

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Adjectives

1. **Adjectives modify a noun or a pronoun.** To modify means to limit, qualify, or make more specific the meaning of another word. Most adjectives come before the word they modify and answer the following questions about the words they modify: "Which one?" or "How many?" or "What kind?" They often reflect "color," "size," "shape," or "texture." Adjectives are not usually movable in sentences.

Sour apples are often used in cooking. The adjective "sour" answers the question "What kind?" about the word "apples." It modifies or describes the apples.

Two books lay on the table. The adjective "two" answers the question "How many?"

The cars, **dirty** and **rusty**, needed to be washed and repainted. The adjectives "dirty" and "rusty" modify the word "cars" and follow it for emphasis. The sentence could also have been written like this: The dirty and rusty cars needed to be washed and repainted.

2. **Predicate adjectives** (a type of subject complement) follow linking verbs and modify the noun or pronoun which is the subject of the sentence.

The air seems **crisper** in the mountains. The predicate adjective "crisper" follows the linking verb "seems" and modifies the subject "air."

He is **lazy**. The predicate adjective "lazy" modifies the subject pronoun "he."

3. The **articles** "a," "an," and "the" act as adjectives.
4. **Possessive adjectives** have forms similar to pronouns: your, her, his, its, our, their, my. (Only "her" and "his" can function as both pronoun and adjective without changing form, however.)

His painting won an award. "His" answers the question "Which one?"

5. **Demonstrative adjectives** have the same form as demonstrative pronouns: this, that, these, those.

This dog and **those** cats are for sale. "This" tells which dog, and "those" tells which cats.

6. **Indefinite adjectives** have the same form as indefinite pronouns, such as some, any, each, every.

Each cookie was decorated. "Each" answers the question "How many?"

Directions: Using the above definitions, circle the words used as adjectives in the following sentences.

1. That woman is the meanest person I know. She is very hateful and often yells at her quiet husband.
2. My youngest sister likes to wear bright, flashy clothing, huge, dangling earrings, and goofy shoes.
3. Her daughter, strong and athletic, was a terrific tennis player and swimmer.
4. Blue and green are her favorite colors. She owns four blue sweaters and five green blouses.
5. Every day I try to listen to relaxing music, even if it's for a few minutes.

Adverbs

Adverbs modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. They are very versatile and may often be moved in a sentence for emphasis or sentence variety. Many adverbs end in "-ly," but some common adverbs do not, such as "very," "not," "never," and "too." Adverbs answer the following questions about the words they modify: "How?" or "To what extent?" or "Where?" or "When?" or "Why?"

The child stared **curiously** at the dog. The adverb "curiously" modifies the verb "stared" and answers the question "How?" (The sentence could also be written like this: The child curiously stared at the dog. Or like this: Curiously, the child stared at the dog.)

The tree was **very** big. "Very" modifies the adjective "big" and answers the question "How?"

She **soon** quit crying. "Soon" tells when she quit. (The sentence could also be written like this: Soon, she quit crying. Or like this: She quit crying soon.)

Jason **quite calmly** told the officer what happened. "Quite" modifies the adverb "calmly," and "calmly" modifies the verb "told." (The sentence could also be written like this: Quite calmly, Jason told the officer what happened. Or like this: Jason told the officer quite calmly what happened.)

Directions: Circle the adverbs in the following sentences. Be prepared to explain what type of word each adverb is modifying. Also, in the space provided, write each sentence another way by shifting the position of one or more of the adverbs.

1. I knew immediately what had happened, and I was extremely upset about it.
2. She was much too sick to attend school today, but she hopes to go tomorrow.
3. Amos tried valiantly to win the race, but he weakened slightly on the last lap and finished third.
4. That dog is so ugly that he actually frightens people even though he has a very sweet personality.
5. My brother will never agree to this proposal, but my sister-in-law has already signed it.