

Adjective

An **adjective** is a lexical category of words that **modify, qualify, or specify a noun or a pronoun**. Its primary function is to provide additional information about the entity it is attached to, thereby narrowing its meaning and making it more specific.

A. Description (Qualitative Function)

This is the most common function, answering the question, "What kind?" It assigns a quality or characteristic to the noun.

Examples:

1. She gave a very **persuasive** argument.
2. He lives in a **dilapidated** building.

B. Identification & Specification

(Demonstrative, Interrogative, Possessive)

This function points out a specific noun, asking about it or showing ownership. It answers the questions, "Which one?" or "Whose?"

Examples:

1. **This** report is more detailed than **that** one.
2. **Which** candidate did they finally select?
3. It was **her** signature on the document.

C. Quantification (Quantitative Function)

This function specifies the quantity or amount of a noun. It answers the questions, "How many?" or "How much?"

Examples:

1. There are **several** inaccuracies in this document.
2. He has **little** patience for bureaucratic delays.
3. **Many** are called, but **few** are chosen. (adjs. acting as pronouns, but their root is quantitative).
4. I need **more** time to complete the analysis.

1.2: The Function of Adjectives vs. The Noun of Quality

An adjective and its related abstract noun are conceptually linked but grammatically distinct. Confusing them is like mistaking the recipe for the cake itself.

Adjective: A word that **attributes a quality** to a noun or pronoun. It answers the question, "What is the noun *like*?"

1. He is an **honest** man. (*Honest* describes the man).

Abstract Noun: A word that **names the quality itself**. It is the concept, the idea, or the state of being.

It answers the question, "What is the *name* of this quality?"

2. **Honesty** is his best quality. (*Honesty* is the name of the quality he possesses).

Adjective vs Abstract Noun

Adjective

1. **Placement:** Usually comes **before a noun** or **after a linking verb**.
2. **Typical Endings:** *-ous, -ful, -less, -able, -ive, -al*
3. **Example:** *The room was spacious.*

Abstract Noun

1. **Placement:** Appears wherever a noun is required.
2. **Typical Endings:** *-ness, -ity, -ion, -ence, -ance, -th*
3. **Example:** *The spaciousness of the room was impressive.*

Common Errors & Traps

1. The judge was known for his **impartiality** decisions.(X)
The judge was known for his **impartial** decisions.

Trap 2: Using an Adjective where an Abstract Noun is needed.

This often happens after a possessive pronoun (his, her, their) or an article (the, a) when the *concept* is the subject or object.

1. The **deep** of the ocean is still largely unexplored.(X)
The **depth** of the ocean is still largely unexplored.

Examples for Clarification

- **Adjective:** The negotiator was very **polite**.
Abstract Noun: The negotiator's **politeness** de-escalated the situation.
- **Adjective:** A **generous** donation was made to the foundation.
Abstract Noun: Her **generosity** is well-known throughout the community.

The Position of Adjectives

An adjective can occupy two primary positions within a clause.

The Attributive Position

This is the most common and intuitive placement for an adjective.

An adjective is in the **attributive position** when it comes **directly before the noun** it modifies.

It forms a single noun phrase with that noun.

Think of it as a label attached to the noun before you even present it.

Examples:

1. We hired a **competent** programmer.
2. The report revealed several **shocking** details.

The Predicative Position

This position separates the adjective from its noun, placing it in the predicate of the sentence, usually after a verb.

An adjective is in the **predicative position** when it follows a **linking verb** (also known as a copular verb) and modifies the **subject** of that verb.

Function: To make a statement or assert a quality about the subject. It's not just labeling; it's *declaring* something about the noun.

Examples:

1. The programmer we hired is **competent**. (The quality "competent" is stated about the subject "programmer.")
2. The details in the report were **shocking**.
3. The noise was **sudden**.
4. The dress she wore looked **beautiful**.

Attributive Vs Predicative difference

1. He is a **responsible** person. (*inherent quality*)
2. He is being **responsible**. (*his current behaviour*)
3. a **green** apple. (*part of noun phrase*)
4. The apple is **green**. (*part of sub. Compliment*)

Adjectives Exclusively for Predicative Use

Certain adjectives, particularly those beginning with the prefix "**a-**" (often derived from Old English prepositions), are confined to the **predicative position**.

They must follow a linking verb and cannot be placed directly before a noun.

These are – **afraid, asleep, awake, alive, alone, ashamed, aware, alike**

Note: Other common predicative-only adjectives include **ill** (when meaning 'sick'), **well** (when meaning 'in good health'), **unable**, **content**, and **glad**.

1. The **afraid** child hid under the bed. (X)
The child was afraid and hid under the bed.
The **frightened** child hid under the bed.
2. An **asleep** student sat in the last row. (X)
The student was asleep in the last row.
A sleeping student sat in the last row.
3. The **awake** baby cried loudly. (X)
The baby was **awake** and cried loudly.
The **wakeful** baby cried loudly.
4. They found an **alive** soldier after many hours. (X)
The soldier was still **alive** after many hours.
They found a **living** soldier after many hours.
5. The **alone** boy sat on the bench. (X)
The boy was alone on the bench.
The **solitary** boy sat on the bench.
6. The **ashamed** girl lowered her head. (X)
The girl was **ashamed** and lowered her head.
Alternative: The embarrassed girl lowered her head.
7. The **aware** driver slowed down at the crossing. (X)
The driver was aware of the danger
Alternative: The cautious driver slowed down...
8. The **alike** twins wore red shirts. (X)
Correct: The twins were alike in appearance.
Alternative: The identical twins wore red shirts.
9. The **lonely** man walked down the street.
The man was **lonely** as he walked down the street.

Attri. (X)	Fixed Pre.	Attri. Alter.
The ill patient...	The patient is ill .	The sick patient...
The well child...	The child is well .	The healthy child...
An unable student...	The student was unable .	A student unable to pass... (postpositive)

The Degrees of Comparison

English adjectives are not static; they change their form to express degrees of a quality.

a) Positive degree

1. **Base form** of the adjective; states the existence of a quality without comparison.
2. Used to describe a single person, thing, or group.

b) Comparative degree

1. Shows comparison of a quality **between two persons, things, or groups**.
2. Indicates that one has more or less of the quality.
3. Requires **exactly two entities** for comparison.

c) Superlative degree

1. Shows comparison of a quality among three or more persons, things, or groups.
2. Indicates the **most** or **least** of the quality in a group.
3. Requires at least **three entities** for comparison.

Formation: Regular (-er/-est) and Irregular (more/most)

Method 1: Inflectional Suffixes (-er / -est)

Applies to: Most one-syllable adjectives and many two-syllable adjectives (especially those ending in -y, -le, -ow, -er).

Periphrastic Forms (more / most)

Applies to: Most adjectives with two or more syllables (except those noted above) and all adjectives with three or more syllables.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful

The Cardinal Sin: The Double Comparative/Superlative

Note: Never, under any circumstances, combine both methods for the same adjective. This is a significant grammatical error.

Using than, the, as...as, and so...as

These words and phrases are the grammatical glue that holds comparative constructions together.

1. The Conjunction **than**

Function: Than is the quintessential marker of the **comparative degree**. Its presence in a sentence almost always signals that a comparison between two unequal things is being made.

Rule: Use than immediately following a comparative adjective (-er or more...).

Examples:

1. This year's report is **more comprehensive than** last year's.
2. The new software is **faster than** the old version.
3. She is **more qualified than** any other candidate.

Common Error: Using then instead of than. **Then** is an adverb of time. This is a spelling error that can undermine credibility.

1. He is taller **then** me.

He is taller **than** I (am). (Note on pronoun case: we'll address this later, but formally, the subject pronoun is preferred).

2. The Definite Article **the**

Function: The is the standard marker of the **superlative degree**. It indicates that the noun being described is unique in its possession of a quality within a specific group.

Examples:

1. This is **the most effective** strategy we have developed.
2. He was **the tallest** player on the team.
3. Mount Everest is **the highest** peak in the world.

Exception: The is not used with superlatives in constructions like "My mother is happiest when..." because it's not comparing her to other mothers but describing a state. However, in direct comparisons, the is mandatory.

3. The as...as Construction

Function: This structure is used to make a comparison of **equality**. It indicates that two entities share a quality to the same degree. It is used with the **positive degree** of the adjective.

Rule: The base form (positive degree) of the **adjective** or **adverb** must be placed between as and as.

Examples:

1. This proposal is **as convincing as** the last one. (They are equally convincing).
2. She is **as intelligent as** her brother.
3. The sequel was not **as good as** the original film.
4. He is **as tall as** his father.

He is as taller as his father. (X)

4. The so...as Construction

Function: This structure is a variation of as...as but is traditionally reserved for **negative comparisons**.

It also indicates a comparison of equality (or lack thereof) and uses the **positive degree**.

Rule: In formal English, use so...as in negative sentences. As...as is also acceptable in modern usage, but so...as is often considered more precise in negative contexts.

Examples:

1. The second attempt was **not so successful as** the first.
2. He is **not so experienced as** his predecessor.
3. Your problems are **not so serious as** you think.

Logical Consistency: Comparing Like with Like (that of / those of)

This is perhaps the most elegant and logical rule in comparative grammar, and its violation is a common flaw in amateur writing.

The Principle: A comparison must be logical. You can only compare a thing to another thing of the same type. You cannot compare a quality of one thing to the entirety of another.

1. The **climate** of Shimla is better than **Delhi**.(X)

The Solution: To avoid repeating the noun ("climate"), we use the pronouns that (for singular nouns) or those (for plural nouns) followed by of.

Structure:

- ...than that of [Noun] (for singular antecedents)

- ...than those of [Noun] (for plural antecedents)

Examples:

1. The climate of Shimla is better than **that of** Delhi. (that = the climate)
2. The **symptoms** of dengue are similar to **those of** malaria. (those = the symptoms)
3. Her **performance** in the final exam was more impressive than **that of** any other student. (that = the performance)
4. The manufacturing standards of this car company are stricter **than those of** its competitors.
5. The cost of living in New York is significantly higher **than that of** Los Angeles.

Note: When comparing a member of a group to the rest of the group, you must logically exclude that member from the group it's being compared with. You cannot be better than yourself. A comparison requires two distinct entities.

- o Nescafe is better than **any coffee** in the market.(X)

Note: Use the word other (for nouns) or else (for pronouns like anybody/somebody) to exclude the item being compared.

Examples:

1. Nescafe is better than any **other** coffee in the market.
 2. Gold is more precious than any **other** metal.
 3. He is smarter than anybody **else** in his family.
- Note:** Do not use other when the comparison is between two entirely different groups.
1. The rivers of America are larger than the rivers of Europe. (No member of the first group is in the second group).

Comparing Two Qualities of the Same Noun

What happens when you compare two qualities within the same person or thing?

The standard -er rule is suspended.

He is **wiser** than brave.(X)

Examples:

1. He is **more wise** than brave. (His wisdom exceeds his bravery).
2. She is **more smart** than beautiful.
3. The path was **more steep** than long.

The + Comparative..., The + Comparative...

This construction, known as the "**correlative comparative**," shows a cause-and-effect relationship where one change is proportional to another.

The Rule: If the first clause begins with The + Comparative, the second clause must also begin with The + Comparative. Both parts require the definite article the.

Examples:

1. **The higher** you go, **the colder** it gets.
2. **The more** you study, **the more** you learn.
3. **The sooner** we leave, **the better** our chances will be.

Note: This is not **the** definite article. It comes from old English and here it means **by that much more**.

Comparison with Multipliers

When a comparison involves a multiplier, than is not used. The as...as structure is required.

- o This rope is **twice longer than** that one.(X)

Examples:

1. This rope is **twice as long as** that one.
2. Their house is **three times as large as** ours.

Adjectives as Quantifiers & Determiners

A quantifier is a type of adjective (or determiner) that indicates an amount or number. The choice of quantifier depends entirely on whether the noun it modifies can be counted.

Some Vs. Any

This is a foundational distinction based on the sentence's polarity (whether it is affirmative, negative, or interrogative).

Some - Typically used in **affirmative (positive) sentences** to indicate an unspecified, non-zero amount or number.

Also Used In: Questions that are actually **offers, requests**, or when a positive answer is expected.

Examples (Affirmative):

1. There is **some** coffee in the pot. (Uncountable)
2. He has **some** interesting books on the shelf.
3. Would you like **some** tea? (Offer)
4. Could you lend me **some** money? (Request)

Any

Typically used in **negative sentences** and **most general questions**. In a negative context, it means "not even one" or "not even a little."

Also Used In: Affirmative sentences with a meaning of "it doesn't matter which."

1. I don't have **any** cash with me. (Negative -means "not a single amount of cash"; standard use.)
2. Do you have **any** questions before the quiz? (Interrogative means "Are there any questions/a single question?"; standard question.)
3. You can take **any** book you like from the shelf. (Affirmative -means "It doesn't matter which book you take"; special use showing choice/freedom.)
4. I rarely eat **any** junk food because I'm on a diet. (Affirmative/Semi-negative - used after words like *rarely/hardly* to mean "almost none"; semi-negative context.)
5. If **any** student fails the exam, they must repeat the class. (Affirmative/Conditional means "If even a single student fails"; used after *if* to indicate possibility.)
6. She's not sure if she needs **any** help with the heavy boxes. (Negative/Embedded Question means "a quantity of help"; used in a subordinate clause after a negative main clause.)
7. Which brand of coffee should I buy? — **Any** will do. (Affirmative/Pronoun the word *any* acts as a pronoun meaning "any brand of coffee, it doesn't matter which one"; special use.)
8. He couldn't find **any** trace of the lost keys in the house. (Negative means "not a single sign or quantity of a trace"; standard use.)

Non-Gradable (Absolute) Adjectives

A **non-gradable** or **absolute adjective** describes a quality that is either 100% present or 100% absent. It cannot exist in varying degrees.

These adjectives represent a binary state (on/off) rather than a spectrum.

Absolute adjectives cannot be modified by adverbs of degree such as very, more, most, less, least, somewhat, or extremely. They cannot be used in comparative (-er) or superlative (-est) forms.

Common Absolute Adjectives and Their Logical Traps

Here is a list of common absolute adjectives that frequently appear in exams and formal writing.

unique: Means "one of a kind." Something is either unique or it is not.

1. This is a **very unique** opportunity.(X)
 2. This design is **more unique** than the other one.(X)
- This is a **unique** opportunity.

The Fix (if a degree is needed): Use an adverb like absolutely, truly, or almost to emphasize the state, not to grade it.

This is an **almost unique** artifact. (Suggests it's close to one of a kind).

perfect / complete / total: Signify a state of being 100% whole or flawless.

1. The report is **more complete** than yours.(X)
2. His performance was the **most perfect** I have ever seen.(X)
3. The report is **complete**.
4. His performance was **perfect**.

Geometric Shapes (round, square, circular, triangular): An object either conforms to the shape or it doesn't.

1. This table is **more round** than that one.(X)
2. This table is **nearly round**. (Use an adverb to approximate).
3. The coin is more circular than the button.
4. That building is the most square of the three.
5. The slice of pizza is more triangular than the piece of cake

States of Being (dead, pregnant, married):

These are binary conditions.

Other Key Examples: supreme, ideal, absolute, impossible, inevitable, unanimous, major, minor, fatal, final.

Examples:

1. The soldier was **very dead**.
The soldier was **dead**.
2. The temperature was **more ideal** than yesterday.
(X)
3. The loss was **extremely inevitable** once the star player was injured. (X)
4. The vote was **more unanimous** than expected. (X)
5. The scratches were **least minor** of all the damage.
(X)
6. His wound was **most fatal** of all the injuries. (X)

The -ior Adjectives and the Preposition to

This is a special subclass of adjectives that, while expressing comparison, do not follow the standard rules. They are Latin comparatives that have been fully integrated into English.

This goes as follows – **senior, junior, superior, inferior, prior, anterior, posterior**

These adjectives are inherently comparative in meaning but are treated as positive in form. They **cannot** be modified by more or most.

They are **never followed by** the conjunction **than**. They are always followed by the preposition **to**.

Examples:

1. He is **senior to** me by three years.
He is **more senior than** me.(X)
2. This material is **superior to** the one we used previously.
This material is **superior than** the other.(X)
3. The quality of their product is **inferior to** ours.
The quality is **inferior than** ours. (X)

A Note on Prefer:

The verb prefer and the adjective preferable behave similarly. They are also followed by to, not than.

Examples:

1. I **prefer** coffee **to** tea.
2. A negotiated settlement is **preferable to** a long and costly legal battle.
A settlement is **more preferable than** a battle.
(Redundant and uses the wrong preposition).

The Royal Order of Adjectives

The **Royal Order of Adjectives** is the conventional sequence in which multiple **attributive adjectives** are arranged before a noun.

While minor variations exist, a generally accepted hierarchy governs their placement.

When you use more than one adjective to describe a noun, they should appear in the following order.

A common **mnemonic** for the core categories is **OSASCOMP**.

1. **Determiner/Article/Number:**
2. **Opinion/Quality:** - This is a **subjective judgment**.
3. **Size: Physical dimension.**
4. **Age:** - How old something is.
5. **Shape:** - Physical shape.
6. **Color:** (red, black, blue, golden) - The color.
7. **Origin:** (British, American, Chinese, lunar) -
8. **Material:** - What it's made of.
9. **Purpose/Qualifier:** (wedding [dress], sleeping [bag], sports [car]) - What it's used for. This often acts as a noun modifier.

Example 1:

1. She has **long blonde beautiful** hair.(X)
She has **beautiful long blonde** hair.
2. She bought **a wooden old large dining round** table.(X)
She bought **a large old round wooden dining** table.
3. She married a **British handsome** man. (X)
She married a **handsome British** man.
4. It was a **steel sharp long** knife. (X)
It was a **long sharp steel** knife.

Special Syntactic Cases & Common Errors

The Rule: When the definite article the is placed before an adjective, it creates a noun phrase that refers to **an entire class or group of people** who share that quality. This construction is always treated as **plural**.

Examples:

1. **The rich** often **have** different problems than **the poor**.
The rich often **has** different problems than **the poor**. (X)
2. The government must provide more support for **the unemployed**.
3. **The brave deserve** our respect.
4. Life can be very difficult for **the homeless**.

Rich/Quick Enough Rule

The word **enough** can function as both an adjective and an adverb, and its position changes accordingly. This is a common point of confusion. When **enough** modifies an **adjective** or another **adverb**, it follows that word.

- When enough modifies a **noun**, it precedes that word.
- a) I am enough strong to lift the box. (X)
I am **strong enough** to lift the box.
 - b) She speaks enough fast for me to understand her.(X)
She speaks **fast enough** for me to understand her.
 - c) They don't have patience enough to wait in line. (X)
 - d) They don't have **enough patience** to wait in line.
(Enough precedes the noun)
 - e) The coffee is not enough hot to burn my tongue.(X)
The coffee is not **hot enough** to burn my tongue.
(Enough follows the adjective)
 - f) The instructions were not explained enough clearly.(X)
The instructions were not explained **clearly enough**. (Enough follows the adverb)

The Comparatively / Relatively Trap

These adverbs are inherently comparative. Therefore, they must be followed by an adjective in the **positive degree**.

The adverbs comparatively and relatively already perform the function of comparison, so using a comparative adjective afterward is redundant.

1. The weather today is **comparatively hotter** than yesterday.(X)
2. This brand is **relatively cheaper**.(X)

The Solution: Use the positive form of the adjective.

Examples:

1. The weather today is **comparatively hot**.
2. This brand is **relatively cheap**.
3. The opportunities available now are **comparatively good**.

Very well. Let us now **venture** into the most treacherous and yet most essential part of comparative grammar: the irregulars.

These are the **renegades** of the adjectival world, following historical patterns rather than predictable rules.

The Irregular Adjectives: A Deep Dive

Unlike regular adjectives, these do not form their comparative and superlative degrees with -er/-est or more/most. They have unique forms that must be memorized.

1. Good / Well → Better → Best

Good is an adjective. **Well** can be an adjective (meaning 'in good health') or an adverb. Both share the same comparative and superlative forms.

1. Positive:

- a) She is a **good** strategist. (Adjective)
- b) I feel **well** today. (Adjective: 'healthy')
- c) She performs her duties **well**. (Adverb)

2. Comparative:

- a) Her plan is **better** than mine.

3. Superlative:

- a) This is the **best** solution we have.

2. Bad / Ill → Worse → Worst

Bad and **ill** (meaning 'sick' or 'evil') follow this pattern.

1. Positive:

- a) The weather is **bad** today.
- b) He is seriously **ill**.

2. Comparative:

- a) The situation is **worse** than we anticipated.

3. Superlative:

- a) This was the **worst** financial crisis in a decade.

3. Many / Much → More → Most

Many is for **countable nouns**.

Much is for **uncountable nouns**.

They merge into a single form for comparison.

1. Positive:

- a) There are **many** reasons for the delay. (Countable)
- b) We don't have **much** time. (Uncountable)

2. Comparative:

- a) We need **more** data before we can proceed.

3. Superlative:

- a) The final speaker had the **most** impact on the audience.

4. Little → Less / Lesser → Least

This is a point of significant confusion. **Less** and **Lesser** are not interchangeable.

Less refers to a smaller quantity (uncountable). It is the standard comparative.

Lesser refers to smaller importance or significance. It is used as an adjective, often attributively.

1. Positive (Little)

- a) I have little money .

2. Positive(Less / Lesser)

- a) I have **less** money than I did yesterday. (Quantity)
- b) This requires **less** effort. (Quantity)
- c) We must choose the **lesser** of two evils. (Lesser importance/severity)
- d) He was relegated to a **lesser** role in the company. (Lesser importance)

3. Superlative (Least):

- a) This is the path of **least** resistance.

5. Far → Farther / Further → Farthest / Furthest

A classic distinction, though modern usage is blurring the lines. For academic and examination purposes, the distinction is critical.

Farther / Farthest refers to **literal, physical distance**.

Further / Furthest refers to **metaphorical or figurative distance** (e.g., more in degree, time, or extent).

Examples (Farther / Further):

- The village is **farther** down this road than the map indicates.
- Which planet is **farthest** from the Sun?
- We need to discuss this **further**. (More in extent)
- Are there any **further** questions? (Additional)
- Nothing could be **further** from the truth.
(Figurative distance)

6. Old → Older / Elder → Oldest / Eldest

Older / Oldest is the general form, used for people, animals, and things.

Elder / Eldest is restricted to comparing the age of **family members** (e.g., brothers, sisters, sons, daughters). It is often used attributively and is **never followed by than**.

1. Attributive Use (Before the Noun - For Family)

Correct (Preferred): My **elder** brother is a pilot.

Correct (General): My **older** brother is a pilot.

Rule: Both are correct when the adjective comes directly before a family noun (attributive use), but **elder** is traditionally preferred for siblings and children.

2. Comparative Use (Followed by 'Than')

My sister is **elder than** me.(X)

My sister is **older than** me.

Rule: When making a direct comparison using the word **than**, you **must** use the general form, **older**. The word **elder** cannot be followed by **than**.

3. Superlative Use (Ranking Family Members)

Correct (Preferred): He is the **eldest** of the three siblings.

Correct (General): He is the **oldest** of the three siblings.

Rule: Both are acceptable for ranking family members, though **eldest** is often the more formal or traditional choice.

7. Late → Later / Latter → Latest / Last

Later: is used for time.

Latter: is a preposition

Latest: its meaning is recent in time.

Last : the final one in the sequence.

Examples (Later / Latest):

- I will call you later.
- What is the latest news? (The most recent)
- Between physics and chemistry, I prefer the latter. (The second of two mentioned)
- He was the last person to leave the room. (The final one in the sequence)

Conclusion of the Course

You are now equipped not just with a list of rules, but with a structured, logical framework for understanding and applying adjectives correctly and effectively. This notebook should serve as a permanent reference, a guide to consult not only for examinations but for the broader goal of clear, precise, and powerful communication.

Well done. Class dismissed.