

Adjective

Definition of Adjective

An adjective is a part of speech that describes and modifies a noun, to make a writing or conversation more specific, relevant, and coherent. The word “adjective” has been derived from the Latin word *adjectivum*, which means “additional.”

An adjective modifies, quantifies, and even transforms the things, ideas, places, and even incidents referred to in the [sentence](#), making them unique and individual. It generally appears before a noun or a [pronoun](#), modifying it to shed more light on its specific characteristics. For instance, “This isn’t a romance. You’re not a damsel in distress and I’m not the handsome prince come to save you” (*Captive in the Dark*, by C.J Roberts). Here, the adjective “handsome” has modified the noun “prince,” making it clear *which prince* the writer is referring to.

Types of Adjective

There are eight basic types of in modern writing:

Descriptive adjective – refers to or describes a noun or a pronoun. For instance, “Adrian is a witty.”

Demonstrative adjective – is an adjective that points towards a specific person, place, or thing within a sentence. It is similar to a [demonstrative pronoun](#). For instance, “These bananas are tasty.”

Possessive adjective – also known as a “possessive determiner,” the possessive adjective refers to the words that modify nouns by showing a sense of possession of, or belonging to, a person or thing. This type is similar to a [possessive pronoun](#). For instance, “She has sold her.”

Interrogative adjective – poses a question, and comes before a noun. The interrogative adjective is similar to interrogative pronoun. For instance, “Which game are you playing?”

Predictive adjective – follows a [linking verb](#), and modifies its [subject](#). For instance, “That girl is beautiful.”

Superlative adjective – expresses a greater increase or decrease in quality. The superlative adjective gives readers the supreme values of a noun. For instance, “David is the smallest of all the students.”

Comparative adjective – compares two objects, things, or persons in a sentence. For instance, “The son is taller than the father.”

Personal title adjective – uses a title, such as Master, Mr. ,Miss, Uncle, Grandmother, Lord, Professor, Doctor, and so on. For instance, “You can visit Dr. John tonight.”

Examples of Adjectives in Literature

Example #1: *The Wapshot* (by John Cheever)

“He was a tall man with an astonishing and somehow elegant curvature of the spine, formed by an enlarged lower abdomen, which he carried in a stately and contented way, as if it contained money and securities.”

This example is showing descriptive adjectives, referring to the quality of the pronoun, “a man,” who is tall, and his “spine,” which is elegant. Additional descriptive adjectives describe other features of the man’s body parts.

Example #2: *Song* (by John Donne)

“Sweetest Love! I do not go
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can shew
A fitter love for me ...”

Donne has used the superlative adjective “sweetest” to describe the affection of a lover for his beloved. This adjective shows a unique quality of love.

Example #3: *Thank You, Jeeves* (by P.G. Wodehouse)

“I had scarcely reached the stairs when I observed a *hideous* form. A little, short, broad, bow-legged individual with long arms and a *short, wizened* face.”

This example of descriptive adjective illustrates qualities of a person who is “little, short, broad, and bow-legged.”

Example #4: *In the Seven Woods: Being Poems Chiefly of the Irish Heroic Age* (by W.B. Yeats)

“O Never give the heart outright,
For they, for all smooth lips can say,
Have given their hearts up to the play.”

In this example, Yeats has used the descriptive adjective “smooth” to describe the noun “lips.” It has appeared before the noun and modified it.

Example #5: *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (by Shel Silverstein)

“My skin is kind of sort of brownish pinkish yellowish white. My eyes are greyish blueish green, but I’m told they look orange in the night. My hair is reddish blondish brown, but it’s silver when it’s wet, and all the colors I am inside have not been invented yet.”

This excerpt presents a perfect example of predictive adjectives, which follow linking verbs: is, look, are, and again is.

Function

An adjective describes a noun or a pronoun. It adds further meaning, or gives additional information about them. The adjective also performs the functions of adjective phrase head, noun phrase modifier, subject complement, object complement, and appositive. In fact, by specifying certain nouns and pronouns, adjectives make them clear, prominent, and distinct within a text. In addition, an effective use of adjectives can

