

Adjectives

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WHAT IS AN ADJECTIVE?

An adjective is a word or phrase that describes a **noun** or **pronoun** with another word or phrase that gives more information about how something looks, smells, sounds, tastes, or feels. Some pronouns function as adjectives as well.

Adjectives answer these questions:

- What kind? **blue** car, **calico** cat
- Which one? **this** school, **those** people
- How many? **five** children, **both** teachers
- Whose? **my** book, **her** backpack

TYPES OF ADJECTIVES

1. **Descriptive adjectives** are the most common adjective. They give information about a noun or pronoun by answering the question *what kind*: how something looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels.

Examples: small, orange, young, hungry, angry
orange shirt, **hungry** squirrel

2. **Pronouns used as adjectives:**

a. Possessive pronouns: **my, your, his, her, its, our, their, one's**

Examples: I change **my** hairstyle at least once a year.
After dinner with friends, Michelle went to **their** house.

b. Pronouns that identify *which one*: **this, that, these, those**

Examples: I would like to buy **this** sandwich.
Those sunflowers are taller than I am.

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- c. Interrogative pronouns, that ask questions to clarify *which one*: **what, which, whose**.

Examples: **What** assignment is that?

Which book is yours?

Whose pencil do you have?

Note: The question words **why** and **when** are adverbs, not adjectives.

- d. Indefinite pronouns that do not identify a specific number, person, place, or time: **another, each, both, many, any, some, no, either, neither**.

Examples: I will watch the movie **another** time.

You can use **either** idea for your paper.

This lunch is for **any** person who wants it.

3. **Numbers.** When a number is used to describe a noun or pronoun, it is an adjective: **two, three, four**, etc; **fifth, sixth, seventh**, etc.

Examples: He needed **two** bricks to finish the landscaping project.

Today is my brother's **eighteenth** birthday.

4. **Articles.** There are only three articles, and they are used before nouns to clarify whether the noun should be considered a general reference or a specific reference.

- a. Indefinite articles: **a, an**

Examples: **A** cat slept on my porch.

An open window provided a cool breeze.

- b. Definite article: **the**

Examples: **The** black and white cat slept on my porch.

The open window in my bedroom provided a breeze.

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THE FUNCTION AND POSITION OF ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are usually near the nouns or pronouns they modify:

- Before the noun being modified or before the indefinite pronoun **one**.
Examples: The **industrious** student visited the Writing Center often.
 That student is the **only** one to miss five days in a row.
- After a linking verb to modify the subject of the sentence.
Examples: The teacher seems **knowledgeable**.
 The room smells **musty**.
- After the direct object in the sentence.
Examples: I want that essay **perfect**.
 The assignment is driving me **crazy**.
- After an indefinite pronoun.
Examples: Something **small** and **shiny** would be nice.
 None **sweeter** could be tasted.

SENSORY ADJECTIVE EXAMPLES

TASTE

acidic	creamy	nutty	savory	sweet
appetizing	delicate	peppery	sharp	stale
bitter	delicious	pickled	smoked	tangy
bland	gooey	ripe	sour	tart
briny	hot	rotting	spicy	tasteless
cool	juicy	salty	stale	tasty

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TOUCH

arid	dirty	greasy	lukewarm	smooth
baking	drenched	grimy	lumpy	soaked
blistering	dry	gritty	melted	soft
breezy	dust	hairy	moist	solid
bumpy	elastic	hard	prickly	sticky
chilly	filthy	heavy	rough	stinging
clingy	firm	hot	scorching	sweaty
coarse	fluffy	humid	shaggy	tepid
cold	freezing	jagged	sharp	tight
cool	frigid	jiggling	silky	vibrating
crunchy	gooey	light	sizzling	warm
damp	grainy	loose	slimy	wet

SMELL

aromatic	floral	nutty	smoky
balmy	fragrant	perfumed	spicy
bitter	fresh	pungent	stale
burning	fruity	putrid	stinky
choking	juicy	redolent	strong
clean	mild	rich	sweet
delicious	musky	rotten	
fetid	musty	salty	

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SIGHT

beefy	flickering	lofty	slender
billowy	forked	lustrous	spacious
blazing	fragile	misty	sparkling
brilliant	gangly	muscular	statuesque
broad	gaudy	ominous	steep
burly	gaunt	pallid	stout
chubby	gigantic	petite	sunny
cloudy	glittering	polished	swollen
corpulent	gloomy	portly	tapering
crooked	glowing	puny	towering
crowded	graceful	radiant	trim
drab	grotesque	rotting	unsightly
dreary	healthy	rotund	voluminous
dull	hefty	scrawny	wizened
flashy	lanky	shattered	youthful

SOUND

banging	earsplitting	melodic	snapping
barking	faint	moaning	snarling
blaring	purring	monotone	thundering
booming	quivering	muffled	thunderous
buzzing	resonant	mumbled	wailing
clamoring	growling	murmured	wheezing
clashing	gurgling	muttered	whimpering
cooing	harmonious	popping	whispered
crashing	hoarse	ringing	whistling
crunching	howling	roaring	
deafening	humming	shrieking	
dissonant	lulling	shrill	

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PRACTICE EXERCISES

Fill in the blank with an appropriate descriptive adjective.

1. Conner wore a _____ shirt.
2. The medicine tasted _____.
3. Her shoes look _____.
4. The _____ cat pounced on the toy.
5. There's something in the oven that smells _____.

Fill in the blank with **what**, **which**, or **whose**.

1. _____ type of cake do you want?
2. _____ coat is this?
3. _____ lunch is yours?
4. _____ car is parked in the driveway?
5. _____ movie should I watch tonight?

Fill in the blank with an appropriate possessive pronoun that acts as an adjective.

1. The sparrow fluttered _____ wings as it hopped toward a puddle of water.
2. Sarah wore _____ new purse on _____ shoulder.
3. The choir knew _____ director would guide them through _____ performance smoothly.
4. _____ house is the two-story green one.
5. This apple isn't mine, so it must be _____ apple.

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Fill in the blank with an appropriate indefinite pronoun that acts as an adjective.

1. Professor Lee told students they could borrow _____ of his pens or pencils.
2. I have seen _____ Oscar winning films, but I haven't seen that one.
3. You can choose _____ topic, immigration or prison reform, for your research paper.
4. I will ask _____ person since you aren't certain of the answer.
5. I like _____ color in a rainbow.