

**Adjectives / Articles / Prepositions****ADJECTIVES**

Adjectives are the words that describe the qualities of a noun or pronoun in a given sentence.

**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Tell which sentence is correct

- (a) Flowers are plucked freshly.
- (b) Flowers are plucked fresh.

Sentence b is correct as, adjective is correctly used with a verb when some quality of the subject rather than verb is to be expressed. Here, fresh describes the word Flowers (a noun) and not plucked (a verb).

**RULES REGARDING DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES:**

2. This and that are used with the singular nouns and these and those are used with plural nouns

For example:

- (a) This mango is sour.
- (b) These mangoes are sour.
- (c) That boy is industrious
- (d) Those boys are industrious.

3. This and these indicate something near to the speaker while that and those indicate something distant to the speaker.

For example:

- (a) This girl sings.
- (b) These girls sing.
- (c) That girl sings.
- (d) Those girls sing.

**RULES REGARDING DISTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVES:**

4. Each is used when reference is made to the individuals forming any group. Each is also used when the number of the group is limited and definite.

For example:

- (a) I was in Shimla for five days and it rained each day.

Every is used when reference is made to total group or when the number is indefinite.

For example:

- (a) Every seat was taken.
- (b) I go for a movie every week.
- (c) Leap year falls in every fourth year.

**5.** Each, either, neither and every are always followed by the singular noun.

For example:

- (a) Each boy must take his turn.
- (b) Every word of it is false.
- (c) Neither accusation is true.

### **RULES REGARDING ADJECTIVES OF QUANTITY:**

**6.** Some is used in affirmative sentences to express quantity or degree.

For example: I shall buy some bananas.

Any is used in the negative or interrogative sentences to express quantity or degree.

For example:

- (a) I shall not buy any bananas.
- (b) Have you bought any bananas?

But some is an exception to the above rule. Some is used in interrogative sentences, which are commands or requests.

For example: Will you please lend me some money?

**7.** Few is used for countable objects and little is used for non-countable objects.

**8.** Little means not much. So use of the word little has a negative meaning.

For example:

- (a) There is little hope of his recovery.
- (b) He has little appreciation of hard work.

A little means some though not much. So, use of a little has a positive meaning.

For example:

- (a) There is a little hope of his recovery.
- (b) He has a little appreciation of hard work.

The little means not much but all there is.

For example:

- (a) The little information he had was quite reliable.
- (b) The little knowledge of management he possessed was not sufficient to stand him in good stead.

- 9.** Few mean not many so use of the word few has a negative meaning.  
For example: Few men are free from faults.  
A few means some. So use of 'a few' has a positive meaning.  
For example: A few men are free from faults.  
The few mean not many, but all there are.  
For example: The few remarks that he made were very good.
- 10.** Only uncountable nouns follow much, little, some, enough, sufficient and whole.  
For example:  
(a) I ate some rice.  
(b) There are not enough spoons.

#### **RULES REGARDING INTERROGATIVE ADJECTIVES:**

- 11.** What is used in the general sense and which is used in a selective sense.  
For example:  
(a) Which of you haven't brought your book?  
(b) What manner of man is he?

#### **RULES REGARDING DEGREES OF COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES:**

- 12.** The comparative form ending in 'er' is used when we are comparing one quality in two persons.  
For example: Anjali is wiser than Rahul.  
But if we wish to compare two qualities in the same person then the comparative form ending in 'er' is not used.  
For example: Anjali is wise than brave.
- 13.** When two objects are compared with each other, the latter term of comparison must exclude the former.  
For example:  
(a) Delhi is bigger than any other city in India.  
If we say  
(b) Delhi is bigger than any city in India.  
Then we are saying Delhi is bigger than Delhi as any city in India includes Delhi also. And this is obviously wrong.
- 14.** In a comparison by means of a superlative the latter term should include the former.  
For example:  
(a) Delhi is the biggest of all cities in India.  
(b) Of all men he is the strongest.

Kindly note the difference in this and previous rule.

**15.** Later and latest refer to time.

For example:

- (a) He came later than I expected.
- (b) This is the latest news.

Latter and last refer to position.

For example:

- (a) The last player could not bat as he was injured.
- (b) The latter chapters are very interesting.

Latter is used when there are two only, last when there are more than two.

For example:

- (a) Of Manohar, Syam and Joshi, the latter is a driver. (Incorrect)
- (b) Of Manohar, Syam and Joshi, the last is a driver. (Correct)

**16.** Elder and eldest are used only of persons (usually members of the same family).

For example:

- (a) My elder sister is doing MBA from IIM Ahmedabad
- (b) My eldest brother is getting married today.

Older and oldest are used of both persons and things.

For example:

- (a) This is the oldest building in the city.
- (b) Anthony is the oldest boy in the class.

**17.** Further means more distant or advanced whereas farther is a variation of further and means at a distance - both the words can be used to indicate physical distance.

For example:

- (a) No one discussed the topic further.
- (b) Calcutta is farther from the equator than Colombo.

**18.** The comparative degree is generally followed by 'than', but comparative adjectives ending in is or are followed by the preposition 'to'.

For example:

- (a) Akshay is inferior to Aamir in intelligence.
- (b) Aamir is superior to Akshay in intelligence.
- (c) He is junior to me.
- (d) Who was captain prior to Azhar?

- 19.** Adjectives such as square, round, perfect, eternal, universal, unique do not admit of different degrees. So they cannot be compared. Thus strictly speaking we cannot say that a thing is more square round or more perfect. But sometimes we do make exceptions to this rule.  
For example: This is the most perfect specimen I have seen.
- 20.** When the comparative form is used to express selection from two of the same kind or class, it is followed by 'of' and preceded by 'the'.  
For example:  
(a) Ramesh is stronger of the two boys.
- 21.** When than or as is followed by the third person pronoun, the verb is to be repeated.  
For example: Ram is not as clever as his brother is.
- 22.** When than or as is followed by first or second person pronoun, the verb can be omitted.  
For example: He is more intelligent than you.
- 23.** In comparing two things or classes of things the comparative should be used.  
For example:  
(a) Of two evils choose the lesser (not least).  
(b) Which is the better (not best) of the two?
- 24.** A very common form of error is exemplified in the following sentence.  
(a) The population of London is greater than any town in India,  
(b) The population of London is greater than that of any town in India.  
Sentence b is correct as the comparison is between the population of London and the population of any town in India.
- 25.** Double comparatives and superlatives should be avoided.  
For example:  
(a) Seldom had the little town seen a more costlier funeral. (Wrong)  
(b) Seldom had the little town seen a costlier funeral. (Right)  
(c) Seldom had the little town seen a more costly funeral. (Right)
- 26.** Preferable has the force of comparative and is followed by to. Phrase 'more preferable' should not be used.  
For example:  
(a) Coffee is more preferable to tea. (Wrong)  
(b) Coffee is preferable to tea. (Right)

- 27.** Less refers to quantity whereas fewer refers to number.  
For example:  
(a) No fewer than fifty miners were killed in the explosion.  
(b) We do not sell less than ten kg of tea.
- 28.** Certain adjectives do not really admit of comparison because their meaning is already superlative. Such words are unique, ideal, perfect, complete, universal, entire, extreme, chief, full, square, round. Therefore phrases like most unique, more round, fullest, chiefest etc. are wrong.
- 29.** If there is a gradual increase it is generally expressed with two comparatives and not with positives.  
For example:  
(a) It grew hot and hot. (Incorrect)  
(b) It grew hotter and hotter. (Correct)

#### **OTHER COMMON RULES:**

- 30.** 'Verbal' means 'of or pertaining to words' whereas 'oral' means 'delivered by word of mouth or not written'. Hence the opposite of written is oral, not verbal.  
For example:  
(a) His written statement differs in several important respects from his oral (not verbal) statement  
(b) The boy was sent with a verbal message to the doctor.
- 31.** 'Common' means shared by all concerned. If a fact is a common Knowledge, it means the knowledge of the fact is shared by all. Everyone knows about it. 'Mutual' means in relation to each other. If you and I are mutual admirers, it means I admire you and you admire me. We might also have a common admirer who admires both of us.  
(a) We started smoking on the advice of a mutual friend. (Incorrect)  
(b) We started smoking on the advice of a common friend (Correct)  
It is apparent that there are two or more than two of us. Apart from us, there is a person (friend). Since he is a friend to all of us, this friend is being shared by all of us. So, he is a common friend. Now, look at this sentence.  
For example: We started smoking on mutual advice.  
It means I advised, you to smoke and you advised me to smoke.

#### **OTHER COMMON ERRORS:**

- 32.** (a) These Kind of questions is often asked in the examinations. (Incorrect)  
(b) This kind of question is often asked in the examinations. (Correct)  
(c) He is as good if not better than his brother. (Incorrect)

- (d) He is as good as if not better than his brother. (Correct)
- (e) The future do not hold much for you. (Incorrect)
- (f) The future does not hold much for you. (Correct)

## ARTICLES

1. A or an does not refer to a particular person or thing. It leaves indefinite the person or thing spoken of.  
For example: I saw a doctor, (means I saw any doctor)
2. An is used before a word beginning with vowel sound (please note a word beginning with vowel sound and not necessarily a vowel itself).  
For example: an ass, an enemy, an inkstand, an orange, an umbrella, an hour.
3. An is placed before an abbreviation if the first letter of an abbreviation is F, H, L, M, N, R, S or X.  
For example:
  - (a) An MBA was required for the post.
  - (b) An SAO is an officer of high rank
4. A is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound.  
For example: a boy, a woman a horse, a one-rupee note, a university, a European (both university and European begin with a consonant sound of 'yu')
5. A and an are used with words 'few' and 'little' if they refer to a small number or a small amount words 'few' and 'little' without the articles means almost none.  
For example:
  - (a) We have little time to spare, (means almost no time)
  - (b) We have a little time to spare, (means some time)
  - (c) Few persons were present at the meeting, (means almost no one was present)
  - (d) A few persons were present at the meeting, (means some were present)
6. A is used in the following senses :
  - (A) In its original numerical sense of one.  
For example:
  - (a) Not a word was said.
  - (b) A word to the wise is sufficient.
  - (B) In the vague sense of a certain time.  
For example: One evening a beggar came to my door.
  - (C) In the sense of any, to single out an individual as the representative of a class.

For example: A pupil should obey his teacher.

(D) To make a common noun of a proper noun.

For example: A Daniel came to judgement. (A Daniel = A very wise man)

- 7.** The points out a particular person or thing or someone or something already referred to.

For example:

(a) I saw the doctor. (means I saw some particular doctor)

(b) The book you want is out of print.

- 8.** The is used with names of gulfs, rivers, seas, oceans, groups of islands and mountain ranges.

For example: The Persian Gulf, The Red Sea, The Indian Ocean, The British Isles, The Alps.

- 9.** The is used before the name of certain books.

For example: The Vedas, The Puranas, The Ramayana.

But we never say 'The Valmiki's Ramayana'. The is not used when the name of a book is mentioned along with the author's name. So, 'Valmiki's Ramayana' is correct.

- 10.** The is used before the names of things unique of their kind.

For example: the sun, the sky, the ocean, the sea.

- 11.** The is used before a plural common noun if it refers to a particular group among the class and not the whole class.

For example: Drive away the cows from the field.

- 12.** The is used before a proper noun only when it is qualified by an adjective.

For example: The great Rani of Jhansi, the immortal Kalidas.

- 13.** The is used before the superlatives.

For example:

(a) Sachin is the best batsman in the world today.

(b) The best person should win.

- 14.** The noun if emphasis is laid on the use of such a noun. Here, noun can be proper or abstract noun

(a) the time for doing it.

(b) occasion to help the distressed.

- 15.** The is used with ordinals.

For example:



- (a) He was the first student to finish his homework.
- (b) The second chapter of the book is very interesting.

**16.** The is used before an adjective when the noun is understood.

For example:

- (a) The poor are always with us. (Here poor mean poor people, which is understood.)
- (b) The weak and the strong. (Here weak means weak people and strong means strong people.)

**17.** No article is used before a common noun when it refers to all the members of the class.

For example:

- (a) Man is mortal.
- (b) Fish has high protein content.
- (c) What kind of flower is it?

**18.** The is used before a common noun to give it the meaning of an abstract noun.

For example: The devil in him begins its misdeeds now and then.

**19.** No article is used before the names of materials such as gold, stone, wine, iron, wheat, wood, cloth.

For example:

- (a) Gold is a precious metal.
- (b) Wheat grows in Uttar Pardesh, Haryana and Madhya Pardesh.
- (c) Iron is a useful metal.

Note: But it is correct to say

For example: An iron is a useful gadget.

Because here we are not taking about material iron, but the object which is used to make clothes smooth.

**20.** No article is used before proper nouns.

For example:

- (a) Delhi is the capital of India.
- (b) Newton was a great philosopher.

But consider the following examples where an article is used before a proper noun.

- (a) This man is a second Newton.
- (b) Bombay is the Manchester of India.

Here Newton and Manchester is not used as a proper noun but a common noun. The first sentence means that this man is as great as Newton and the second sentence means that Bombay is a great manufacturing City like Manchester.

**21.** No articles are used before a common noun used in its widest sense.

For example:

(a) The science has developed much in the past hundred years. (Incorrect)

(b) Science has developed much in the past hundred years. (Correct).

**22.** No article is used before the noun following 'Kind of:

For example:

(a) What kind of a hobby is this? (Incorrect)

(b) What kind of hobby is this? (Correct)

**23.** No article is used before abstract nouns.

For example:

(a) Wisdom is the gift of heaven.

(b) Honesty is the best policy.

But consider the following examples where an article is used before an abstract noun.

(a) The wisdom of Solomon is famous.

(b) I cannot forget the kindness with which he treated me.

Here the article is used before the abstract noun as the abstract noun has been qualified by a adjective or adjectival clause.

**24.** No article is used before languages, subject of arts and science.

For example:

(a) We are studying English.

(b) Geometry is the toughest subject I have ever studied.

**25.** No article is used before words such as school, college, church, bed, table, hospital, market, prison.

For example:

(a) I went to school till last year.

(b) I have never been to hospital.

But an article is used before these words when reference is made to a definite place.

**26.** No article is used before the name of relations like father, mother, aunt, uncle.

For example: Mother would like to see you.

But If someone else's mother is being talked about then the should be used.

For example: The mother would like to see you.

**27.** Article should not be used before positions that are held at one time by one person only.

For example:

(a) S D Sharma was elected the president of the country. (Incorrect)

(b) SD Sharma was elected president of the country. (Correct)

**28.** Please consider this sentence

(a) I have a black and white cat.

Here I mean that I have one cat that is partly black and partly white.

Now, consider this sentence

For example: I have a black and a white cat.

Here I mean that I have two cats one is black and the other white. Hence the rule is that when two or more adjectives qualify the same noun, the article is used before the first adjective only. But when they qualify different nouns, the article is used before each adjective separately.

Consider one more example.

(a) The President and Chairman is absent.

(b) The President and the Chairman are present.

Sentence a means that only one person is acting as president as well as chairman. Sentence b means that two different persons are acting as the President and the Chairman and both the persons are absent.

## **PREPOSITIONS**

**1.** In is used with the names or countries and large towns; at is used when speaking of small towns and villages.

For example:

(a) I live in Delhi.

(b) I live at Rohini in Delhi.

**2.** In and at are used in speaking of things at rest; to and into are used in speaking of things in motion.

For example:

(a) He is in bed.

(b) He is at the top of the class.

(c) He ran to school

(d) He jumped into the river.

(e) The snake crawled into its hole.

**3.** On is often used in speaking of things at rest; and upon for the things in motion.

For example:

(a) He sat on a chair.

(b) The cat sprang upon the table.

- 4.** Till is used of time and to is used for place.

For example:

- (a) He slept till eight o'clock.
- (b) He walked to the end of the street.

- 5.** With often denotes the instrument and by the agent.

For example:

- (a) He killed two birds with one shot.
- (b) He was stabbed by a lunatic with a dagger.

- 6.** Since is used before a noun or phrase denoting some point of time and is preceded by a verb in the perfect tense.

For example:

- (a) I have eaten nothing since yesterday
- (b) He has been ill since Monday last.

From is also used before a noun or phrase denoting some point of time but is used with non-perfect tense.

For example:

- (a) I commenced work from 1st January
- (b) He will join school from tomorrow

For is used with a period of time.

For example:

- (a) He has been ill for five days.
- (b) He lived in Bombay for five years.

- 7.** Use of in before a period of time means at the end of period, but use of within before a period of time means before the end of period.

For example:

- (a) I shall return in an hour. (means I shall return at the end of an hour).
- (b) I shall return within an hour. (means I shall return before the end of an hour).

- 8.** Scarcely should be followed by when and not by but.

For example: Scarcely had he gone, when (not than) a policeman knocked at the door.

- 9.** The phrase 'seldom or ever' is wrong 'Seldom or never' is right.

For example: Such goods are made for export, and are seldom or never used in this country

- 10.** Examine the following sentence

- (a) This is as good, if not better than that. (Wrong)

- (b) This is as good as, if not better than that. (Right)
- (c) This is as good as that, if not better. (Right)

**11.** Beside means at the side of while besides means in addition to. For example:

- (a) Beside the ungathered rice he lay.
- (b) Besides being fined, he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

**12.** Above and Below merely denote position While over and under also carry a sense of covering or movement.

- (a) The bird flew above the lake. (Wrong)
- (b) The bird flew over the lake. (Correct)

Here over is used to denote upward position and movement also.

**13.** During is used when reference is made to the time within which something happens. For is used when we are talking about how long something lasts.

- (a) There are few incidents of irregularity for the emergency years. (Wrong)
- (b) There are few incidents of irregularity during the emergency years. (Correct)

**14.** Compare is followed by with when it shows that two things are alike. It is followed by to when we look at the ways in which two things are like and unlike each other. For example:

- (a) Sanath Jayasuria's batting may be compared with the sales of a useful book; they score right from the beginning. (Wrong)
- (b) Sanath Jayasuria's batting may be compared to the sales of a useful book, they score right from the beginning. (Right)
- (c) If we compare Delhi University to the regional ones, we find the former to be much more efficient (Wrong)
- (d) If we compare Delhi University with the regional ones, we find the former to be much more efficient (Right)