

Modifiers, intensifiers and postmodifiers

GRAMMAR

LEVEL Advanced | NUMBER C1_4041G_EN | LANGUAGE English



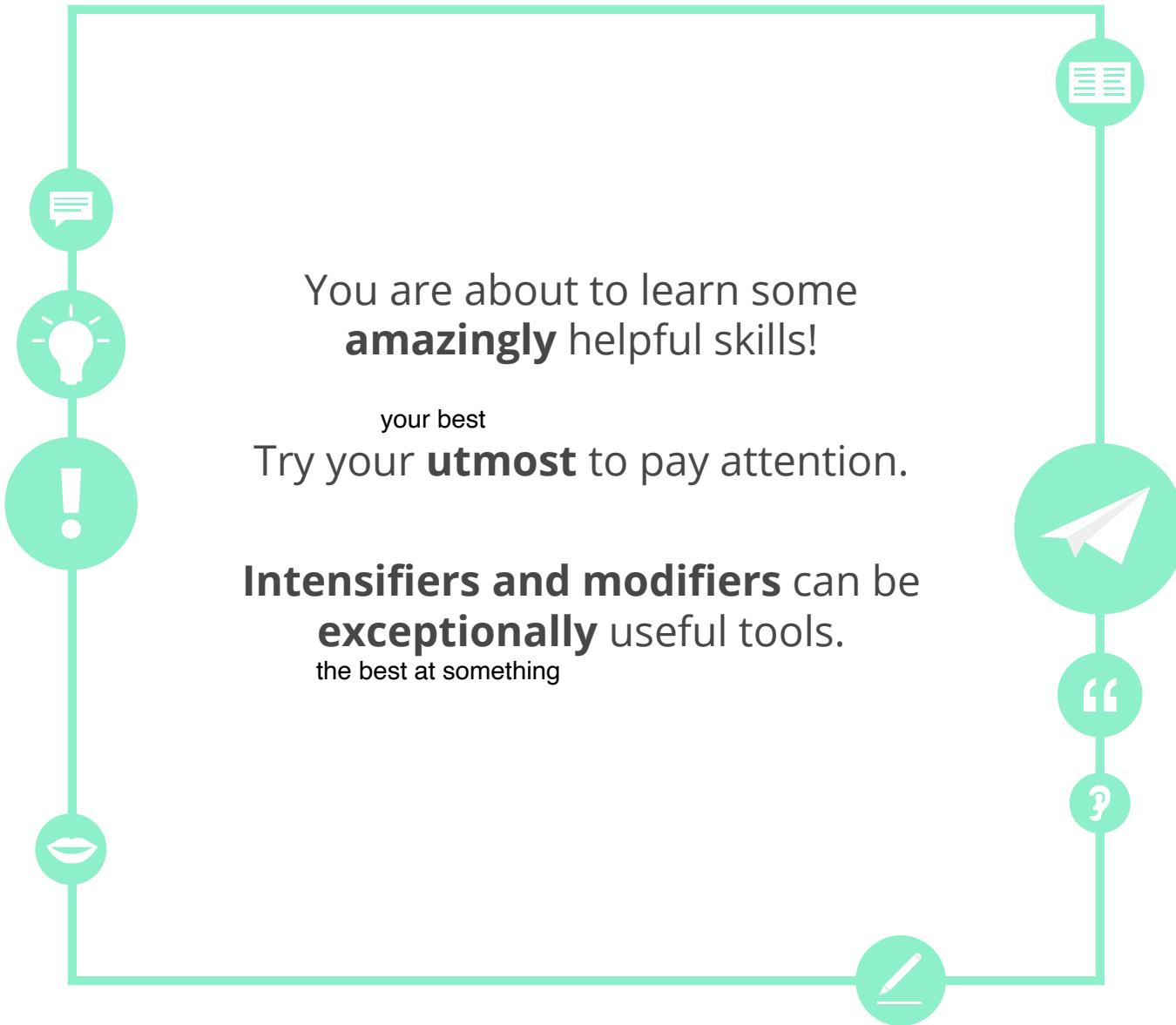


Goals

- Can recognise a series of more advanced modifiers and intensifiers and explain why they are used.

- Can accurately use intensifiers with whwords as well as a range of gradable and non-gradable adjectives in a sentence.







Basic intensifiers: review

- We use intensifiers like **really**, **totally** and **extremely** to help **strengthen adjectives** in our writing.
- Intensifiers can tell the reader more about the **intensity** of a word. They generally function as **adverbs**, modifying the **meaning** of a sentence.



This exam is **quite** difficult!

I am **totally** interested in your work.

It's an **extremely** long drive home.

I'm **extremely** worried about my upcoming exam



Review: basic intensifiers

- We use **intensifiers** to add **force** to the meaning of **verbs**, **adjectives**, or even other **adverbs**.
- Intensifiers like **extremely** and **really** are placed **before** the word they modify.

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| I think what you said is | very | hurtful. |
| That dog is | extremely | overweight. |
| It's an | unbelievably | hot day today! |
| The flight was | terribly | long. |



Making sentences

Now let's practise some intensifiers you already know.

Create some sentences with the suggestions below.

For example: I find frozen ready meals *rather* convenient because I work *incredibly* long days.

Frozen meals are extremely bad for your health as they are full of artificial ingredients.

Catching the flu is very bad for my social life as I cannot go out and socialise.

Travelling overseas is very valuable for your knowledge as travel broadens the mind.



frozen ready
meals

catching the flu

travelling

history books

skateboarding

philosophy

History books are extremely interesting
Skateboarding is an extremely exciting sport especially for teenagers

Philosophy is extremely boring for me.



Review: more basic intensifiers

- Specific intensifiers can also be used to modify **adverbs** and **adjectives**.
- They can answer questions like **how?**, **how much?**, or **how far?**
- Use the example in the first row. **The first day was overwhelming!**
 - **How overwhelming was it?** Observe the answer below.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------|
| The first day was | slightly | overwhelming! |
| He trained | fairly | consistently. |
| I found the film's premise | somewhat | ridiculous. |
| The new boss is | kind of | annoying. |



Grade the adjectives in the sentences below

1. I feel frightened, this horror film is good!

→ I feel **quite** frightened, this horror film is **unbelievably** good!

2. It's an interesting opinion that you shared.

.....very interesting

→ _____

3. John was enthusiastic when we walked into the office yesterday.

→ overwhelmingly
enthusiastic as he got a promotion

4. Vanessa was irritated with herself for forgetting her lunch.

→ extremely irritated ... as
she was hungry all day

5. Theresa was tired but exhilarated after she completed the marathon.

→ very tired

→ _____



Intensifiers in reality!

Using the images below for inspiration, give two example sentences for each scenario using the given intensifiers.



It was remarkably crowded on the roads during rush hour
remarkably



This comedy film was truly funny
truly



this cake was particularly delicious

particularly



It was exceptionally wet a few days ago in Dubai

exceptionally



Try to use each of these intensifiers in a sentence

It's intensely hot in the Sahara desert
intensely

The woman was strikingly beautiful
strikingly

Elon Musk is insanely rich
insanely

Aldi is reasonably priced / sells reasonably priced food
reasonably

He was radically different to his calm sister
radically

simply
One and one equals two. This is simply a fact and can't be denied.



Advanced intensifiers



- **Strong adjectives** do not always work so well with the basic intensifier **very**.
- **To sound natural**, these adjectives rely on **more advanced intensifiers**. Otherwise known as **modifiers**.
- Some examples of strong adjectives include: perfect, superb, tiny and enormous. Because a word like **superb** already means **very, very good**, using a basic intensifier such as **very** would sound a little odd.
 - For example: that film was very superb! You would rather say: that film was **absolutely superb!**

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| The performance was | rather | wonderful. |
| Your dish was | particularly | delicious. |
| What an | astonishingly | brilliant book. |
| That is an | utterly | enormous elephant. |



Match the intensifier

Choose the best intensifier for each sentence below.

- 1) Pierre's film was especially powerful.
- 2) It had an especially relevant message for our modern times.
- 3) We had a really good time at the party last night.
- 4) It's extremely important to practise the piece before your recital on Tuesday.
- 5) Arthur is an particularly intelligent individual.
- 6) William was utterly spent after the marathon.
- 7) Wow Kelly, your costume is totally believable!
- 8) Johann is an really talented piano player.
- 9) Your behaviour is utterly ridiculous.
- 10) The general's army was completely vanquished.

absolutely

completely

exceptionally

totally

particularly

really

utterly

incredibly

remarkably

especially



Let's get creative!

Remember when you have a strong adjective, you can't use *very*. With this in mind, try filling the gaps in the sentences below.

Be as creative as you like!

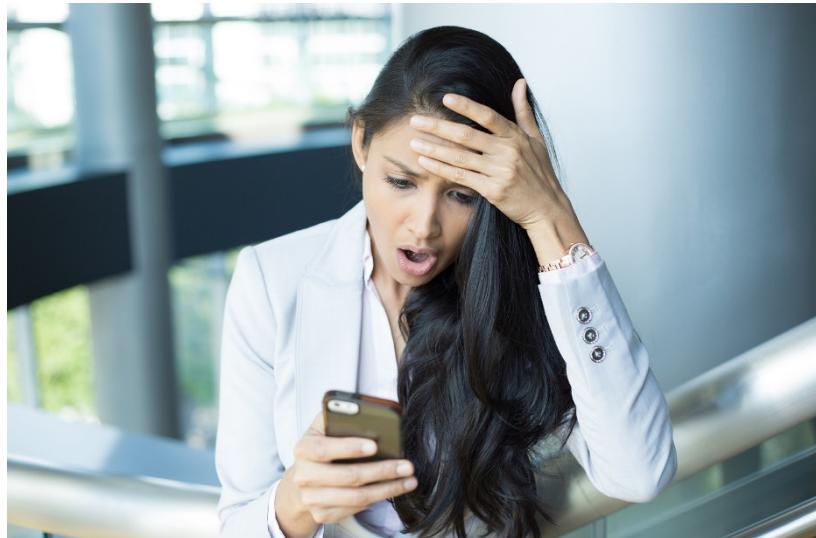
1. She was really terrified, it was her initial interview for the post.
2. The baby is particularly gorgeous.
3. That podcast was utterly hilarious.
4. When I got in the car this morning it was exceptionally freezing.
5. Your room needs cleaning, it's really filthy.
6. The film was absolutely awful.
7. Your sister has passed her music exams, she is exceptionally/really thrilled!
8. That was a really excellent song.





What the...

- **Intensifiers** can also be used with **wh- words** to **emphasise** an emotion, usually shock or annoyance. We tend to use **on earth** or **ever** as the intensifier.



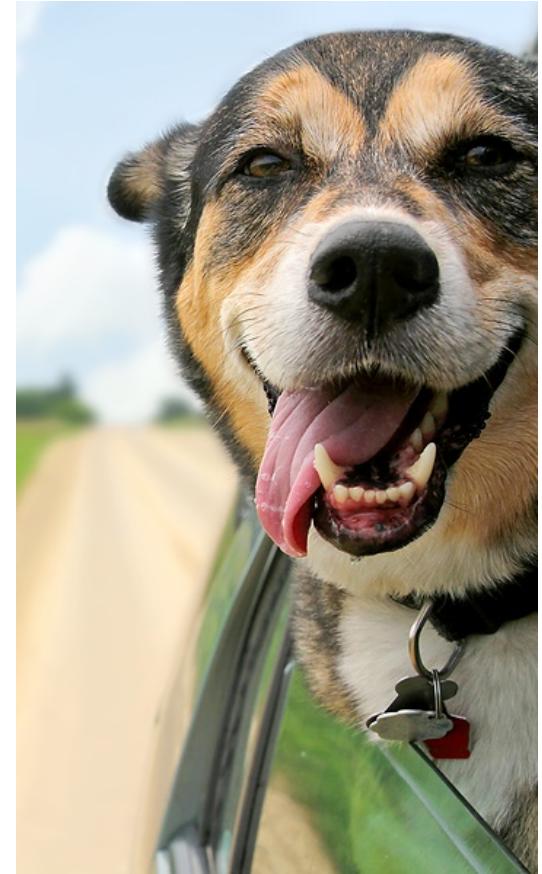
What **on earth** is this supposed to be?
Why did I **ever** think this is a good idea?
When did he **ever** make that joke?



What the...

Practise using intensifiers with the sentences below.
Remember you can use *ever* and *on earth*. Which fits best?

1. What on earth is going on here?
2. Who ever does that dog belong to?
3. Why did I ever suggest they should come over for dinner?
4. What on earth was I thinking when I purchased those shoes?
5. Oh my goodness, what ever is your cousin doing in that photograph?



“

Remember the differences: intensifiers and modifiers



- **Modifiers** give us **extra information** about another word or **noun phrase**.
Modifiers can **clarify, change, quantify** or **limit** words and sentences.
- Some **modifiers** relate to **certainty**, some to **opinion** and others to **intensity**.
Their role in a sentence depends upon the context of the situation.
- If used correctly, **modifiers** can really transform a sentence!

- **Intensifier** – is a word used to make the meaning of another word **stronger**.
 - e.g. the surf is **totally** awesome
- **Modifier** - A word which **adds additional information or meaning** to a **noun phrase**
 - e.g. in the sentence: I'd like to try on that orange jumper in the vintage shop, **orange** and **vintage shop** are **modifiers**





Select the right modifier depending on the context

Johnny's got a brand new record player.

- a. brand
- b. super
- c. great
- d. huge

It's a purely fictitious account.

- a. massive
- b. brand
- c. purely
- d. surely

That house was ridiculously expensive.

- a. crazily
- b. purely
- c. ridiculously
- d. intensely

You're extraordinarily good at fishing for a city dweller.

- a. majorly
- b. perfectly
- c. miserably
- d. extraordinarily



It was absolutely...

Imagine you are in each of the scenarios below.
Describe your experiences using as many intensifiers and modifiers as possible!

you have been
to see your
favourite band in
an intimate
venue



your flight has
been delayed by
4 hours



you have sent
your car for its
M.O.T and the
mechanic is trying
to rip you off



your friend has
bought a new
house

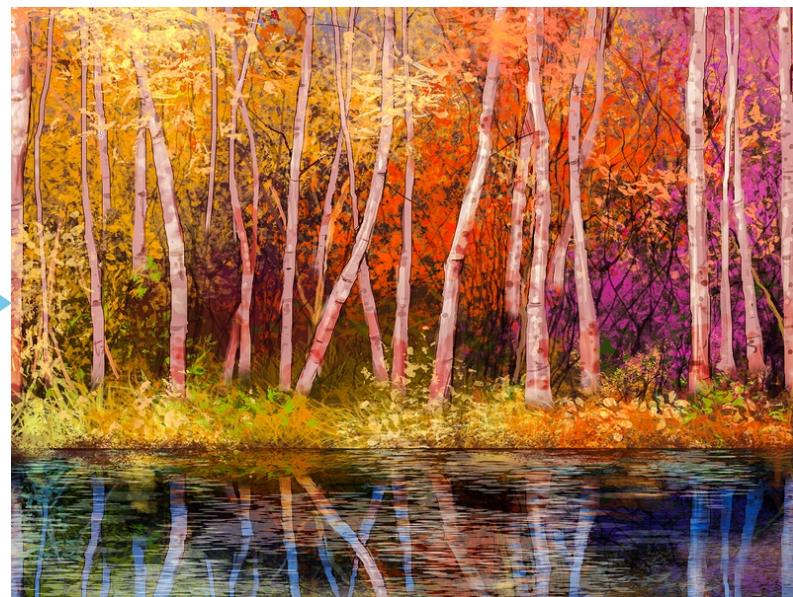
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Gradable adjectives

- Adjectives can be broken down into **gradable** or **non-gradable**.
- **Gradable** adjectives can show different **degrees** of **intensity**.
 - **Fast** is a **gradable** adjective – you can run **very** fast or **moderately** fast.
 - **Hot** is also **gradable** – there are many different degrees of heat.

Observe the gradable adjectives in the sentences below. How can they be altered to change the meaning?

- It's a **little chilly** in here.
- You seem **quite unwell**.
- That painting is **rather interesting**.
- I am **extremely sleepy**.



“

Non-gradable adjectives

- Non-gradable adjectives take **two** forms:
 - Strong or **extreme** adjectives which cannot be marked by degrees
 - **Absolute** adjectives, which are either **true** or **false**
- Non-gradable adjectives **cannot** be marked with **intensifiers**.

Observe the **non-gradable adjectives** used in the sentences below:

- They got **married** yesterday!
- Be careful of the **boiling** water.
- He is a **unique** tiger.





Non-gradable adjectives list

boiling

very hot

appalling

very bad

filthy

very dirty

arduous

very difficult



Classify the adjectives as gradable or non-gradable

Gradable

sleepy

confused

cold

Non-gradable

married

finished

boiling

dead

starving

cold

confused

married

finished

sleepy

boiling

starving

dead



Non-gradable adjectives

Match these non-gradable adjectives with their definitions.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| very clean spotless | very sad miserable | very ugly hideous | very loud <i>deafening</i> |
| very sad | very clean | very funny hilarious | thrilling very exciting |
| very funny | thrilling | very loud | very ugly |



Timed quiz!

You have one minute!
Try to come up with as many sentences as you can which include non-gradable adjectives.

“

Adverb + enough

- Using the form **adverb + enough** can be another tool in English to mean **sufficiently**, **very**, or **somewhat**.
- It usually allows us to say something has just met a threshold. For example:
 - **Surprisingly enough**, I ran into Judy yesterday in the park.
 - The sentence means it was quite a surprise to see Judy in the park.

- **Surprisingly enough**, I enjoyed the new James Bond film.
- **Luckily enough**, Darryl scored a basket in the game yesterday.
- **Shockingly enough**, they still aren't recycling plastics!
- **Interestingly enough**, I was reading about that just the other day.





Complete the sentences using the adverb + enough structure

1. Surprisingly enough...



I saw them last night, they said they were feeling under the weather.

2. Luckily enough...



3. Interestingly enough...



4. Sadly enough...



5. Amazingly enough...





Improvising a story

Imagine you're telling your friend a story about something that happened yesterday. You almost got into big trouble, but you managed to get out of it, thankfully!

Use as many adverb + enough sentences as you can.



I thought I was done for, but...



She caught up with me, then...

“

Emphasisers and amplifiers

- **Emphasisers** are a category of **intensifier**. They are usually placed **before** the word they emphasise.
- I **really** can't stand this wait
- I **literally** fell off my chair laughing
- She **silently** sat reading her book in the library

Amplifiers are also another category of **intensifier**. They stress a **higher degree** of **emotion**:

- I love you **so** much.
- I am **amazingly** fond of this part of the world.
- John was **greatly** moved by the tango performance.

“

Minimisers

- Minimisers lower the **intensity** and effect of the **verb**.
- Minimisers can also be referred to as **downtoners**.

- Slightly **reduce** the force of the verb:
 - I can **kind of** play badminton
- Show a **minimised amount** of meaning:
 - Jerry was **slightly** upset this morning
- **Modify** the level of truth:
 - It **barely** hurts





Amplify, emphasise or minimise?

Categorise the intensifiers according to amplify, emphasise or minimise the degree of meaning.

I'm going to win the race for sure!



He literally told Mr Dodd to shut up!



Your lecture was interesting to some extent.



That is absolutely ridiculous.



He heartily tore into his steak.



Jane mildly approved of her brother's tattoo.



Dana's party was almost ruined.



I kind of like you.



Amplify

Emphasise

Minimise



Dream world!

You are on your dream holiday and you call your friend to let them know what an amazing time you are having!

Describe your holiday, in detail, taking into consideration what we have discussed in this lesson.



why did I ever
think I wouldn't
like it here...

I really don't
want to come
home!

luckily enough,
we got the last
hotel room...

the food is
insanely good...



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Activity

party was almost ruined. / Your lecture was interesting to some extent.
Minimise: I kind of like you. / Jane mildly approved of his brother's tattoo. / Dana's
Emphasise: He literally told Mr Dodd to shut up! / That is absolutely ridiculous.
Amplify: I'm going to win the race for sure. / He heartily tore into his steak.

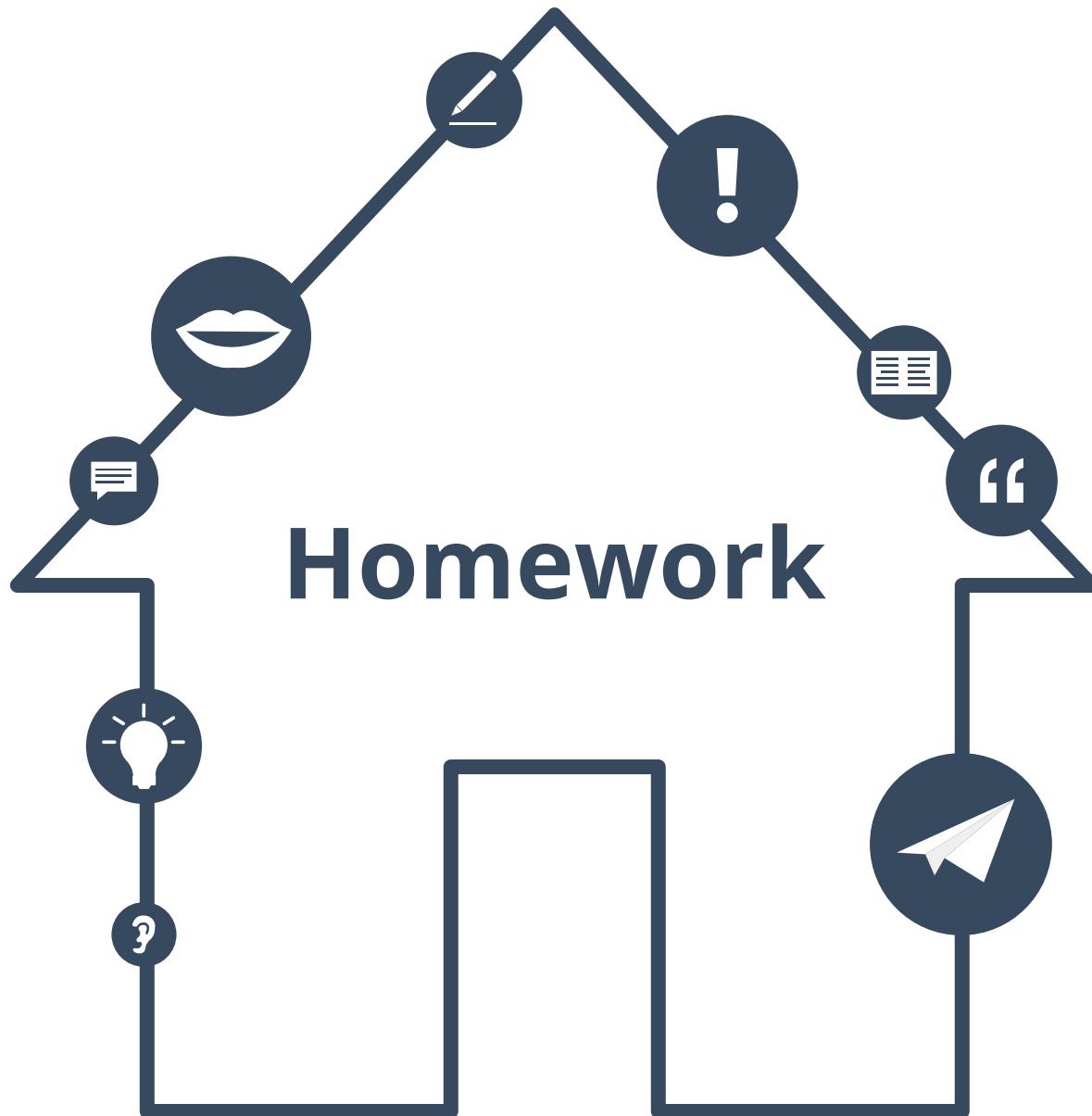
Activity p. 30

hilarious - very funny, thrilling - very exciting
spotless - very clean, miserable - very sad, hideous - very ugly, deafening - very loud,
Activity p. 23

Non-gratifiable: married, dead, finished, boiling, starving
Gratifiable: cold, confused, sleepy
Activity p. 22

brandy, purely, ridiculously, extraordinarily
Activity p. 17

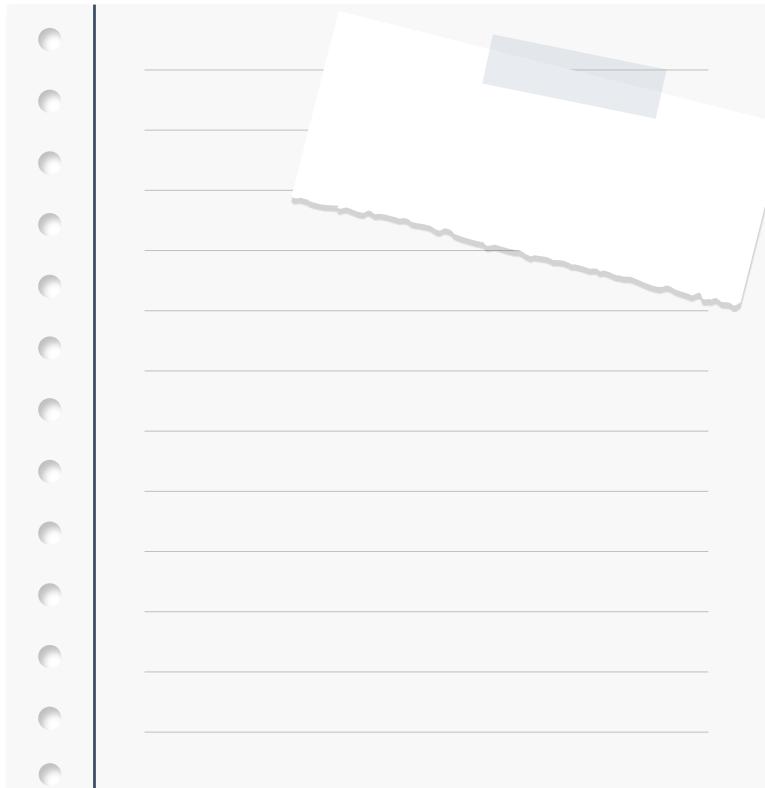
absolutely, completely
remarkably, exceptionally, really, particularly, incredibly, utterly, totally, especially,
Activity p. 12





Text work

Write a story including as many of the intensifiers and modifiers from today's lesson. This will help your English sound more fluid and interesting.





Absolutely amazing holiday?

Using the words intensifiers below as inspiration, write a detailed fictional account of someone's holiday.

ferocious

dazzling

furious

anxious

boiling

tiny



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