

FOUNDATIONAL GRAMMAR

LESSON TWO: ADJECTIVES and INTERJECTIONS

An adjective is a word that describes or *qualifies* a noun or pronoun. A good way of discovering if a word is an adjective, is to see if the word answers the questions:

1. *What kind?* **Green** apples, **small** car, **capable** student, **silly** boy
2. *Which one?* **This** woman, **that** play, **those** children, **these** animals
3. *How many? How much?* **Some** birds, **two** squirrels, **less** money, **more** pancakes
4. *Whose?* **Mary's** dress, **children's** music, **his** cat, **their** house

Adjectives often come before the nouns they describe.

Because an adjective describes a noun or pronoun, it is said to *modify* it. *To modify* means “to limit,” or to make the meaning of a word more definite.”

cool, red, fast = adjectives that could describe the noun “bike” eg: The **cool** bike is mine.

cuddly, soft, white = adjectives that could describe the noun “cat” eg: The **cuddly** cat is meowing loudly.

Note: you can have multiple adjectives modifying one noun.

Eg: **Clear blue** skies make me happy.

Clear and blue both modify *skies*.

Possessive Pronouns as Adjectives

Possessive nouns and pronouns are called adjectives when they come before nouns. We have seen the possessive pronouns *his, her, their, its*, etc. before. Consider how they function as adjectives when used before nouns:

Eg: This is **her** doll. (**her** is an adjective, because it comes before doll (a noun) and more clearly defines or *modifies* it. It answers the question “Whose?”)

Articles are Adjectives!

A, an, and the are always adjectives and are called *articles*.

Eg: **The** cuddly cat is meowing loudly.

An apple **a** day keeps **the** doctor away.

The blue car zoomed away.

We worked **an** hour.

Using Adjectives to Compare

Adjectives can also show comparisons between persons and things. If a comparison is being made, you need to add an er/est ending:

Eg: I am tall, but he is taller. (tall, taller, tallest/small, smaller, smallest)

Same Word as Adjective and Pronoun

A word may be used in different ways and that may change what part of speech it is. For example, some verbs can function as nouns when you use them as if they are things. (We *love* music. *Love* is a powerful emotion.) The same is true of the pronoun on the list below. They can be either pronouns or adjectives.

all	many	any	another	more	neither	both
one	each	other	what	either	several	few
some	that	these	this	those	most	which

You recall that these many of these are indefinite pronouns, but ***they can also be used as adjectives when they are next to a noun or pronoun:***

Adjective: **Few** people know the truth. [*Few* modifies or describes the noun *people*.]

Pronoun: **Few** know the truth. [*Few* takes the place of a noun previously mentioned.]

Adjective: **These** books are overdue. [*These* modifies the noun *books*.]

Pronoun: **These** are overdue. [*These* takes the place of a noun previously mentioned.]

Adjective: We chose **neither** candidate. [*Neither* modifies the noun *candidate*.]

Pronoun: We chose **neither**. [*Neither* takes the place of a noun previously mentioned.]

Can you give an example of the following words used as adjectives and pronouns?
one, what, this, several, another

Adjectives Formed from Nouns

Many adjectives are formed from nouns, as for example the word *beautiful* is formed from the noun *beauty* and means “full of beauty.” Remember also that it can work the other way around! For example, the word *happiness* is a noun formed from the adjective *happy* and means “the state of being happy.”

Can you come up with some adjectives made from nouns?

Simple Sentences—Modifiers

In many simple sentences (all simple sentences contain a subject and a verb), adjectives are used to describe either the subject or the object. For example: The happy girl danced. The boy threw a blue ball. In these sentences, the main parts of the sentence are the subject and verb. Adjectives are used to give more information but are not CRUCIAL to the structure of the sentence. In other words, you could say: “The girl danced” or “The boy threw a ball” and the sentences would be grammatically correct (though less interesting!) The adjectives give more information without changing the basic structure of the sentence. When considered as parts of a sentence rather than parts of speech, adjectives are called **modifiers**, though you can also say that they are “part” of the subject or “part” of the object. If you were to draw a basic diagram of these sentences, they would look like this: (notice that the word “happy” goes under “girl” because *happy* describes *girl*, but “blue” goes under “ball” because it describes *ball*.)

The girl | danced
happy

The boy | threw | a ball
blue

Interjections

An *interjection* is a word that expresses emotion and has no grammatical relation to other words in the sentence.

Eg:

Oh! My goodness! Ah! Ouch! No!