

Adjectives : position and punctuation

Position :

We usually use adjectives before nouns (1) or after linking verbs such as be and seem (2)

- 1- I had amusing experience. They faced enormous challenges. He has a kind, honest face.
- 2- Don't be silly. She became ill. They felt angry. It got cold. He seemed anxious and upset.

Note that adjectives are called "attributive" before nouns and "predicative" after linking verbs.

When we use more than one adjective before a noun, there is a typical order. We usually put emphasizing adjectives before describing adjectives (3) and both of these before classifying adjectives (4)

- 3- The weather has been our principal recent concern. Her necklace had real red rubies in it.
- 4- Kenya was the sole African representative. The recent economic new isn't encouraging.

Some adjectives are typically used after a linking verb, not before a noun (5)

- 5- The old man is asleep. The girl seemed glad.

Other include: afraid, alike, alive, alone, ashamed, awake, ill, well.

In some expressions, we put the adjective after the noun (6) or after an indefinite pronoun (7).

- 6- Six feet tall, two metres deep, two years old, notary public, the time available.
- 7- Someone nice, anything unusual, everything necessary, nothing new.

Punctuation

There is usually no punctuation between two or more different types of adjectives before a noun (8). We normally put a comma between describing adjectives in a set of two or more of the same type, especially those representing opinions where the order could easily be changed (9)

- 8- Anderson works in a lovely old Victorian building. His office has big black leather chairs.
- 9- She likes wild, vivid, flashy designs. He was just a normal, quiet, rather shy teenager.

We put *and* between two colors (10) or between two classifying adjectives of the same type (11).

- 10- I lost my blue and white scarf. He wore a red and black cap.
- 11- She likes Greek and Lebanese food. We discussed financial and educational topics.

We put *and* between adjectives after linking verbs; it's small and black.

We normally put a comma between the first two adjectives and the word *and* between the last two adjectives in a set of three colours (12) or three classifying adjectives of the same types (13).

- 12- The flag had black, green and yellow stripes. The tulips were yellow, orange and red.
- 13- In recent years, the island has experienced social, political and economic problems.

Exercise:

Add commas or the word *and* where necessary to these sentences:

- 1- The flags of Britain and the USA both have white blue designs.

- 2- He described the wonderful friendly outgoing people who worked in the little Italian cafe.
- 3- You immediately notice the large plastic vases with pink purple flowers or every table.
- 4- There are many industrial agricultural application of the new chemical compounds.
- 5- What are the cultural religious historic origins of these current regional conflicts?

Exercise:

Most of these sentences have adjectives in the wrong position. Write the correct versions.

- 1- The German entire team played well.
- 2- The wine made a red small stain.
- 3- There's new nothing in the Christian main values.
- 4- You'll need hiking leather comfortable boots.
- 5- It has a pointed long stem with tiny pink flowers.
- 6- The windows are in circular wooden huge frames.
- 7- They are the northern industrial major nations.
- 8- I love those marvelous new Italian designs.
- 9- They found a rocking beautiful antique chair.
- 10- Her alone mother was in the chaos total.
- 11- The old public swimming pool is closed.
- 12- We like economic recent American policies.