

Adjectives and adverbs are part of speech that **modify other words, providing additional detail and context**. **Adjectives** describe nouns and pronouns while **adverbs** describe verbs, other adverbs, adjectives, and even entire clauses. Adjectives and adverbs can also make comparisons among multiple nouns by using **comparatives and superlatives**. While this handout covers general concepts, always write with your audience and assignment in mind.

Adjectives

Adjectives describe nouns or pronouns by answering the questions *what kind, how many, or which one?*

What Kind: big, red, furry, enthusiastic

How Many: three, some, both, all

Which One: this, that, those, each

Adjectives are usually placed before a noun or pronoun or after a linking or helping verb.

Before a Noun: We looked up at the **blue** sky.

After a Linking Verb: Will is **happy**.

Order of Adjectives in a Sentence

When two or more adjectives modify a noun, they usually occur in the following order:

1. **Evaluation or Opinion:** beautiful, boring, comfortable
2. **Size:** big, little, standard
3. **Physical Quality:** hollow, rough, soft
4. **Shape:** long, round, square
5. **Age:** new, old, young
6. **Color:** blue, green, yellow
7. **Origin:** Korean, Mexican, Southern
8. **Faith:** Buddhist, Catholic, Muslim
9. **Material:** metal, plastic, wooden
10. **Noun Used as an Adjective:** bathroom sink, kitchen cabinet, writing desk

Example: The playground had a **big, yellow, plastic** slide.

Adverbs

Adverbs describe verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or clauses. Adverbs often answer the questions *where, when, how, and to what extent?*

Adverb Describing a Verb: My sister runs **quickly**.

Adverb Describing an Adverb: My sister runs **very** quickly.

Adverb Describing an Adjective: They were **incredibly** bright.

Adverb Describing a Clause: He ran **until** he was out of breath.

Adding the suffix *-ly* to an adjective can turn it into an adverb. This often answers the question *how?*

Adjective: She is very **intelligent**.

Adverb: She answered the question **intelligently**.

Not all adjectives take on *-ly* to make adverbs, but they may change in form. These types of adverbs are often referred to as irregular adverbs.

Adjective: It was **good**.

Adverb: It was done **well**.

Comparatives and Superlatives

Comparatives and superlatives are used to describe nouns by comparing multiple nouns to each other. This is usually done by adding *-er . . . than (comparative)* or *the . . . -est (superlative)* to an adjective or adverb.

	Type of Modifier	Modifier Example	Comparative	Superlative
<i>-er/-est</i>	Adjective	John is tall .	John is taller than me.	John is the tallest man at work.
<i>-er/-est</i>	Adverb	She ran fast .	She ran faster than him.	She ran the fastest of the team.

Adjectives and adverbs that have three or more syllables typically use *more than (comparative)* or *the most (superlative)*, rather than of adding *-er* or *-est*.

	Type of Modifier	Modifier Example	Comparative	Superlative
<i>more/most</i>	Adjective	Ann is intelligent .	Ann is more intelligent than Victor.	Ann is the most intelligent student.
<i>more/most</i>	Adverb	Jac writes proficiently .	Jac writes more proficiently than Dan.	Jac writes the most proficiently in the program.

Some adjectives and adverbs change form completely when used in comparisons.

Modifier Example	Comparative	Superlative
Apples are good .	Apples are better .	Apples are the best .
I have little money.	They have less money.	The have the least money.