

**Adjectives** are words that **describe or limit nouns or pronouns**. They often answer questions such as “*what kind?*”, “*how many?*”, and “*which one?*” All **adjectives** modify the meanings of the nouns or pronouns to which they refer. In other words, **adjectives change the meaning of a noun or pronoun by giving more information about it**.

Consider the following sentences that contain **adjectives**:

- 1) He delivered a **profound** speech.  
The adjective **profound** describes the noun **speech**.
- 2) They were **angry** when their toys were taken away.  
The adjective **angry** describes the pronoun **they**. The adjective **angry** is placed after the linking verb **were**.
- 3) The **friendly** driver pointed out the city's landmarks.  
The adjective **friendly** describes the noun **driver**.

Note that **adjectives** can occur either before the **nouns** they describe or after **linking verbs** like **be, look, see, appear, or feel**.

## Positive, Comparative, and Superlative Forms

**Adjectives** have various **forms or degrees**. The three main degrees are **positive, comparative, and superlative**.

<b>Positive</b> – used to describe nouns and pronouns	<b>Comparative</b> – used to compare two persons or things	<b>Superlative</b> – used to emphasize the highest degree of description the adjectives can attain
profound	more profound	most profound
angry	angrier	angriest
friendly	friendlier	friendliest

The following sentences show the three degrees adjectives can have:

- He delivered a **profound** speech. (**positive** degree)  
 He delivered a **more profound** speech. (**comparative** degree)  
 He delivered the **most profound** speech. (**superlative** degree)  
 Nouns as Adjectives

Nouns can function as adjectives when they describe other nouns. Remember that adjectives, including nouns functioning like adjectives, **do not add plural endings**.

**Example:**       **Right**       The **bus** drivers are on strike.  
                   **Wrong**       The **buses** drivers are on strike.

The noun **bus** functions as an **adjective** because it **describes** the plural noun **drivers**. The **noun modifier bus** remains **singular**.

## Other Examples of Nouns as Adjectives

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flower pot	coffee shop	printer cable
diploma requirements	midnight snack	watch face

## Articles as Adjectives

**Definite and indefinite articles** describe persons or things. Use the definite article *the* to describe **specific persons or things**.

- 1) **The** chef specialised in French cuisine.
- 2) **The** refrigerators are stored in a warehouse.

Use the indefinite articles **a** or **an** to describe **a person or thing in general**.

- 1) **An** hour passed without interruption.
- 2) **A** bicycle was stolen last night.

## Compound and Independent Adjectives

A **compound adjective** is formed when **two or more words modify the same noun**. Some **compound adjectives** are **temporarily hyphenated** for those specific instances of modification.

**Example:** The ten-year-old children played outside. (**hyphenated compound adjective before the noun**)  
The children, who played outside, were **ten years old**. (**same words not hyphenated after the noun**)

Other **compound adjectives** are **always hyphenated**, whether they occur **before** or **after** the **nouns** they describe.

**Example:** The pear-shaped vase held a bouquet of roses.  
The vase that held a bouquet of roses was pear-shaped.

Check a **current dictionary** to determine whether or not the **adjective** is **permanently hyphenated**.

**Independent adjectives** are **two or more successive adjectives** that **independently modify a noun**. Separate independent adjectives with **commas**.

**Example:** The expensive, new car gleamed in the sunlight.  
The two adjectives independently describe the noun **car**.

However, if the first adjective is modifying both the second adjective and the noun as a combined idea, no comma is needed.

**Example:** The expensive sports car gleamed in the sunlight.  
The first adjective describes the combined idea of the second adjective **sports** and the noun **car**.

## The -ING and -ED/-EN Participle Verb Forms as Adjectives

The **-ing** and **-ed/-en** participle verb forms can function as **adjectives**.

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**Examples:** The sliding doors were open to let in the fresh air.  
The **-ing** form of the verb **slide** is the adjective describing the noun **doors**.

Baked goods were sold at the church bazaar.  
The **-ed** form of the verb **bake** is the adjective describing the noun **goods**.

Kathy and Cynthia are two of the chosen candidates.  
The **-en** form of the verb **choose** is the adjective describing the noun **candidates**.

## Other Examples of **-ING** and **-ED/-EN** Verb Forms as Adjectives

debilitating illness	restraining order	flying frisbee
informed choice	frozen vegetables	sorted laundry