

# ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

**Adjectives** are words used to describe or modify **nouns** or **pronouns**; their normal position is in front of the noun or pronoun they modify. Adjectives take the following forms:

- Possessive: **my** suit, **their** yard, **Carole's** dog
- Demonstrative: **this** carriage, **those** people, **these** words
- Interrogative: **whose** cat? **which** boy?
- Articles: **a** picture, **an** egg, **the** book
- Numerical: **one** day, **second** inning, **hundredth** time
- Descriptive: **blue** sky, **pretty** picture

**Adverbs** are words used to describe or modify **verbs**, **adjectives**, or **other adverbs**. Adverbs usually go in front of adjectives and other adverbs they modify; however, adverbs which modify verbs can go before or after the verb. They indicate:

- Place: *Put the cat **outside**.* (*outside* modifies the verb *put* and tells where)
- Time: *He is **constantly** sick.* (*constantly* modifies the adjective *sick* and tells when)
- Manner: *She was **secretly** envious.* (*secretly* modifies the adjective *envious* and tells how)
- Degree: *I was **quite easily** angered.* (*quite* modifies the adverb *easily*; *easily* modifies the verb *was angered* and they both tell how much or to what degree)

Many adverbs are distinguished from their corresponding adjectives by the **-ly** ending (*strong/strongly, happy/happily, hasty/hastily, mad/madly*). However, the **-ly** ending is not always an indication of the adverb; a few adjectives also end in **-ly** (*friendly, gentlemanly*).

A few words can be both adjectives and adverbs (*fast, much, late, well*).

- Example: *That is a **fast** car.* (*fast* is an adjective modifying the noun *car*)
- He ran **fast**.* (*fast* here is an adverb modifying the verb *ran*)
- She performed **well**.* (*well* is an adverb telling how she performed)
- You don't look **well** today.* (*well* is an adjective describing *you*)

## Points to watch out for:

### 1. Do not use an adjective to modify a verb.

- Incorrect: *He drives **careless**.*
- Correct: *He drives **carelessly**.*

### 2. Do not use an adjective to modify another adjective or an adverb.

- Incorrect: *He was **real** sorry.*
- Correct: *He was **really** sorry.* (*sorry* is an adjective and must be modified by an adverb.)

### 3. Use an adjective to modify the subject after a linking verb.

The following verbs can be action or linking and need to be modified by the appropriate adjective or adverb, depending on the use: **look, smell, taste, sound, feel**

- Examples: *He **looked** suspicious to me.* (since *looked* is not an action, but a linking verb, the adjective *suspicious* modifies the subject *he*)
- He **looked** suspiciously at me.* (here *looked* is an action and requires an adverb modifier)
- Juan **felt** bad about the team's loss.* (*felt* here is a linking verb and requires an adjective modifier)
- Juan **felt** his injured leg carefully.* (*felt* here is an action and requires an adverb modifier)

#### 4. Distinguish between the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs. (see chart)

Adjectives and adverbs show degrees of quality or quantity by means of their positive, comparative, and superlative forms.

- positive: makes no comparison at all; used for one person, thing, or action (*slow movie, run quickly*)
- comparative: makes a comparison between **two** persons, things, or actions; formed by adding **-er** to a one-syllable word or putting **more** in front of longer words (*slower than.., more quickly than..*)
- superlative: indicates the greatest degree of quality or quantity among **three or more** persons, things, or actions; formed by adding **-est** to a one-syllable word or putting **most** in front of longer words (*slowest of all, most quickly of all*)  
(adjectives that end in **-y** (*happy, lazy, hazy*) change the **y** to **i** before adding **-er** or **-est** (*happier/happiest, lazier/laziest, easiere/easiest*).

Some adjectives and adverbs - **unique, empty, dead, perfect, entirely** - are absolute in their meaning and therefore cannot logically be compared; there are no degrees of uniqueness or deadness.

#### 5. Good and well.

**Good** is an **adjective** that modifies a person or thing: *Sue is a good writer.* (*good* tells what kind of writer Sue is)

**Well** is usually an **adverb** that tells how an action is done: *Sue writes well.* (*well* tells how Sue writes)

**Well** can also be an **adjective** meaning "healthy": *The patient feels well once again.*

(describes the patient's health and indicates that he was sick)

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