

Lesson #2

Describing People

Practicing adjectives

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Describing People adjectives

WARM-UP:

Look at the following poem, a traditional love poem linked to Valentine's day (February 14th). The **colored** words are adjectives.

Roses are **red**,
Violets are **blue**,
Sugar is **sweet**,
And so are you.

Read the lyrics to the first stanza of the American anthem. All the **colored** words are adjectives.

Oh, say can you see by the dawn's **early** light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the **perilous** fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's **red** glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that **Star-Spangled** Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Watch the following video, called 'Grammar Rock Adjectives':
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYzGLzFuwXI>



Describing People adjectives

Text:

Remember our friends from the previous lesson? They are back to tell us more about themselves!



Steve, college student:

Well, I am **tall** and **athletic**. I play different sports: basketball, football, and soccer. I have **brown** hair and **hazel** eyes. My friends say I am **friendly** and **nice**. I am very **open**. I love discussing **interesting** ideas and meeting **new** friends.

Julie, journalist:

I am **small**, but I am **strong**! Sometimes I am **shy** around people I do not know. With my friends and family, I am very **outgoing**. My mom says I have a **pretty** smile. Do you agree? She also likes my **long, curly brown** hair. My **favorite** color is blue, and I am always **optimistic**. I am **youthful**, but I am an **old** soul.

Claudia, artist (Claudia was unavailable, so her friend Vivian talks about her):

Claudia? Oh, she is **special**! I like her **spontaneous** nature. She is **young, exuberant**, and **lively**; she is **slim** and **active**. She often wears **colorful** clothes. Do you see her picture? She wears a **green** shirt and her **favorite** jeans! She has a **creative** mind: students love her **passionate** outlook on life.

Walter, doctor:

I am **nearsighted**, so I wear glasses. I am **well built**; I have a **dark** complexion and **black, wavy** hair. I am **focused** and **driven**. I am not **lazy**! I am very **patient**. I work **long** hours, but I am never **bored** at my job. It is so **interesting**! I do not want a **boring** life. I am **energetic** and I want to be **successful**.



Work on the Text

Organize the adjectives from the texts in the following categories

Age	Height	Body	Hair	Skin	Eyes	Colors	Characters	Other

2. Looking at the descriptions, can you find how adjectives are placed in relation to the noun they modify?



LESSON

What are adjectives?

Adjectives are words that describe or modify a person/thing/place/concept (i.e. a noun or a noun phrase) in a sentence. Adjectives are placed before the noun or noun phrase that they modify. If two adjectives describe a noun, use and to link the adjectives. If there are more than two adjectives, use commas at first, then use and before the last adjective (it is rare to have more than three adjectives in a row):

Examples: He owns a yellow car.
Black and white televisions are very rare.
The company seeks intelligent, motivated, and energetic people.

Adjectives are also used on their own, or with fixed expressions such as how _____ or it/this/that is

_____:
Examples: Excellent! This is great!
You work in advertising? How interesting!

When indefinite pronouns (i.e. something, someone, anybody) are modified by an adjective, the adjective comes after the pronoun:

Examples: We watched something fascinating on the news tonight.
In Washington DC you always see something new.

When an adjective owes its origins to a proper noun, it is capitalized:

Examples: French fries, the English Parliament, the Smithsonian institute, a Victorian house, etc.

How do I find or make adjectives?

Adjectives are very often associated with nouns, and describe various attributes of the noun:

- size: a small company, a big house
- shape: a round table, the Oval Office
- age: a young man, an old establishment
- color: blue skies, a red carpet
- origin: an American car, the Spanish football team
- material: a wooden house, a marble building
- etc.

You can easily create adjectives with many verbs (not all!) if you add the -ed or -ing endings to the verb. However, be careful to make a distinction between the two! Generally, the -ed ending means that the noun described is the receiver of the action implied by the original verb. The -ing ending means that the noun described is the actor:

Examples: The news is dramatic. I am shocked. (the news shocks you)
BUT I hate shocking documentaries. (the documentaries shock you)



LESSON (cont.)

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Common adjectives and their opposites:

Good / bad	Rich / poor	Polite / rude
Clever - intelligent / stupid	Hot / cold	Lively / calm – reserved
Wise / foolish	Clean / dirty	Easy / hard – tough
Smart / stupid	Funny / sad	Alone / together
Beautiful / ugly	Happy / unhappy	Far / close
Big / small - little	Patient / impatient	Hopeful / desperate
Long / short	Exciting / boring	
Thick - fat / thin	Perfect / imperfect	
Young / old	Interesting / dull	



Exercises

Find the intruder:

1. Small / tall / patient / thick
2. Funny / boring / lively / clever
3. Lazy / active / exuberant / lively
4. Clever / beautiful / intelligent / stupid

Describe a person or element in the following pictures.











Exercises (cont.)

React to the sentences using this is _____ or how _____ and an adjective of your choice:

Example: I have a new job! How great! / This is great!

1. It is raining!
2. You are late for a meeting.
3. Your friend lost his wallet.
4. President Obama is visiting your school.

Role-play:

Act out the following scenarios, using adjectives to describe the situation.

1. You left your bag at the gym. Describe what it looks like to the gym manager...
I have a green bag. It is small and _____. It is as big as a _____. It is a leather/canvas/
plastic/nylon bag.
2. You just returned from visiting Washington D.C. Tell your family / friends about your discoveries.
The Washington Monument is tall! The stones are different colors, and the Mall is immense!
3. Pick a celebrity and describe him/her to a classmate. When your classmate correctly guesses the name of your celebrity, reverse the roles.
He is a political figure. He is very well-known, he is old, he lives in South Africa... Nelson Mandela!

Family portrait:

Describe what someone in your family looks like to an artist.



Wind-down

Listen to the song and find the adjectives!

Tom Petty, American girl <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNgt7U9QrFQ>

Well, she was an _____ girl,
Raised on promises
She couldn't help thinking that
there was a little more to life
Somewhere else
After all it was a great _____ world
With lots of places to run to
And if she had to die
Tryin', she
Had one _____ promise she was gonna keep

Oh yeah, alright,
Take it _____, baby
Make it last all night
She was an American girl.

Well, it was kind of _____ that night,
She stood _____ on the balcony
Yeah, she could hear the cars roll by,
Out on four forty one like
Waves crashing on the beach,
And for one desperate moment there
He crept back in her memory
God, it's so painful when something that's so close
Is still so _____ out of reach

Listen to this broadcast and find the adjectives!

VOA Learning English – Education report #397

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BM6S7GmKI7o&feature=Playlist&p=CF433A0716D62837&index=0&playnext=1>

Pictures: courtesy of <http://www.stockvault.net>

Videos: courtesy of <http://youtube.com>

