

Adjectives

Adjective is a word that describes a noun or pronoun.

Adjectives describe **quality**. They qualify nouns or pronouns. So the words **good, bad, ugly, dear, costly, interesting** etc. are all adjectives.

Position of some peculiar adjectives

Usually adjectives come before the noun: He is a **great** CEO.

But in some cases adjectives come after the noun. In the following phrases the adjective always comes after the noun:



The body politic, New York Proper, God almighty, heir apparent, letters patent, knights temporal, lord paramount, notary public, president elect, IIM-select, time immemorial, the sum total, chairman elect, a God incarnate, Governor-General, from time immemorial.

Here is a sample sentence where the adjective follows the noun: **Things eternal** are more precious than **things temporal**.

Absolute superlatives

Sometimes superlatives formed by "**most**" are used in such a way that they do not carry the sense of the highest degree of comparison; they only lay emphasis on the quality concerned. They are called **absolute superlatives**.

1. That was a **most unfortunate** event.
2. It was a **most moving** speech.

Comparison of equality

When equality or similarity is shown through comparison between two persons, things or qualities, we use the pattern: **as + adjective + as**.

1. She is **as beautiful as** her sister.
2. Ram is **as tall as** Shyam.

Comparison of inequality

When inequality or dissimilarity through comparison is shown between two persons, things or qualities, we follow one of the following two patterns: **not as + adjective + as** OR **not so + adjective + as**.

1. She is **not as beautiful as** her sister.
2. She is **not so beautiful as** her sister.
3. Ram is **not as tall as** Shyam.
4. Ram is **not so tall as** Shyam.

If we wish to lay more emphasis on inequality, we can use **quite** before **so**.

1. She is **not quite so beautiful as** her sister.
2. Ram is **not quite so tall as** Shyam.

Concealed comparison

In some sentences, the **comparison is not explicit** but concealed in its sense. In such sentences we use: **not all that + adjective**.

1. He is **not all that intelligent**. (*He is not **as intelligent as** he was believed to be.*)
2. Its price is **not all that high**.
3. The swimming pool is **not all that deep**.

Comparison of actions (verbs)

In positive degree **two actions can be compared** in the following ways:

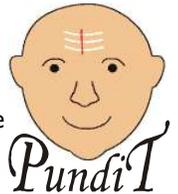
By using as + adjective + as

1. **Writing** is as easy as **reading**.
2. **Walking** is as difficult as **running**.
3. It is not as easy **to write** as **read**.
4. It is as difficult **to walk** as **run**.

In this construction it should be remembered that the first infinitive is used *with "to"*, and the second *without "to"*.

By using had better/had rather/had sooner

1. I **had rather go** than **wait**.
2. You **had rather read** than **write**.
3. You **had better work** than **sit** idle.
4. We **had better sit** there than **stand** here
5. They **had sooner die** than **surrender**.
6. They **would sooner die** than **surrender**.
7. They **would as soon die** as **surrender**.



In this construction, infinitive is used twice, and each time without **to**. This is the correct pattern.

Use of "to"

For all **adjectives of Latin origin**, comparison is shown by **"to"** (not by **"than"**). The more common adjectives of Latin origin are: **superior, inferior, junior, senior, prior, anterior and posterior**.

Generally these adjectives may be remembered as those that end with **"-or"**.

It may be noted that **"to"** is used after **prefer** or **preferable** also, though they are not of Latin origin. Also, we cannot use comparative degree with these.

1. He is junior (or senior) **to** me. (*Not than me*)
2. This is superior (or inferior) **to** that.
3. His turn comes **prior to** mine.
4. Milk is **preferable to** tea. (*Not than*)

Comparison of qualities of same person

When **two qualities** of the same person or thing are to be compared, the comparative degree formed by **"-er"** should not be used. In their place, comparative degree should be made by adding **more** or **less** to the adjective concerned.

1. He is **more brave** than **strong**. (*Not braver than stronger*)
2. Mohan is **more good** than **wise**. (*Not better than wise*)
3. He is **more industrious** than **intelligent**. (*Not more industrious than more intelligent*)

Repeated comparative adjective

In some sentences the same **comparative adjective is repeated**. The **form** of such sentences is as follows:

1. He is getting **weaker and weaker**.
2. He is working **harder and harder**.
3. The Sensex is rising **higher and higher**.

Emphatic comparatives

Emphatic comparatives can be used in the following **three** ways:

- By using **much, far, by far or still** before the comparative degree (but not by using **very**)
 1. This house is **much larger** than that.
 2. This is **far better** than that.
 3. This is **by far more** important than the other.
 4. This book is **still better**.
 5. This book is **better still**.
- By using **rather**
 1. This book is **rather cheaper**.
 2. This hall is **rather better**.
- By using **all the**
 1. This is **all the better**.
 2. That was **all the worse**.
 3. That was **all the more disappointing**.

WATCH OUT!			
	Common errors	The correct form	Why? (The theory)
1	My horse is better than Ram.	My horse is better than Ram's.	When two persons, things or qualities are to be compared, the comparison should be made between correct persons, things or elements.
2	The climate of Punjab is better than Bihar .	The climate of Punjab is better than that of Bihar .	
3	Ram is more intelligent than any student in the class.	Ram is more intelligent than any other student in the class.	
4	I have less pens than pencils.	I have fewer pens than pencils.	Fewer is used for number, and less for quantity. Fewer is always followed by a countable plural noun and less by an uncountable singular noun.
5	He eats fewer butter than sugar.	He eats less butter than sugar.	
6	This is comparatively easier.	This is comparatively easy.	If an adjective (or an adverb) has " comparatively " before it, the adjective (or adverb) should be used in the positive degree, not in the comparative degree .
7	The higher a man rises, the humble he grows.	The higher a man rises, the humbler he grows.	When comparative degree adjective is split up and used in two parts of the sentence, the comparative degree should be used in both the parts.
8	The nobler a man is, the most respect he gets.	The nobler a man is, the more respect he gets.	
9	He runs as fast , if not faster than you.	He runs as fast as , if not faster than you.	Where the comparative and positive degree adjectives are used, positive degree adjective should be used with as ... as (not with one as only) and comparative degree adjective with than .
10	This hall is as large , if not larger than that.	This hall is as large as , if not larger than that.	

Superlative + of or in

Preposition "of" or "in" is used to show comparison among **three** or **more persons** or **things**.

1. He is the richest **of all men** here.
2. This is the cheapest **of all books**.
3. This is the best building **in the town**.
4. He is the most intelligent boy **in the class**.



Superlative + "one of" or "among"

When **one of** or **among** is used with a superlative, the noun coming after it must be of **plural number**.

1. Ram is **one of the** best **boys** in the class.
2. This is **one of the** cheapest **books** available.
3. He is the best **among** these **boys**.
4. This is the cheapest **among** these **books**.

Emphatic superlative

In order to give additional **emphasis** to a superlative adjective, we can use **by far the, much the, the very** or **out and out the**.

1. Bangalore is **by far the most beautiful** city.
2. This is **much the best** school.
3. This is **the very best** school.
4. This is **out and out the best** school.

Adjectives of the same degree

If the **same noun** is qualified by **two** or **more than two adjectives**, they must be of the **same degree**.

1. She is the **best** and **most talented girl**.
(We can't say **best and talented** or **good and most talented**)
2. This is the **deepest** and **longest** valley.
3. I have the **best** and **cheapest** book.

Non-gradable adjectives

The following adjectives are already of the **superlative degree**. They cannot be used as comparative degree adjectives, nor **can the emphasising** expressions such as **very, extremely, highly** or **much** be used with them. These adjectives are:

Unique, perfect, matchless, excellent, ideal, absolute, universal, impossible, entire, whole, full, complete, round, extreme, eternal, chief, principal, adequate, inevitable, stationary, irrevocable, sufficient, main, unanimous, devoid, manifest, unavoidable, minor, unbroken, fatal, paramount, final, perpetual, preferable etc.

1. He is an **ideal** leader. (We can't say **more ideal** or **most ideal**)
2. This is a **unique chance**. (Not, **more unique** or **most unique**)
3. This plan is **perfect**.
4. I have **full** sympathy with him.

BUT: These days **full** and **perfect** are being used in **comparative** and **superlative** degrees also. Now we can use **full, fuller, and fullest**, or **perfect, more perfect or most perfect**. This use is coming into vogue.

1. I have the **fullest** sympathy with you.
2. This is the **more perfect/most perfect** plan.
3. Please give me a **fuller** account of the incident.



Like best, like most

Both these uses are correct.

1. Which of these books do you **like most**?
2. Which of these books do you **like best**?

Kind and sort

"**Kind**" and "**sort**" are of singular number. Therefore, "**this**" or "**that**" should be used with them, **not "these" or "those"**.

1. I don't like **this (or that) kind** of men. Or I don't like men of **this/that kind**.
2. I don't like **this (or that) sort** of men. Or I don't like men of **this/that sort**.

Adjective, adverbially

Sometimes **adjectives** are used **with verbs** also, but in that case the **adjectives** qualify **the subject** of the verb. If, however, they qualify the **action (verb)**, they should be used **adverbially**.

1. The flowers smell **sweet** (not **sweetly**)
2. He looked **angry** (not **angrily**)
3. The ship appeared **suddenly** (not **sudden**)
4. He looked **coldly** at us. (not **cold**)
5. **Incorrect:** Flowers were plucked **freshly**.
6. **Correct:** Flowers were plucked **fresh**.

Adjective used as nouns

Sometimes **adjectives** are used as **nouns**, as in the following cases:

1. **The rich** should not be proud. (*i.e. rich people*)
2. **The poor** should not be derided.
3. **The humble** are blessed.
4. **The wicked** always come to grief.
5. Keats was a poet of **the beautiful**.

Adjectives becoming nouns

Proper nouns

Canadians, Africans, Asians, Italians, juniors, seniors, elders, nobles, inferiors, superiors, criminals, savages, betters, sweets, valuables, eatables, the rich, the poor, the beautiful, the long and short of, in black and white, through thick and thin, from bad to worse, for good, at best, for better, for worse or worst, before long, in short etc.



1. He has left India **for good**.
2. **At best**, we shall get marginal profit.
3. The agreement was made **in black and white**.
4. We shall remain friends **through thick and thin**.
5. We shall not part company **for better or for worse**.
6. Nothing **better** can come.
7. Nothing **worse** can happen.
8. I am prepared for **the worst**.
9. I shall start a new business **before long**.
10. In short, I have lost the chance.
11. His condition is getting **from bad to worse**.
12. **The long and short** of the whole matter is that the match had to be cancelled.

CONFUSION COMPOUNDED!			
	Confused	Corrected	The clarification
1	Ram came latter than Hari.	Ram came later than Hari.	Later is the comparative degree of late , while latter is the antonym of former .
2	Ram and Shyam are brothers but the later is more cultured than the former.	Ram and Shyam are brothers but the latter is more cultured than the former.	Later gives the sense of time , while latter expresses place or position .
3	Ram and Shyam are brothers but the first is very rich and the last very poor.	Ram and Shyam are brothers but the former is very rich and the latter very poor.	When there is reference to only two persons or things, we use former for the first and latter for the second. But when the reference is for
4	In a list of fifty candidates, Ram's name is former and Mohan's latter.	In a list of fifty candidates, Ram's name is at the first place and Mohan's at the last .	three or more persons or things , we use first for the first and last for the last.

CONFUSION COMPOUNDED!			
	Confused	Corrected	The clarification
5	He was the foremost man to reach here.	He was the first man to reach here.	First is first merely in serial order without any suggestion of more or less in importance, while foremost means most important without any reference to serial order.
6	Jawaharlal Nehru was the first statesman of his time.	Jawaharlal Nehru was the foremost statesman of his time.	
7	The latest person in the queue is my friend.	The last person in the queue is my friend.	Last is the antonym of first , while latest is the antonym of earliest . Therefore, last has the sense of place in serial order, while latest has the sense of time .
8	What is the last news about his condition?	What is the latest news about his condition?	
9	Which is the next railway station from here?	Which is the nearest railway station from here?	Nearest means nearest in distance, while next means after this or that in serial order.
10	My seat was nearest to the door.	My seat was next to the door.	
11	There is nothing farther to say.	There is nothing further to say.	Farther means away in distance, while further means 'in addition to' but is also used sometimes for distance.
12	Lucknow is further from Agra than Kanpur.	Lucknow is farther from Agra than Kanpur.	
13	Lesser visitors came to see the Taj this year.	Fewer visitors came to see the Taj this year.	<p>Fewer is used for number, less for quantity, and lesser for less in importance.</p> 
14	Popcorn without butter has fewer fat than popcorn with butter.	Popcorn without butter has less fat than popcorn with butter.	
15	I have not read the less poets of the Elizabethan Age.	I have not read the lesser poets of the Elizabethan Age.	
16	I have ten rupees fewer at the moment.	I have ten rupees less at the moment.	If in a certain sentence there is a definite numeral adjective , followed by a plural noun , use less in place of fewer .
17	There are two members lesser in the team.	There are two members less in the team.	
18	He is the eldest man in the village.	He is the oldest man in the village.	Elder and eldest are used for members of the same family. Elder means senior in age and eldest means senior-most in age. Older and oldest are used for other people or things, in the same sense of age.
19	He is my older brother .	He is my elder brother .	
20	My oldest brother is like my father.	My eldest brother is like my father.	
21	I don't want to read some more books.	I don't want to read any more books.	Some is used in affirmative and interrogative sentences for request or invitation. Any is used in negative and interrogative sentences.
22	Will you please have any tea?	Will you please have some tea?	

Little, a little, the little

Little means **almost nil** or **nothing**. It has a **negative** sense.

There is **little** hope of his success. This means "*There is almost no hope of his success.*"
I have **little** time to waste. This means "*I have no time to waste.*"

A **little** means small in quantity. It has a **positive** sense.

1. There is a **little** money left.
2. I have only a **little sugar** left.
3. We had only a **little time** to complete the work.

The little means **not much** but **all that is there**. It has a **neutral** sense.

1. He has wasted **the little money he had**. *Not much, but all that he had.*
2. Make the best use of **the little time** you have.

So, in short, we have:

1. He has **little** knowledge of politics. (Hardly any knowledge)
2. He has a **little** knowledge of politics. (Some knowledge)
3. **The little** knowledge of politics that he possesses has been gained through newspapers. (Whatever little)



Few, a few, the few

Few means "**almost nil**". It has a **negative** sense.

1. He has **few** enemies. (*Hardly any*)
2. He has **few** achievements to write on his CV. (*Hardly any*)

A few means "small in number". **It has a positive sense.**

1. I can give you a **few books**.
2. I have only a **few friends**.

"The few" means **small in number**, but **all that are there**.

1. I have lost the **few books I had**. *Very few in number, but all those that I had.*
2. Carefully read **the few books** you have.

A lot of, lots of, quite a little, quite a few, a little bit of, quite a bit of, plenty of

1. **Lots of effort** will be required to solve this problem. (Uncountable)
2. **A lot of Americans** travel to Europe each year. (Countable)
3. They offered **quite a little help** for my problem. (Meaning "a large amount") (See *quite a bit of*, below.)
4. **Quite a few restaurants** in this town offer vegetarian dishes. (Meaning "a large number")
5. There's a **little bit of pepper** in the soup. (Meaning "a small amount")
6. There's **quite a bit of pepper** in the soup. (Meaning "a large amount")
7. There are **plenty of mountains** in Switzerland.
8. She has **plenty of money** in the bank.

Each and every

Each is used for **two** or **more than two**. **Every** is used for **at least three** or **more**. **Every** should not be used for **two**.

1. **Each** of you must reach in time.
2. **Each** of the two brothers is highly cultured.
3. **Every** one of them was ready to go.
4. I know **every** street of Kolkata.

Either and neither

Either means "one of the two"; **neither** means "neither this nor that of the two". **Neither** is antonym of **either**. **Neither and either** are **not** used for **more than two**.

1. You can take **either** side.
2. **Either** of the two brothers is coming.
3. You should take **neither** side.
4. **Neither** of the two brothers is likely to come.

Due to, because of and owing to

Due to means **caused by**. It is related to the action of a verb.

1. His demotion was **due to** his negligence of duty.
2. He has risen so high **due to** his hard labour.

Due to and **prior to** should be used as predicative adjectives. When prepositional functions are to be performed, use **because of** in place of **due to**, and **before** in place of **prior to**.

Incorrect: Wickets fell *due to* superb bowling.

As it is used in the given sentence, due appears to be an adverb qualifying the verb fell or a preposition linking the fall of wickets and bowling. But neither is true. Usually, due is used as a predicative adjective. In cases such as the given one, because of should be used.

Correct: Wickets fell because of superb bowling.

*However, if the sentence were in the form, "The fall of wickets was **due to** superb bowling", the usage would be correct.*



Owing to is only a prepositional phrase. **It** only governs a **noun** or a **nominal**. It is generally placed **at the beginning of** the sentence.

1. **Owing to** his illness, he could not appear at the examination.
2. **Owing to heavy rain**, the programme was badly disturbed.

Many a

It is used like a **singular numeral adjective**, though it is **plural** in sense. It takes a **singular noun** and a **singular verb** after it. It means **many (one by one)**.

1. **Many a young man has** laid down his life for the country.
2. **Many a great occasion has** come in my life.

Verbal and oral

Verbal means **of** or **in words**.

1. There is no **verbal** difference between the two documents.
2. There is a striking **verbal** similarity between the two poems.

“Oral” means by “mouth”, not in writing.

1. There will be an **oral** test.
2. He has failed in the **oral** examination.

Incorrect: His written statement differs from his **verbal** one.

Correct: His written statement differs from his **oral** one.

Note: Nowadays “verbal” is also used in the sense of **oral** (by mouth). *We have received a **verbal** message --such a usage should be avoided, though.*

Common and mutual

Common means belonging to **two** or **more** persons **or** things.

1. There is nothing **common** between them.
2. This is our **common** property.

Mutual means “between two”, “for each other”

1. There was **mutual exchange** of views between them.
2. There was little **mutual understanding** between them. (Hardly any)

1. **Incorrect:** We started smoking on the advice of a **mutual** friend.

2. **Correct:** We started smoking on the advice of a **common** friend.



Adjectives revisited

Incorrect	Correct
These kind of questions is often asked in examinations.	This kind of questions is often asked in examinations.
The later part of the novel is not neatly written.	The latter part of the novel is not neatly written.
What is last news?	What is the latest news?
I have an older brother.	I have an elder brother.
Mohan is the eldest boy in the town.	Mohan is the oldest boy in the town.
After this he made no farther statement.	After this he made no further statement.
This is the next post-office to my house.	This is the nearest post-office to my house.
Mohan is wiser than strong .	Mohan is more wise than strong .
Satish is clever than any student in his class.	Satish is cleverer than any other student in his class.
India’s fielding is <i>inferior</i> than South Africa’s.	India’s fielding is <i>inferior</i> to South Africa’s.
Our field is more square than theirs.	Our field is as square as theirs.
Of the two boys, his brain is the sharpest .	Of the two boys, his brain is sharper .
Alexander was the <i>most powerful</i> of all other kings.	Alexander was the <i>most powerful</i> of all kings.
The orientation of Indira Awas Yojana is better than other housing schemes.	The orientation of Indira Awas Yojana is better than that of other housing schemes.
Zarda mangoes are more sweeter than the Maldah ones.	Zarda mangoes are sweeter than the Maldah ones.
Staying indoors is more preferable than going out an summer day.	Staying indoors is preferable to going out on a summer day.
No less than forty VIPs were involved in the hawala scam.	No fewer than forty VIPs were involved in the hawala scam.
I saw only the two first episodes of the serial.	I saw only the first two episodes of the serial.
Of Manohar, Shyam and Joshi, the latter is a driver.	Of Manohar, Shyam and Joshi, the last is a driver.
It grew hot and hot .	It grew hotter and hotter .
He is as good if not <i>better than</i> his brother.	He is as good as if not <i>better than</i> his brother.
I have fallen in love with the beautiful woman’s daughter.	I have fallen in love with the woman’s beautiful daughter .