

Grammar - 5

Placement of Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives modify or describe nouns or pronouns.

👉 Adjectives usually answer one of these questions: Which one? What kind? How many?

the *red* car [Which car?]

sunny dry weather [What kind of weather?]

sixteen candles [How many candles?]

Adjectives generally precede the nouns they modify.

👉 For example, in the sentence *Johnny ate the large apple*, “large” is the adjective that modifies “apple.”

👉 However, adjectives follow the verb when they are used to describe or name the subject with linking verbs such as *appear, was, is, are, be, become, feel, grow, look, make, prove, remain, seem, smell, sound, and taste* (and other verbs of sensation or existence).

Notice the placement of the adjectives in these examples:

He appeared *confused*.

The food looked *delicious*.

She was *disappointed*.

When you use more than one adjective, you must decide if they are coordinate or cumulative.

👉 Adjectives are **coordinate** if they can be joined with “and,” such as “strong and confident and independent,” or if they can be scrambled and still make sense, such as the following sentence:

She is a strong, confident, independent woman.

👉 Adjectives that do not modify the noun separately are **cumulative** and do not require commas.

The following phrase is an example:

He carried three red packages.

👉 “Red” describes “packages” and “three” describes “red packages.” We cannot insert the word “and” between cumulative adjectives: “Three and red packages,” nor can we scramble them: “Red three packages.”

The English language is specific about the order of adjectives before a noun.

The following list is in the order in which adjectives usually appear:

Articles: a, an, the, her, Sue's, two, many, some

Evaluative words: attractive, dedicated, delicious, disgusting, ugly

Sizes: enormous, large, little, small

Lengths or shapes: long, short, round, square

Ages: antique, new, old, young

Colors: blue, crimson, yellow

Nationalities: American, French, Spanish

Religions: Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Protestant

Materials: silver, walnut, wool, marble

Nouns/adjectives: tree (*tree house*), kitchen (*kitchen table*)

Example: Ellen was wearing *a beautiful antique silver* necklace.

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.

👉 Adverbs answer one of these questions: When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? To what degree?

For example:

Speak *clearly* after the tone [speak how?]

The semester *always* starts in August [starts when?]

Adverbs modifying verbs appear in various positions:

at the beginning or end of the sentence

before or after the verb

between the auxiliary, or helping verb, and its main verb

👉 Remember that adverbs are not technically part of the verb.

Slowly, they walked through the park.

She completed her assignments *efficiently*.

We *always* have hot dogs on Tuesdays.

He is *rarely* on time for his class.

The student has *often* asked for more time.

never between a verb and its direct object

Incorrect example: She completed efficiently her assignments.

Corrected example: She efficiently completed her assignments.



The adverb *efficiently* may be placed at the beginning or at the end of the sentence or before the verb. It cannot appear after the verb because the verb is followed by the direct object, *her assignments*.