



ADJECTIVES IN ENGLISH

Subject: English Language - Lecture # 4

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Adjectives in English describe people, places, and things.

- Definition of adjectives
- Recognizing and placing adjectives in sentences
- The order of adjectives when using several in a row
- Forming comparative and superlative adjectives
- Using adjectives to compare attributes
- Adjectives describing equal quantities
- Adjectives describing unequal quantities

FUNCTIONS OF ADJECTIVES

Adjectives describe the aspects of nouns.

When an adjective is describing a noun, we say it is "modifying" it.

Adjectives can:

- Describe feelings or qualities

- He is a **lonely** man.

- They are **honest**.

- Give nationality or origin

- I heard a **French** song.

- This clock is **German**.

- Our house is **Victorian**.

- Tell more about a thing's characteristics
 - That is a **flashy** car.
 - The knife is **sharp**.
- Tell us about age
 - He's a **young** man.
 - My coat is **old**.
- Tell us about size and measurement
 - John is a **tall** man.
 - This film is **long**.
- Tell us about colour
 - Paul wore a **red** shirt.
 - The sunset was **crimson**.

- Tell us what something is made of
 - The table is **wooden**.
 - She wore a **cotton** dress.
- Tell us about shape
 - I sat at a **round** table.
 - The envelope is **square**.
- Express a judgment or a value
 - That was a **fantastic** film.
 - Grammar is **complicated**.

USING ADJECTIVES IN ENGLISH

- Adjectives in English are invariable. They do not change their form depending on the gender or number of the noun.
 - This is a **hot** potato.
 - Those are some **hot** potatoes.
- To emphasis or strengthen the meaning of an adjective, use the adverbs very or really in front of the adjective you want to strengthen.
 - This is a **very hot** potato
 - Those are some **really hot** potatoes.
- Adjectives in English usually appear in front of the noun that they modify.
 - The **beautiful** girl ignored me.
 - The **fast red** car drove away.

- Adjectives can also appear after being and sensing verbs like to be, to seem, to look & to taste.
 - Italy is **beautiful**.
 - I don't think she seems **nice** at all.
 - You look **tired**.
 - This meat tastes **funny**.

SOME EXCEPTIONS

- Adjectives appear after the noun in some fixed expressions.
 - The **Princess Royal** is visiting Oxford today.
 - The **President elect** made a speech last night.
 - He received a **court martial** the following week.

- The adjectives involved, present & concerned can appear either before or after the noun that they modify, but with a different meaning depending on the placement.

Adjective placed after the noun	Meaning	Adjective placed before the noun	Meaning
➤ I want to see the people involved.	I want to see the people who have something to do with this matter.	➤ It was an involved discussion.	The discussion was detailed & complex.
➤ Here is a list of the people present at the meeting.	Here is a list of the people who were at the meeting.	➤ The present situation is not sustainable.	The current situation is not sustainable.
➤ I need to see the man concerned by this accusation.	I need to see the man who has been accused.	➤ A concerned father came to see me today.	A worried father came to see me today.

ORDERING MULTIPLE ADJECTIVES

- When a number of adjectives are used together, the order depends on the function of the adjective. The usual order is:

Quantity, Value/opinion, Size, Temperature, Age, Shape, Color, Origin, Material

What the adjective expresses	Examples
Quantity	four, ten, a few, several
Value/Opinion	delicious, charming, beautiful
Size	tall, tiny, huge
Temperature	hot, cold
Age	old, young, new, 14-year-old
Shape	square, round
Color	red, purple, green
Origin	Swedish, Victorian, Chinese
Material	glass, silver, wooden

Quantity, Value/opinion, Size, Temperature, Age, Shape, Color, Origin, Material

- They have a **lovely old red** post-box.
- The playroom has **six small round plastic** tables.
- I bought **some charming Victorian silver** ornaments at the flea market.
- She is selling her **flashy 3-year-old Italian** car.
- It was a **beautiful cold** day.

THE COMPARATIVE AND THE SUPERLATIVE

COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

- Comparative adjectives are used to compare differences between the two objects they modify (*larger, smaller, faster, higher*).
- They are used in sentences where two nouns are compared, in this pattern:
- **Noun (subject) + verb + comparative adjective + *than* + noun (object).**
 - My house is **larger** than hers.
 - This box is **smaller** than the one I lost.
 - Your dog runs **faster** than Jim's dog.
 - The rock flew **higher** than the roof.

- The second item of comparison can be omitted if it is clear from the context.
- **Jim and Jack are both my friends, but I like Jack **better**.** ("than Jim" is understood)

SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

- Superlative adjectives are used to describe an object which is at the upper or lower limit of a quality (*the tallest, the smallest, the fastest, the highest*).
- They are used in sentences where a subject is compared to a group of objects.

- **Noun (subject) + verb + the + superlative adjective + noun (object).**

- My house is the **largest** one in our neighborhood.
- This is the **smallest** box I've ever seen.
- Your dog ran the **fastest** of any dog in the race.
- The group that is being compared with can be omitted if it is clear from the context.
 - We all threw our rocks at the same time. My rock flew **the highest**. ("of all the rocks" is understood)

FORMING REGULAR COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

Forming comparatives and superlatives is easy. The form depends on the number of syllables in the original adjective.

ONE SYLLABLE ADJECTIVES

- Add *-er* for the comparative and *-est* for the superlative.
- If the adjective has a consonant + single vowel + consonant spelling, the final consonant must be doubled before adding the ending.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
tall	taller	tallest
fat	fatter	fattest
big	bigger	biggest
sad	sadder	saddest

TWO SYLLABLES

- Adjectives with two syllables can form the comparative either by adding *-er* or by preceding the adjective with *more*.
- These adjectives form the superlative either by adding *-est* or by preceding the adjective with *most*.
- In many cases, both forms are used, although one usage will be more common than the other.
- If you are not sure whether a two-syllable adjective can take a comparative or superlative ending, play it safe and use *more* and *most* instead.
- For adjectives ending in *y*, change the *y* to an *i* before adding the ending.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
simple	simpler	simplest
happy	happier	happiest
busy	busier	busiest
tilted	more tilted	most tilted
tangled	more tangled	most tangled

THREE OR MORE SYLLABLES

- Adjectives with three or more syllables form the comparative by putting *more* in front of the adjective, and the superlative by putting *most* in front.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
important	more important	most important
expensive	more expensive	most expensive

IRREGULAR COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

These very common adjectives have completely irregular comparative and superlative forms.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least
much	more	most
far	further / farther	furthest / farthest

- Today is the **worst** day I've had in a long time.
- You play tennis **better** than I do.
- This is the **least** expensive sweater in the store.
- This sweater is **less** expensive than that one.
- I ran pretty far yesterday, but I ran even **farther** today.

COMPARING ATTRIBUTES

When comparing the attributes of two things, we use a standard set of constructions.

WHEN ATTRIBUTES ARE EQUAL

- Comparing equal attributes is simple. To compare the attributes of two things that are equal, we use the pattern:

as + *adjective describing the attribute* + as

- Tom is **as tall as** his brother.
- I am **as hungry as** you are.
- Sally is **as nice as** Jane.

WHEN ATTRIBUTES ARE NOT EQUAL

When the two attributes are not equal, there are three constructions with equivalent meanings:-

- Either use the pattern:

not as + *adjective describing the attribute* + as

➤ Mont Blanc is **not as high as** Mount Everest.

➤ Norway is **not as sunny as** Thailand.

- Or use the pattern:

less + *adjective describing the attribute* + than : This construction is more frequent with some adjectives than with others.

➤ Mont Blanc is **less high than** Mount Everest.

➤ Norway is **less sunny than** Thailand.

• Or use the pattern:

comparative adjective + than : This construction may require changing the order of the phrase or using the opposing adjective.

➤ Mont Blanc is **lower than** Mount Everest.

➤ Mount Everest is **higher than** Mont Blanc.

➤ Thailand is **sunnier than** Norway.

➤ Norway is **cloudier than** Thailand.

ADJECTIVES COMPARING EQUAL QUANTITIES

- To compare two things that are equal, we use the pattern:

as + *adjective indicating quantity* + (noun) + as

- The quantity adjective you use depends if the noun in the comparison is countable or uncountable.

COUNTABLE NOUNS

- Use as many and as few with countable nouns.
 - They have **as many children as** we do.
 - We have **as many customers as** they do.
 - Tom has **as few books as** Jane.
 - There are **as few houses in his village as** in mine.
 - You know **as many people as** I do.
 - I have visited the States **as many times as** he has.

- Note that the noun may be omitted when it is understood from the context.
- I have three brothers. That's **as many as** you have. ("brothers" is understood)

UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

- Use as much or as little with uncountable nouns.
 - John eats **as much food as** Peter.
 - Jim has **as little patience as** Sam.
 - You've heard **as much news as** I have.
 - He's had **as much success as** his brother has.
 - They've got **as little water as** we have.
- Note that the noun may be omitted when it is understood from the context.
 - I'm not hungry. I've had **as much as** I want. ("food" is understood)

ADJECTIVES COMPARING UNEQUAL QUANTITIES

- To compare two things that are unequal, we use the pattern:
adjective indicating quantity + (noun) + than
- The quantity adjective you use depends if the noun in the comparison is countable or uncountable.

COUNTABLE NOUNS

- Use more and fewer with countable nouns.
 - They have **more children than** we do.
 - We have **more customers than** they do.
 - Tom has **fewer books than** Jane.
 - There are **fewer houses in his village than** in mine.

- You know **more people than** I do.
- I have visited the States **more times than** he has.
- Note that the noun may be omitted when it is understood from the context.
- I have three brothers. That's **more than** you have. ("brothers" is understood)

UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

- Use more or less with uncountable nouns.
 - John eats **more food than** Peter.
 - Jim has **less patience than** Sam.
 - You've heard **more news than** I have.
 - He's had **more success than** his brother has.
 - They've got **less water than** we have.
- Note that the noun may be omitted when it is understood from the context.
 - I'm not hungry at all. I've had **more than I want**. ("food" is understood)

Thank you for your attention

