

ENGLISH

Grammar: Adjectives



Adjectives: Participles and Nominal Adjectives

Participles

What are Participles?

Let us read the following sentences.

1. The revellers were feasting on the food.
2. Feasting on the food, the revellers sang songs.

In the above sentences, the word **feasting** is used in two different ways.

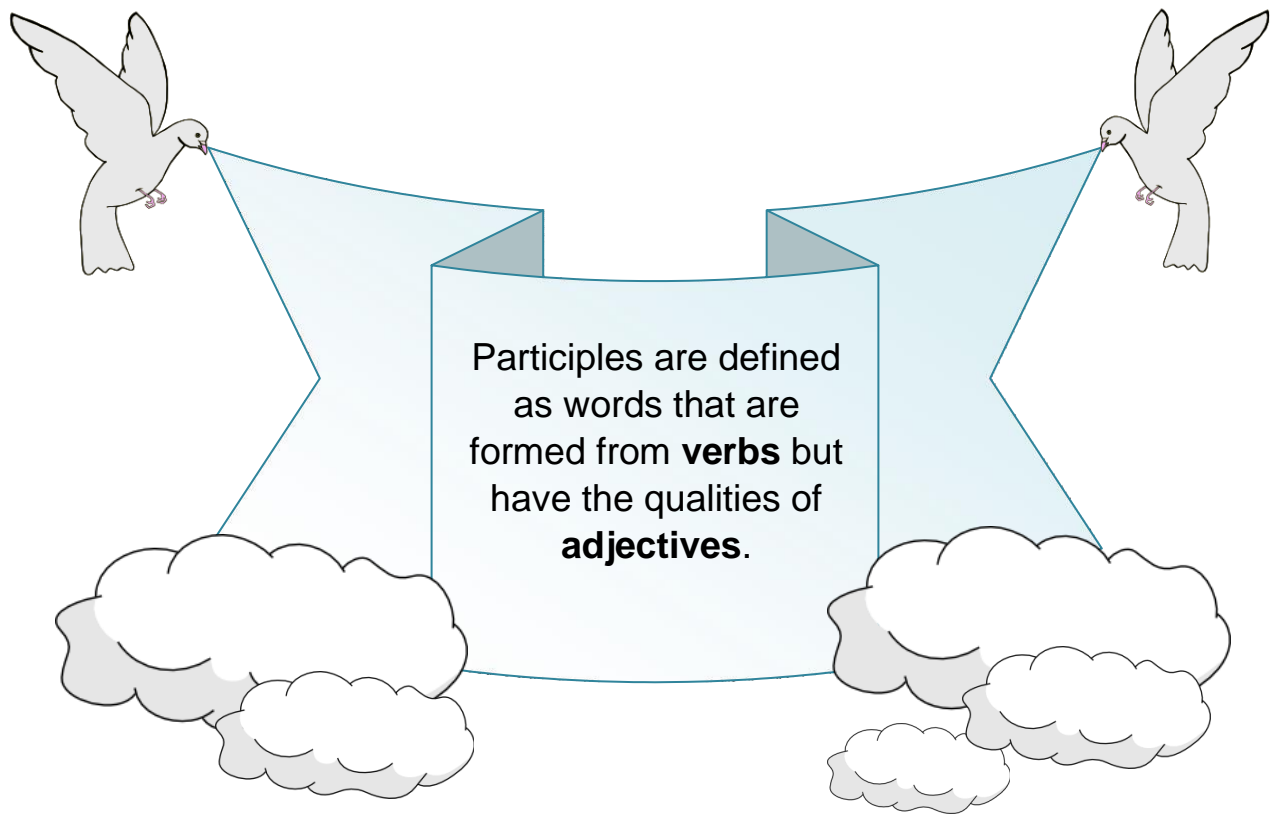
- In sentence 1, the word **feasting** is used as a verb; its subject is the word **revellers**.
- In sentence 2, the word **feasting** qualifies the noun **revellers**. It is formed from the verb **feast**. It also has an object **food**. Therefore, it has the properties of a verb and an adjective.
- The phrase **Feasting on the food** is a participial phrase.

Let us look at more examples.

1. Fatima is singing to her baby.
2. The singing bird perched itself on a branch.

In the above sentences, the word **singing** is used in two different ways.

- In sentence 1, the word **singing** is used as a verb; its subject being **Fatima**.
- In sentence 2, the word **singing** qualifies the noun **bird**.
- It is formed out of the verb **sing**.
- The word not only expresses the action of the noun but also acts as an **adjective**.
- The word **singing** in sentence 2 is therefore a **participle** because it looks like a verb but acts like an adjective.



Participles are grouped into two categories according to their tenses—**past participle** and **present participle**.

- Present participles end in –ing.
 - The captain went down with the **sinking** ship.
 - **Eating a bowl full of cornflakes**, Rajesh answered the door.
- Past participles end in –ed or –en.
 - Mr Shatrugan was **impressed** by the new intern.
 - She brought a pair of **bejewelled** earrings.

Examples of Past and Present Participles

Verb	Past Participle	Present Participle
Fry	The <u>fried</u> eggs	A <u>frying</u> pan
Boil	<u>Boiled</u> vegetables	The <u>boiling</u> point
Interest	<u>Interested</u> buyers	An <u>interesting</u> fact
Embarrass	The <u>embarrassed</u> teenager	An <u>embarrassing</u> situation
Write	The <u>written</u> note	The <u>writing</u> pad
Confuse	The <u>confused</u> pedestrian	The <u>confusing</u> sum
Amuse	<u>Amused</u> onlookers	An <u>amusing</u> anecdote
Bore	<u>Bored</u> students	<u>Boring</u> lesson
Hang	The <u>hanged</u> criminal	The <u>hanging</u> clothes
Overwhelm	<u>Overwhelmed</u> lady	The <u>overwhelming</u> evidence
Shave	His <u>shaven</u> head	The <u>shaving</u> machine
Bend	The <u>bent</u> rod	The <u>bending</u> branch

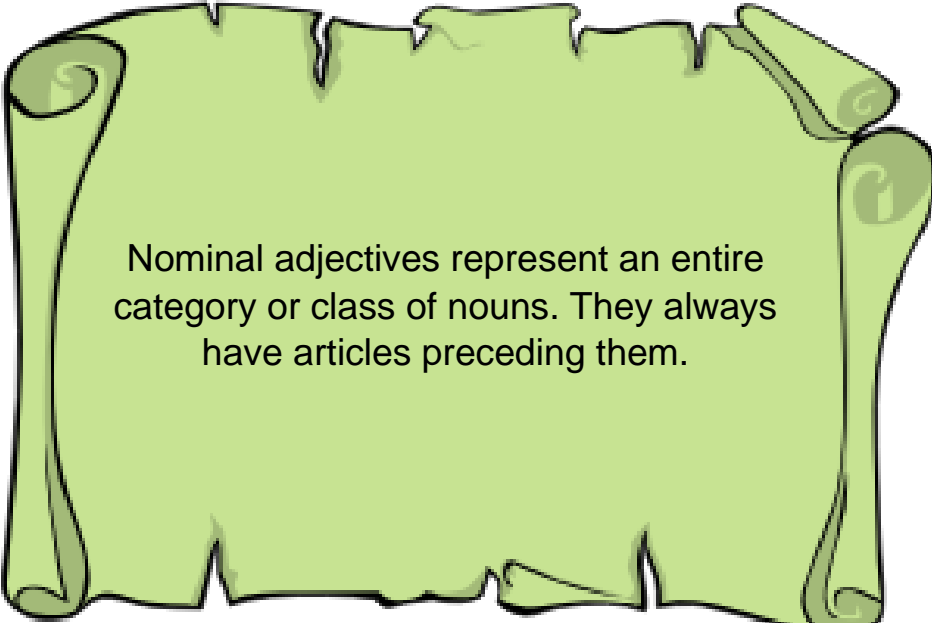
Nominal Adjectives

Read the following sentences.

1) The bride was rich, but the bridegroom was poor.

2) The rich will always exploit the poor.

- In sentence 1, the words **rich** and **poor** function as adjectives.
- However, the same words when used in sentence 2 function as nouns.
- They are preceded by the definite article.
- The phrases **the rich** and **the poor** used in sentence 2 are known as **nominal adjectives**.
- **Nominal adjectives** look like adjectives but operate like nouns.



Nominal adjectives represent an entire category or class of nouns. They always have articles preceding them.

What do nominal adjectives represent?

- Nominal adjectives represent a class marked by their qualities.

- The hazardous
- The young
- The living
- The inspirational

- Nominal adjectives represent nationalities.

- The British
- The Dutch
- The Germans
- The Japanese
- The Indian



- Comparative and superlative adjectives function like nominal adjectives.

- The better of the lot
- The worst
- The most important

Points to remember

Nominal adjectives are always preceded by the definite article.

- The horrible

Nominal adjectives can be modified by other adjectives or adverbs.

- The extremely unfortunate
- The truly honest

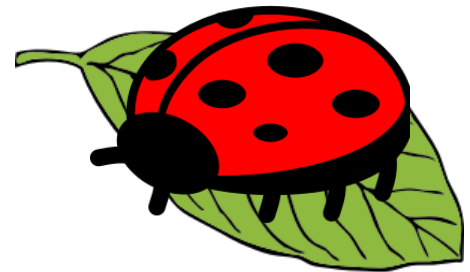
Adjectives: Royal Order of Adjectives

Royal Order of Adjectives

Read these sentences.

1) A red big bug sat on a green small leaf.

2) A big red bug sat on a small green leaf.



Which sentence seems grammatically correct to you? How are the two sentences different from each other? The order of the adjectives in both the sentences is different.

- In sentence 1, **red big** and **green small** are the sequences.
- In sentence 2, **big red** and **small green** are the sequences.

Obviously, sentence 2 sounds right to you. **But how did you arrive at that answer?**

Knowing how to arrange the adjectives is intuitive.

Speakers of English instinctively know that

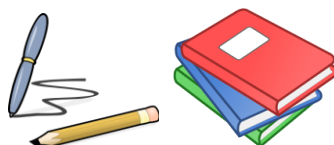
big red bug is correct and **red big bug** is incorrect.



There is an order which governs the placement of adjectives in a phrase. In English grammar, we call it the Royal Order of Adjectives.

Royal Order of Adjectives

If there is more than one adjective qualifying a noun, then they all have to be arranged in a particular order. This order is predetermined and comes naturally to habitual users of English. Let us learn more!



The expected adjective order is

The Royal Order

Physical qualities



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Determiners	Numerals	Opinion	Size	Age	Shape	Colour	Origin	Material	Participle

- Determiners:** Determiners are words like articles and demonstrative adjectives that precede nouns.
 - The, a, an, that, these
- Numerals:** Adjectives of number which show the numerical value of nouns come next.
 - One, three, many, some
- Opinion:** Adjectives which are based on opinions. They can differ from person to person. Something that is beautiful or interesting to one person may not hold the same meaning for somebody else.
 - Pretty, good, nice, evil, rotten
- Size:** Adjectives which express the size of the nouns
 - Gigantic, huge, minuscule, small
- Age:** Adjectives which express the age of the noun
 - Old, new, prehistoric
- Shape:** Adjectives which express the shape of the noun
 - Triangular, round, prismatic, oblong
- Colour:** Adjectives which express the colour of the noun
 - Red, blue, yellow, green, maroon, golden
- Origin:** Adjectives which express the nationality or the place of origin of the noun
 - Hungarian, Indian, American, Polish, Gujarati
- Material:** Adjectives which tell us about the materials which make up the noun
 - Glass, silk, wooden, brick, paper
- Participle:** Adjectives which give the purpose for using certain nouns or its qualities.
 - Sewing, frying, sleeping, beloved, frozen

Note

Gold is material.
Golden is colour.

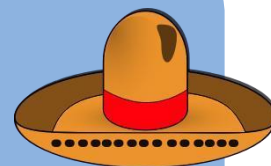
Metal is material.
Metallic is colour.

Silver is material.
Silvery is colour.



Let us look at a few examples.

Determiner	Opinion	Colour	Origin	Material	Noun
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
A	beautiful	brown	Mexican	felt	hat



Determiner	Size	Colour	Material	Participle	Noun
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
A	small	grey	stainless steel	frying	pan



Numerical	Age	Shape	Colour	Origin	Noun
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
One	ancient	circular	golden	Roman	coin



Determiner	Opinion	Participle	Noun
↓	↓	↓	↓
That	fat	smiling	crocodile



Remember!

These rules are not cast in stone; a few exceptions are possible.

For example, one can say a **black little book** instead of a **little black book** to stress on the **blackness** of the book.

But predominantly, these rules prevail when it comes to sequencing adjectives for nouns.

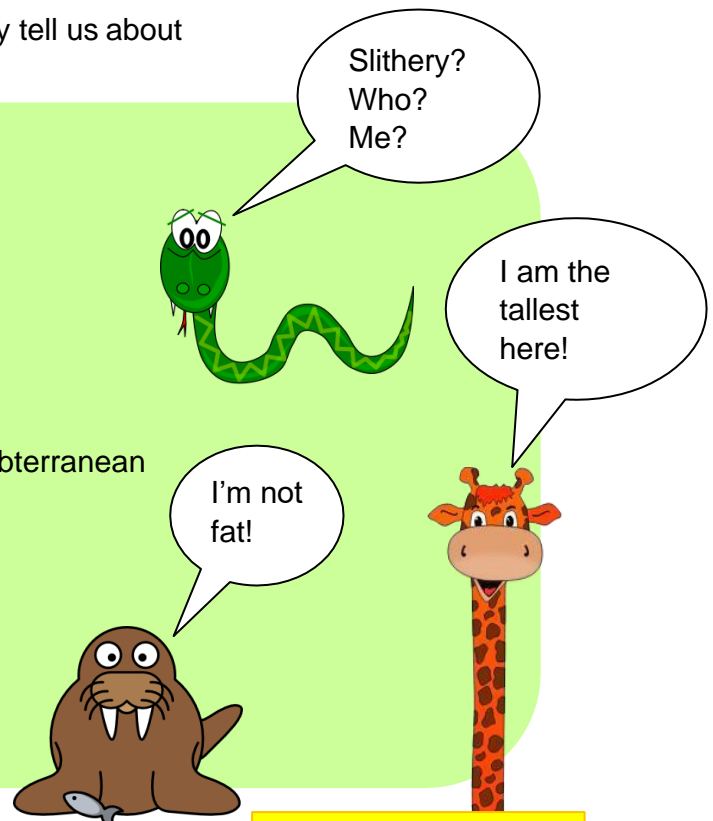
Adjectives: Types of Adjectives

Types of Adjectives

What are Adjectives?

Adjectives are words that tell us more about nouns. They tell us about

- **Quality**
 - Beautiful, sly, slithery, cold, evil, busy
- **Quantity**
 - Some, more, much, 5 kg, 13
- **Colour**
 - Green, silvery, bluish, metallic, red
- **Origin**
 - Mongolian, Arabic, Maharashtrian, Subterranean
- **Shape**
 - Rectangular, triangular, round
- **Size**
 - Big, small, tall, stout, thin
- **Age**
 - Old, new, prehistoric



Placement of Adjectives

There are two ways in which we can use adjectives in English.

- Before the nouns they qualify
 - **Three** sticks, a **queer** sight, **some** gentlemen
- After forms of the verb 'to be' and with others such as 'looks', 'seems', 'sounds', 'feels', 'smells' etc.
 - The house looks **magnificent**.
 - The boy seems **nervous**.
 - I am **busy**.
 - The camper was **asleep** in his tent.
 - They were **victorious** in their efforts.

Note:

Articles 'A', 'An' and 'The' are also adjectives since they precede nouns and qualify them.



Adjective of Quality

An **adjective of quality** is a word which indicates the quality or the attribute of a **noun**.

- To understand the nature of the noun, we ask the question '**What kind of?**' to the noun. The answer which we get is the adjective of quality.

- This is a **slimy** monster.

What kind of monster?

Slimy



Let us look at a few examples.

Sheila was the **main** nurse.

The night is **young**.

The sword had a **golden** handle.

The clouds have a **silvery** hue.

Doctor Agarwal is a **good** man.

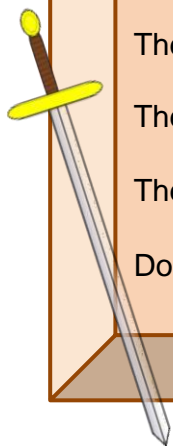
The boy brought home a **shabby** dog.

Tabitha was a **fat** woman.

Mallika is **intelligent**.

Tariq is an **obedient** boy.

King Arthur's shield was very **ornate**.



Adjective of Quantity

An **adjective of quantity** tells us about the quantity of a noun.

- Some, many, few, little, less, much, more, enough, sufficient** are some examples.
- It describes the number of countable nouns.
 - The **three** musketeers, **many** black birds, a **few** enemies

- It describes the volume, amount or quantity of uncountable nouns.
 - **Some** milk, **three** kilo rice, **much** water
- To understand the quantity of the noun or pronoun, we ask the question '**How much/many?**' The answer we get is the adjective of quantity.

There is **some** rice in this bowl.
How much rice?
Some



- It can express an indefinite amount or quantity.
 - **much** water, **less** time, **some** people
- It can also express a definite number.
 - **five** people, **three** little pigs, **5 kilo** rice
- Adjectives like **much**, **little** and **less** are used with uncountable nouns.
 - **much** time, a **little** water
- Adjectives like **many** and **few** are used with countable nouns.
 - **many** bottles, **few** children

Let us look at a few examples.

There is still **some** pride left in me.

Two doves were sitting on a branch.

We have **enough** money to last us a lifetime.

Sabita has **two** sons.

Maria had **little** patience with her son.

I have a **few** friends in dance class.

You wasted so **much** time.

We could see **many** stars in the sky.

Demonstrative Adjectives

Previously, we learnt about demonstrative pronouns which point towards their antecedents. In this chapter, we learn about **demonstrative adjectives**.

- Adjectives like **this**, **that**, **these** and **those** are demonstrative adjectives.
- They help the reader or listener understand what or who exactly is being addressed.
- 'This' and 'that' are used for **singular nouns**.
 - **This** cat, **that** house, **this** river, **that** woman

- 'These' and 'those' are used for **plural nouns**.
 - **These** days, **those** gentlemen, **these** toys, **those** moments

Let us look at a few examples.

- **That** man is cooling his heels in the jail as we speak.
- Scarlet is one of **those** women who would do anything to save a penny.
- **These** confectionaries are very delicious.
- **This** seat is reserved for the chief guest.



Interrogative Adjectives

Interrogative adjectives are those which help in framing questions by appearing before the noun that they qualify.

- **What, which, whose** are the three interrogative adjectives used in English.

- **Which** bus do we board?
- **What** excuse will you provide?
- **Whose** little dog is this?



- Unlike interrogative pronouns, these adjectives cannot stand on their own and they always appear before a noun.

Possessive Adjectives

Possessive adjectives, like possessive pronouns, show ownership or possession of nouns to pronouns.

- **My, your, his, her, our, its, their** are possessive adjectives.
- They appear before the noun they qualify.

His car was damaged in the accident. Henry was proud of his blue shoes.

My computer is not working properly. Your mother is busy.

The dog wagged its tail. Their voices echoed in the hall.

Remember:

Never add an apostrophe with possessive adjectives.
It's - incorrect
Its - correct

To differentiate between a pronoun and an adjective, check where the word is placed.

- If the word appears before a noun, it is an adjective.
 - That man
 - Which bag
- If the word is at a distance from the noun with other words in between, it is a pronoun.
 - That is the man.
 - Which is the best?