

Chapter 4 Enter Modifiers for Detail: Part 1—Adjectives

Additional information and practice

More practice from Exercise 1

This is the continuation of the story from the exercise in the textbook. Underline as many adjectives as you can, including participial ones, in the excerpt¹ below.

Amidst the rustling leaves and whispers of the wind, their soft purrs resonated like soothing melodies, weaving tales of ancient secrets and untold adventures into the fabric of the night. And as dawn painted the sky in hues of rose and gold, the cats retreated to their cozy nooks, their dreams filled with visions of endless exploration and boundless curiosity, eagerly awaiting the next chapter in their timeless tale.

More practice from Exercise 2

For these additional items, use derivational (if applicable), inflectional evidence, and additional evidence for why the italicized words are classified as adjectives.

- a) In a *quaint* little village (...) lived a colony of *feline* friends. (sE)
- b) We got some *unique* patterns of language.² (AAE)
- c) Any man can't fight for his friends had better be *dead*.³ (AE/AAE)

More practice from Exercise 5

Underline as many adjectives as you can in the excerpt¹ below. Label them attributive (A) or predicative (P). The excerpt is taken from the published convention program for the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

Yes, yes, y'all, we bout **social** justice dis here time. So y'all **diverse** peoples, y'all there **inclusive** folk, y'all there allies, and those who wanna be allies, and y'all who still workin on bein **proper** allies, I urge you and support you to speak yo own truf first. Then—when u done, speak on that truf that power must hear—and if power don't listen, it will hear us nonetheless. So speak up—speak out—even if yo voice shakes.

Additional paper or project ideas

¹ based on an excerpt produced by OpenAI, 2024.

² Smitherman, G. (2006), *Word From the Mother: Language and African Americans*. New York: Routledge, p. 2.

³ Doherty, 1993, p. 158; cited in McCoy, T. (2016), 'Subject contact relatives', *Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America*. (Available online at <http://ygd.yale.edu/phenomena/subject-contact-relatives>. Accessed on 2024-03-06). Updated by Katie Martin (2018) and Oliver Shoulson (2020).

1. Read Heidi Schmidt's webpost listed in the Suggested Readings section (above). Based on the order of adjectives described, select language examples to analyze. Do any of the data violate the 'rule'? Use your data to create a presentation or paper based on your findings.

Data could be derived from

- A. Advertisements (print or video)
- B. Poems (e.g., e. e. cummings, William Carlos Williams, Robert Creeley)
- C. Conlangs (i.e., created languages) for television (e.g., Game of Thrones, Into the Badlands, The 100), movies (e.g. Harry Potter series, Avatar, Star Trek, Despicable me), or texts (e.g., Harry Potter, Star Wars, 1984).
- D. Another language you are studying
- E. Your favorite song lyrics

2. To help you bring the expected order of English adjectives to the forefront of your consciousness, imagine you have a friend who is learning English. You would like to help this person internalize the English adjective order. Create a flow chart for your friend and other English language learners that will help them select the correct order when they are constructing written sentences.
3. Here is another way you can discover variety of English adjective use. Create a list of 20 sentences that feature serial attributive adjectives (something along the lines of *The seven, useful, large, antique, round, green, city lights are in the garage.*) In some, adhere to the order. In others, vary the expected order. Now, ask native speakers to rate the sentences based on their judgments of how grammatical each sentence is. For instance,

7 (excellent) 5 (acceptable) 3 (acceptable but odd) 1 (Ungrammatical)

Then, share your results with your peers and compare what you all have found. Does everyone agree?

4. Adjectives, Large Language Models (LLMs), and gender bias. Read Mihaylov & Shtedritski (2024) and summarize their findings about gender bias in LLMs. Why do think looking at adjectives in particular is a good strategy to examine gender biases? Can you come up with your own research project based on this article?
5. Adjectives in Marketing and Business. Read the short article in *The Economist* about luxury brands and the adjectives associated with them. Then, pick some brands you personally like and conduct a survey. Ask 10-15 people to describe the brands. Then, analyze the adjectives they provided. What do they show? How are the brands perceived? Do you agree with that perception yourself? Why or why not?

Answer key for additional items

Exercise 1

rustling, soft, soothing, ancient, untold, cozy, endless, boundless, timeless

Exercise 2

	derivational	inflectional	additional
a) <i>quaint</i> , <i>feline</i>	N/A N/A	quaint > quainter > quaintest N/A	faint > fainter > faintest more/most feline more divine > more/most divine
b) <i>unique</i>	N/A		more/most unique more/most oblique
c) <i>dead</i>	N/A	dead > deader > deadeast	red > redder > reddest

Exercise 5

All bold words are attributive adjectives.