

Adjectives

1 Order of adjectives

Several adjectives can be used before a noun in English. See p. 23 for a guide to the order in which they can be used. In general we put the more precise adjective nearest the noun but it is not always easy to decide which is the most precise; a possible order would be:

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| determiner, | your own opinions, | dimensions (size, weight), | age, |
| (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) (9) |
| shape, colour, | place of origin, | material, | purpose. |

Examples

- a Chinese silk wedding dress
- some short blue denim jeans
- an awful old stair carpet

2 Other points to notice about the order and use of adjectives

He is 1 metre 30 tall.

I don't like living alone.

It's difficult to read.

The instructions are easy to follow.

She was worried about him.

He's a worried man.

It's all very worrying.

It's a worrying time for us all.

- 1 Adjectives describing measurement come after the measurement.
- 2 Some adjectives (e.g. *alone*, *afraid*, *alive*, *awake*) come after the verb, never before a noun.
- 3 Adjectives are often followed by an infinitive with *to*.
- 4a Adjectives ending in *-ed* come after a verb like *be*, *seem* or before a noun and describe a person's feelings.
- b Adjectives ending in *-ing* come after a verb or before a noun and describe the person or thing that produces those feelings. ▷ p.18

3 Comparative and superlative of adjectives ▷ pp.74, 86

3.1 Form

London is bigger than Edinburgh.

This armchair is more comfortable than that wooden seat.

This is the biggest factory in the area.

I have many old books but this is the most interesting.

- 1a We form the comparative by adding *-er* to one-syllable adjectives and to two-syllable adjectives ending in *-y* using *more* + two- and more than two-syllable adjectives + *than*
- 2a We form the superlative by adding *-est* to one-syllable adjectives and to two-syllable adjectives ending in *-y* using *most* + two- and more than two-syllable adjectives

3 He is as strong as a horse.
He isn't as/so clever as his sister.

3 We use *as* + adjective + *as* for positive comparisons or *not as/so* + adjective + *as* for negative comparisons.

1.3.2 Adjectives of one syllable

- 1 If the adjective ends in two consonants (e.g. *-ng*, *-rd*, *-rm*) just add *-er*, *-est* to the adjective:
long longer longest
hard harder hardest
warm warmer warmest
- 2 If the adjective ends in one vowel and one consonant (e.g. *-in*, *-at*, *-ot*) double the consonant and add *-er*, *-est* to the adjective:
thin thinner thinnest
fat fatter fattest
hot hotter hottest
- 3 If the adjective ends in *-e* add *-r*, *-st* to the adjective:
wide wider widest
rude ruder rudest

Exceptions

good better best
bad worse worst
much/many more most
far farther farthest
(used to describe distance but can also mean 'additional, extra' e.g. *further* details, *further* information)
old older oldest
(used to describe objects and people)
old elder eldest
Notice *elder*, *eldest* are used before a noun to talk about family relationships but after a verb only *older*, *oldest* are possible (e.g. *My older/elder brother*. *My brother is older than I am.*)

1.3.3 Adjectives of more than one syllable

- 1 I've never been happier than I am now.
Friday the 13th is the unluckiest day of the year in Britain.
- 2 Sally is cleverer/more clever than her brother.
The commonest/most common cause of road deaths is careless driving.
- 3 I find science more interesting than the arts.
He told me the most extraordinary story.

- 1 If the adjective ends in *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add *-er*, *-est* to the adjective.
Exception *friendly*, *more friendly*, *most friendly*
- 2 Some adjectives with two syllables can form their comparative and superlative in two ways: either by adding *-(e)r*, *-(e)st* or by using *more*, *most*.
- 3 If the adjective has three (or more) syllables use *more*, *most* + the adjective.

2 Adverbs

2.1 Form

- 1 quick quickly
slow slowly
- 2 careful carefully
beautiful beautifully
- 3 lucky luckily
funny funnily
- 4 He greeted me in a friendly way.
She looked at me with a silly expression on her face.

- 1 Adverbs can be formed from adjectives by adding *-ly*.
- 2 The same rule applies to adjectives which end in *l*.
- 3 To form adverbs from adjectives ending in *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add *-ly*.
- 4 To form adverbs from adjectives ending in *-ly* we use a phrase *in a... way* etc.