

Chapter 4

Adjectives and Adverbs

Abstract This chapter focuses on two closely related word classes: adjectives, which we explore in Sect. 4.1, and adverbs, which we explore in Sect. 4.2. The chapter examines the differences and similarities of these two word classes and also considers the issues in categorizing the various subclasses of adverbs. Adjectives and adverbs often differ in form but not always. Some adjectives and adverbs have no “typical” derivational endings, and some adjectives and adverbs have derivational endings typical of the other class. The key to distinguishing between the two classes is their function: adjectives modify nouns. Adverbs, as we saw in Chap. 2 and examine more closely in this chapter, can modify just about anything except nouns and pronouns.

Keywords adjectives · adverbs · comparative · superlative · manner adverbs · frequency adverbs · time and place adverbs · other adverbs

4.1 Section 1: Adjectives

Adjectives comprise a rich category that gives flavor to the written and spoken language. Unlike structure words, adjectives do not provide grammatical meaning to a sentence. Instead, adjectives are content words that provide imagery and character to discourse by describing the nouns in a sentence.

What clues are there to help identify adjectives?

As with nouns, we can use semantic, morphological, and structural clues to identify adjectives.

4.1.1 *Semantic Clues*

As you will remember from Chap. 3, when we use semantic clues to help us identify the function of a word, we are using the meaning of a word itself to provide a clue to its use. For example, *long*, *small*, *hot*, and *great* are descriptive words that

describe something. These words are descriptive adjectives that fall into a group of what are referred to as *prototypical adjectives*.

As we saw in Chapt. 3, words that carry core semantic properties for a particular word class are called *prototypical*. Prototypical adjectives are words that are easily identified as adjectives on the basis of their inherent characteristic of describing nouns or pronouns, such as *crazy* or *horrible*. Such adjectives are also called “best example” adjectives and are the kinds of adjectives native speakers will generally think of when they are asked to provide an adjective.

Try Discovery Activity 1 if you would like more practice in identifying prototypical adjectives.

Discovery Activity 1: Prototypical Adjectives

1. Read the following sentences.
2. Provide one or two adjectives for each underlined noun.

Example:

The boy refused to put away his toys. *angry, little*

- (a) The dog bit the man.
 - (b) Birds flew over my head.
 - (c) The engineers failed to realize the impact the project would have.
 - (d) Look at the horses!
3. Compare your adjectives and those of your classmates.
 - Would you consider these adjectives “best example” or prototypical adjectives? Why or why not?

Discussion: Discovery Activity 1

The purpose of Discovery Activity 1 is to illustrate how much you, as either a native speaker or a highly proficient non-native speaker, know about adjectives. Think about the words you and your classmates provided. What are they telling or describing about each noun?

Whether or not you know all the rules governing the use of adjectives, you intuitively know which words describe nouns. You are relying upon a subconscious knowledge of the semantic properties of adjectives to complete the sentences in this Discovery Activity. However, as we noted in our discussion of nouns and semantic meaning in Chap. 3, it is usually difficult for learners of English to rely on semantic clues; they must use other clues to help them determine which words are functioning as adjectives. We look now at morphological and structural clues, which are more productive for ESL/EFL learners in identifying adjectives.

4.1.2 Morphological Clues

Morphological clues, such as the derivational suffixes discussed in Chap. 2, offer clues as to which words are adjectives. You will recall that in Chap. 1 you were able to identify some of the nonsense words in the poem *Jabberwocky* as adjectives based on their derivational suffixes (morphological clues) and/or on their sentence position (structural clues).

What are some of the typical derivational suffixes for adjectives?

4.1.2.1 Derivational Clues

In Chap. 2, we saw how certain derivational suffixes provide us with clues to identifying class membership. Some of the suffixes we examined were those that indicate adjective class membership such as *-ous* (e.g., *gorgeous*) and *-ful* (e.g., *helpful*).

Although not all adjectives can be identified on the basis of morphological suffixes, many can be. Discovery Activity 2 reviews some common derivational suffixes of adjectives. If you feel that you are strong in this area, you can move on to the next section.

Discovery Activity 2: Adjectives

Part I

Look at the following excerpts and underline all the adjectives you find.

A.

Love him or hate him—it is impossible to downplay the importance of Columbus’s voyage...[Davis, K. C. (2003). *Don’t know much about history: Everything you need to know about American history but never learned* (p. 4). New York: HarperCollins.]

B.

Autocratic and conservative, he tyrannized his workers. Ford’s attitude was that workers were unreliable and shiftless. [Davis, K. C. (2003). *Don’t know much about history: Everything you need to know about American history but never learned* (p. 338). New York: HarperCollins.]

Part II

Look at the adjectives you underlined.

1. Discuss which morphological clues helped you identify the adjectives.
2. Were you able to use morphological clues for all the adjectives? Why or why not?

Discussion: Discovery Activity 2

Discovery Activity 2 demonstrates how many adjectives can be identified by their morphological endings. Below are the common adjective suffixes found in this Discovery Activity (bolded), as well as some additional examples.

<i>-ible/-able</i>	<i>-ic</i>	<i>-ive</i>	<i>-less</i>
impossible/unreliable	autocratic	conservative	shiftless
comprehensible	academic	active	helpless
acceptable	basic	selective	jobless

As we discussed in Chap. 2, learning about derivational endings is very helpful for ESL/EFL learners both in helping them identify word classes and in building their vocabulary. However, learners of English need to be aware that some suffixes can identify words that belong to more than one class. An example of this is *-ive*, included in the above chart, which is also found in nouns. Consider the sentence:

They are *conservatives*.

In this sentence, *conservatives* is a plural noun, meaning people who belong to a conservative party or movement. Likewise, the word *relative* can be either an adjective or a noun as in:

It is a *relative* problem.

I have a *relative* in New York.

Something that is *relative* refers to a type of comparison or relation to something else. A person who is connected to us by blood or marriage is the noun (i.e., a *relative* of ours). The form of the two words is identical, but their function is different, which we can tell from the sentence position of *relative*. In first sentence, *relative* comes before a noun, i.e., in the common sentence position for an adjective position. In the second sentence, *relative* is to the right of the verb, i.e., a common sentence position for a noun object.

Are there any inflectional clues to help us identify adjectives?

4.1.2.2 Inflectional Clues

As we saw in Chap. 2, adjectives and adverbs can take the *-er* and *-est* inflections to show the *comparative* and *superlative*. When we compare two things, we use the comparative. When we compare more than two things, we use the superlative. We can identify many adjectives by their ability to take the comparative suffix *-er* and the superlative suffix *-est* (with some spelling changes).

Adjectives and Inflectional Endings		
Adjective	Comparative <i>-er</i>	Superlative <i>-est</i>
cool	cooler than	the coolest
mad	madder than	the maddest
lean	leaner than	the leanest
happy	happier than	the happiest
little	littler than	the littlest

Note that in sentences with comparatives, we must use *than* in addition to the *-er*. For the superlative, we must use *the* before the adjective.

Sample Sentences:

- It is **cool** today.
- It is **cooler** *than* yesterday.
- It is *the* **coolest** day of the year.

Why do we say more beautiful and not *beautifuler?

For many adjectives with two syllables and for those with more than two syllables, we add *more* and *most* before the adjective to form the comparative and superlative forms.

Adjectives and More/Most		
Adjective	Comparative <i>more</i>	Superlative <i>most</i>
beautiful	more beautiful than	the most beautiful
gorgeous	more gorgeous than	the most gorgeous
enthusiastic	more enthusiastic than	the most enthusiastic

Sample Sentences:

- That is a **beautiful** house.
- That house on the corner is **more beautiful** *than* the one across from us.
- The house over there is *the* **most beautiful** of them all.

Short adjectives with two syllables can form the comparative and superlative either by adding the inflectional ending *-er/-est* or by using *more* or *most*. Often, both forms are used, although one form may be more common than the other. Adjectives that end in the suffix *-le* (e.g., *little*) usually take *-er* and *-est* (*littler*, *littlest*), as do adjectives that end in *-y* (*funny*, *funnier*, *funniest*.)

There are also a few irregular comparative and superlative forms:

Irregular Adjectives in the Comparative and Superlative		
Adjective	Comparative <i>more</i>	Superlative <i>most</i>
good	better than	the best
bad	worse than	the worst
little	less than	the least

Sample Sentences:

I have **little** money.
 She has **less** money *than* Sandra.
 Alex has *the* **least** amount of money.

Descriptive adjectives can also be used to compare two like nouns or noun phrases. In such cases, we use the form *as + adjective + as*:

The man was *as tall as* the door.
 Avery is *as blonde as* her mother.

The *as + adjective + as* form is often used in similes when two unlike things are compared:

My cat is *as loud as* a lion.
 She has eyes *as clear as* glass.

Can all adjectives be compared?

There are some adjectives that cannot be compared. These are generally adjectives from technical fields (e.g., *biological* or *psychological*), or what some grammarians call *absolute terms* (e.g., *chief* or *perfect*). Many grammar books label adjectives that can be compared as *gradable* adjectives to distinguish them from adjectives that cannot be compared.

What kinds of problems do ESL/EFL learners have with comparative and superlative adjectives?

- ***Learner difficulties***

Conceptually, ESL/EFL learners usually have little difficulty understanding the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. In practice, they may confuse which adjectives take the *er/–est* endings and which ones require *more/most*. Sometimes, they add both an inflectional ending and *more/most*:

*We had a *boringer* class last time.
 *Her crying is *the most loudest* of all my babies.

As we will also see in our study of verbs in Chaps. 5, 6, and 7, whenever there are two or more parts to a particular structure, ESL/EFL learners will often omit one or more of these elements. For example, they may omit *the* in the superlative:

*It is *oldest* book I own.

Or, in comparing two like nouns (*as + adjective + as*), learners may forget to use the second *as*:

*Mr. Jones is *as tall* Mr. Smith.

Errors also occur in spelling changes when the inflectional endings are added to certain adjectives, for example:

*I am *busyier* this semester than last semester.

Overall, learners have fewer difficulties with the spelling changes (see Appendix C) than they do with the use of *-er/-est*, *more/most*, and *as + adjective + as*.

The next Discovery Activity looks at adjectives that have common derivational endings and adjectives that do not. You can check your answers to Part I in the Answer Key at the end of the chapter. Discuss your responses to Part II with your classmates.

Discovery Activity 3: More Adjectives

Part I

Look at the following excerpts and underline all the adjectives you find.

A.

After everyone took a bite of the delicious creamy cake, we looked around to see who had it. [Kline, S. (2003). *Horrible Harry and the holiday daze* (p. 19). New York: Viking.]

B.

As Tad walked by the little empty chapel in the woods and past its small, old graveyard, he heard voices...[Young, R. (1993). *The scary story reader* (p. 66). Little Rock, AR: August Horror.]

C.

Many museums display giant ant colonies that you can watch through big windows. [Gomel, L. (2002). *The ant: Energetic worker* (p. 21). Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.]

Part II

Look at the adjectives you underlined.

- Discuss whether you were able to use derivational clues for all the adjectives. Why or why not?
- Were you able to use inflectional clues for any of the adjectives you identified? Why or why not?

In addition to the morphological clues we have been discussing, we can also use structural clues to help us in our identification of adjectives.

4.1.3 Structural Clues

Consider the sentence:

She killed *a* **big** *mosquito*.

In this sentence, the position of *big* between the article *a* and the noun *mosquito* is a structural clue indicating the adjective function of the word *big*. As you will remember, since word order in English is very fixed, the sentence position of a word tells us what a word is functioning as.

Do adjectives only occur before nouns?

Adjectives can occur in three positions:

- (a) before a noun
- (b) after certain verbs
- (c) after certain nouns

Adjective Position	Examples
prenominal (before the noun)	Betsy bought a huge <i>house</i> .
after a stative or linking verb	Her house <i>is</i> huge .
postnominal (after the noun)	He needs to do <i>something</i> useful .

The most common position for adjectives is before a noun. Many grammar books refer to this position as *prenominal*. In Excerpt B of Discovery Activity 3, for instance, *little* and *empty* occur before the noun *chapel*. These adjectives give us descriptive information about *chapel*. Their sentence position before *chapel* is an indicator of their function as adjectives.

Adjectives can also come after certain verbs, especially the verb *be*. This position is often referred to as the *predicate* position. Verbs that are followed by adjectives are often called *stative* or *linking* verbs. These verbs refer to mental states, attitudes, perceptions, emotions, or existence. They “connect” the subject with something after the verb (see Chap. 6).

The mosquito *was* **big**.

The water *feels* **cold**.

Adjectives that come after a linking or stative verb describe or modify the noun phrase that is to the left of the verb. In the first sentence, **big** is describing something about *The mosquito*. In the next sentence, **cold** is describing something about *The water*.

Some adjectives occur after the noun they are describing. This is often called *postnominal* sentence position. Often nouns that have adjectives following them have to do with units of measurement:

The quake caused a crack five *inches* **wide**.
 They have a pool twelve *feet* **deep**.
 The rapids run two *miles* **long**.

Most adjectives can come either before a noun or after a linking verb. A few, however, can only occur in certain positions. We say *Rob ate the **entire** hamburger* but not **The hamburger was **entire***; and *Meg looks **asleep*** but not **The **asleep** girl is Meg*.

Why should I know so much about adjective sentence position?

For native speakers and highly proficient non-native speakers, adjective sentence position is not an issue. However, ESL/EFL learners need to learn both basic positions and the exceptions. How difficult this will be for learners depends greatly on their native language. If, for instance, normal adjective position is similar to English, as in Chinese, learners will have fewer difficulties than Spanish speakers where the adjective position is different.

In doing Discovery Activity 4, think about ESL/EFL learners and what kinds of things need to be pointed out to them.

Discovery Activity 4: Adjective Position

Look at the following sentences.

1. Underline the adjectives.
2. Decide which sentences sound correct.
3. If the sentence sounds incorrect, explain why.
 - (a) He was a mere boy when he left home.
 - (b) He was mere when he left home.
 - (c) She cried out with a sharp shriek.
 - (d) Her shriek was sharp.
 - (e) A cold rain hit their faces.
 - (f) The rain was cold as it hit their faces.
 - (g) The story was an utter fabrication.
 - (h) The fabrication was utter.

Discussion: Discovery Activity 4

Sentences b and h are incorrect because the adjectives in these sentences, *mere* and *utter*, are examples of the limited number of adjectives that cannot be used in predicate position (i.e., after the verb).

In Sentences c, d, e, f, the adjectives *sharp* and *cold* can, like the majority of English adjectives, come before the noun (prenominal position) or after the linking verb *be* (predicate position).

Word order is important in English. For the most part, word order is fixed and not very flexible. The vast majority of adjectives in English come before the noun or after a linking verb; therefore, teachers need to focus primarily on these sentence positions, particularly at for English language learners at lower levels of proficiency.

The next Discovery Activity has teacher-created sentences intended for extra practice if you still have questions about identifying adjectives (the answers are in the Answer Key). If you are comfortable with adjectives, move on to the next section.

Discovery Activity 5: Identifying Adjectives

Look at the following sentences.

- (a) The new students had excellent scores on the tests.
- (b) Some of the concerns we had were important.
- (c) Some parents are unhappy with the current changes in the curriculum.
- (d) Although their home is humble, they are content to live as they do.
- (e) The cold, snowy weather over the long weekend resulted in slow sales for retailers.
- (f) When the viewers saw the movie, they were ecstatic over the ambitious plot and the stupendous special effects.

1. Underline the adjectives and noun or noun phrase each adjective is modifying.
2. What clues helped you identify the adjectives?

Examples:

The large dog barked loudly.

Large modifies or describes the noun *dog*. It comes between the article *the* and before the noun *dog*.

The salesclerk is busy.

Busy modifies or describes the noun phrase *the salesclerk*. An adjective after the verb *be* modifies the noun before the verb; *-y* at the end of a word often indicates membership in the adjective class.

When there is more than one adjective, do they occur in a certain order?

4.1.4 Order of Adjectives

In Discovery Activity 3 in Excerpts A and B, we saw that two or more adjectives can appear together:

delicious creamy cake
little empty chapel
small, old graveyard

The order of adjectives in English is not random. Different types of adjectives occur in a certain order. The exception to this is adjectives of general description and those of physical state (size, shape, color), where their order may be reversed.

They own an **enormous, long-handled** cutting knife.
 They own a **long-handled, enormous** cutting knife.

She has a **round yellow** sofa.
 She has a **yellow round** sofa.

When the adjective order is reversed, as in the previous sentences, the speaker generally wants to emphasize or draw attention to the first adjective in the sequence. Native speakers and highly proficient non-native speakers know intuitively the order in which adjectives should occur when more than one is used. The order of adjectives is not something that they have difficulty with, nor generally even think about. For ESL/EFL learners, the order of a string of adjectives is something they need to learn. Much of this knowledge is gained through practice, but a table such as the following one detailing the order of adjectives can be helpful for learners at lower levels of proficiency. Although changes in normal adjective order do not interfere with sentence meaning or comprehension, such changes do lead to awkward and/or strange-sounding sentences. Note that this chart provides only general guidance and not hard-and-fast rules of word order.

Adjective Order								
Opinion	General description	Size	Shape	Color	Place of origin	Material	Use or type	Sample noun
	fierce				Siberian			tiger
			oval			metal		frame
				blue			cutting	board
beautiful						leather	cowboy	boots
		small	round					dish

Sample Sentences:

The children admired the **fierce Siberian** tiger.
 She bought an **oval metal** frame.
 I have a **blue cutting** board.
 The visitors bought **beautiful leather cowboy** boots.
 Her aunt brought the dip in a **small, round** dish.

Discovery Activity 6 provides practice in sorting adjectives into categories. As you will see when you do this activity, it is not always easy to distinguish between some of the categories. Keep in mind that the table above is only meant as a guideline or introduction to the order of adjectives. When you have finished, compare your answers to those in the Answer Key.

Discovery Activity 6: Adjective Word Order

Look at the following sentences.

Part I

1. Underline the adjectives.
2. In sentences where there are two or more adjectives, discuss whether you could change the word order of the adjectives.

Example:

The large spotted dog barked loudly.
 The large spotted dog barked loudly.

These two adjectives refer to size and color, so it doesn't matter in which order they occur.

- (a) Do you own any light cotton dresses?
- (b) The pirates' swift ship outran the ponderous tanker.
- (c) Her elderly mother received a box of expensive Swiss chocolates for her birthday.
- (d) Mr. Branch was a little squat man with bushy black hair.
- (e) Rapunzel's long golden hair was wrapped in a priceless silk scarf.
- (f) The flower consists of delicate blossoms on a slender green stalk with broad rectangular leaves.
- (g) The busy young architect displayed his plans on a drawing board.

Part II

Make a table like the one below. Place each of the adjectives you have identified in the sentences above into the categories on your chart.

The words from the example in Part I have been done for you.

general description	size	shape	color	place of origin	material	use
large			spotted			

Is there any special punctuation I need to tell my students about?

When there are more than two adjectives, a comma may be necessary to separate them, particularly if they are adjectives of opinion, general description, size, shape, or color. As a rule of thumb, we do not use commas between adjectives referring to place of origin or type. In cases where you are not sure whether or not to use a comma, a simple test is to use *and* where you think the comma should go. If you can insert *and* between two adjectives, we usually need to add a comma:

I saw a boisterous, rowdy crowd of boys in the park.
I saw a boisterous **and** rowdy crowd of boys in the park.

The zoo has clever, mischievous Capuchin monkeys.
The zoo has clever **and** mischievous Capuchin monkeys.

but not:

*The zoo has clever, mischievous, Capuchin monkeys.
*The zoo has clever **and** mischievous **and** Capuchin monkeys.
*The zoo has clever, mischievous **and** Capuchin monkeys.

4.1.5 Special Types of Adjectives

In this section, we will look at two special types of adjectives: nouns that function as adjectives and participial adjectives.

One of my students asked me if school in school bus is an adjective like small in small bus. How can it be an adjective if it's a noun?

4.1.5.1 Nouns Functioning as Adjectives

In English, as we have seen, class membership is no guarantee of function. Nouns, for example, frequently function as adjectives. In other words, one noun can come before another noun to modify it. Consider the following sentences:

The horse jumped over the **stone** wall.
The **train** station is near the port.

Here **stone** and **train** are both nouns describing what kind of *wall* and what kind of *station*. **Stone** and **train** are functioning as adjectives because they are modifying the nouns they precede. We know, however, that while they may be functioning as adjectives, **stone** and **train** have not changed word class membership because they do not share the features or characteristics of other adjectives, but rather the features inherent to nouns.

What is an example of a feature or characteristic?

One feature of count nouns is that they have singular and plural forms. If you remember from our discussion of nouns and inflections in Chap. 3, only regular count nouns can take the plural *-s* inflectional ending. We can use this morphological feature to help identify a noun functioning as an adjective by considering whether we can attach an *-s* to that noun when it stands alone.

The horse jumped over the **stones**.
The **trains** are near the port.

Adjectives cannot take this inflectional ending. We cannot say **stones wall* even though there may be many stones in that wall, or **birds coop* even though there are many birds in a bird coop. The *-s* plural inflection can only attach itself to count nouns and only when these nouns are functioning as nouns. When count nouns function as adjectives, they cannot take the plural inflection. Non-count nouns can also function as adjectives, but we cannot use this morphological feature because non-count nouns do not have plural counterparts. With the non-count nouns we must rely on semantic and structural clues.

Try the next Discovery Activity to see how well you are able to identify nouns functioning as adjectives. Remember that nouns modifying other nouns do not change their class membership, only their function. You can find the answers in the Answer Key at the end of the chapter.

Discovery Activity 7: Nouns Functioning as Adjectives

Underline the nouns functioning as adjectives in the excerpts.

A.

These are all our issue teams. They're mostly graduate students in climate science, not attorneys. [Crichton, M. (2004). *State of fear*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, p. 78.]

B.

- (1) I race across the baseball field, past a bunch of houses that line my street, and to my tree house in our backyard.
- (2) Right when I sat down, Vince asked, "Are you wearing a pajama top to school?"
- (3) Then I mess up my hair even worse than Brian's and make a fish face to go with my new, crazy hairdo.
- (4) I'll have the school counselor work with Vince to teach him the skills he needs to be a better friend.

[Ludwig, T. (2006). *Just kidding*. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press. No page numbers.]

C.

- (1) If you don't have the space for a vegetable garden, or you miss the taste of fresh greens in the middle of winter, growing in containers is a great solution.
- (2) You can design a container garden just like you would a backyard garden, except it's much easier because you can move it around.

[Planet Natural: Growing vegetables in containers | Vegetable Gardening Guru. (n.d.). <https://www.planetnatural.com/vegetable-gardening-guru/container-vegetables/>]

A noun modifying another noun and thus functioning as an adjective—is this a difficult concept for ESL/EFL learners?

- ***Learner difficulties***

Conceptually, understanding that the first noun is modifying the second noun is not that difficult for language learners. An error that some ESL/EFL learners make is adding the *-s* plural inflection to the modifying noun. This is especially common if a plural inflection is required in their native language (e.g., Spanish) for adjectives modifying plural nouns. For such learners, *stones walls* would be logical because in their language the adjective (*stones*) has to take a plural inflection because the noun (*walls*) has a plural inflection.

Learners sometimes become confused by nouns that end in *s* that are not plural, such as *news*, *pants*, or *linguistics*. As we saw in Chap. 2, the *s* of these words is not a separate morpheme. Nouns ending in *s* can also modify other nouns as in *news program* or *linguistics program*.

4.1.5.2 Participial Adjectives

Participial adjectives are adjectives that end in *-ing* or *-ed* (or *-en* in some instances). These are adjectives that are derived from verbs but function as adjectives. Like any other adjective, they modify nouns and can occur in three positions: prenominal, postnominal, or after a linking or stative verb.

The following poem has many examples of adjectives ending in *-ing*. They are bolded to make them easy for you to recognize.

My world is made of things I like:
creeping bugs,
wiggling worms,
leaping frogs,
drifting seashells,

shifting stones,
singing birds,
swimming fish,
dancing butterflies,
growing fruit,
falling leaves,
blooming flowers,
shining sun,
splashing rain,
glittering stars,
fluttering moths,
 and **glowing** moon.

Thank you world for everything.

[Ehlert, L. (2002). *In my world*. New York: Harcourt. No page numbers.]

How can we distinguish participial adjectives?

Sometimes participial adjectives are mistakenly identified as verbs because of the *-ed* and *-ing* inflectional endings. These are the inflections used for past tense verbs and for present participle of the progressive verb phrases (see Chaps. 5 and 6). However, we know that in following sentences, *annoyed* and *irritating* are participial adjectives for several reasons.

The *annoyed* bird squawked.
 There was an *irritating* quietness to the landscape.

First, an important structural clue is the sentence position of *annoyed* and *irritating*. Remember that word order is very important in English. Both words come before a noun (*bird, quietness*), the most common position for adjectives. Second, the *-ing* form, in order to be considered a verb, must be part of a verb phrase. That is, a verb phrase with *-ing* must include any tense of the helping verb *be* and the present participle *-ing* attached to the main verb, as in *The bird was squawking* or *She is walking*. Likewise, the *-ed* form must also be part of a verb phrase to be considered a verb. Such verb phrases must include any tense of the helping verb *have* and the past participle *-ed*, as in *The bird has squawked* or *She had walked*. (see Chaps. 5 and 6).

A simple way to test whether or not an *-ing* or *-ed* word is an adjective (as opposed to a verb) is to use *very* before it.

The Very Test	
	+ very before participial adjective
The <i>rushed</i> publication had many errors.	The very <i>rushed</i> publication had many errors.
The text supplied <i>confusing</i> explanations.	The text supplied very <i>confusing</i> explanations.

Because we can take our original and add *very* before *rushed* and *confusing*, we know that these are participial adjectives. Now look at these sentences and see what happens when we add *very* before *resulted* or *supplying*:

*The ambitious project **very** *resulted* in errors.

*The text is **very** *supplying* confusing explanations for the problems.

Inserting *very* before *resulted* and *supplying* tells us that these are not participial adjectives because it creates ungrammatical sentences. *Resulted* is a past tense verb and *supplying* is part of the present progressive verb tense *is supplying* (see Chap. 6).

While the *very* test is a good clue in determining participial adjectives, it does not always work. If, for example, we take some of the participial adjectives used in the selection at the beginning of this section, we see that inserting *very* works with some of the *-ing* participial adjectives but not with all of them. The insertion of *very* before these participial adjectives sounds strange:

My world is made of things I like:

very creeping bugs,

very wiggling worms,

very leaping frogs,

very drifting seashells,

very shifting stones,

Discovery Activity 8 asks you to identify participial adjectives. As you do the activity, think about whether or not you can insert *very* and about the sentence position of the words you are trying to identify as participial adjectives. The answers are in the Answer Key at the end of this chapter.

Discovery Activity 8: Participial Adjectives

Look at the following teacher-created paragraphs.

1. Underline the participial adjectives.
2. Discuss what clues you used to identify the participial adjectives.

A.

It is both fun and rewarding to grow your own vegetables. Many people dream of a large sprawling site large enough to grow many different vegetables. But most don't have this option and must make efficient use of a reduced area. One way is to create 3- or 4-foot wide raised beds that make good use of existing garden space. When we increase the width of growing beds, we reduce the growing area that we walk on. Untrammelled soil around plants is better for their roots.

B.

Jackie McKenzie sits at her desk with potted plants on the windowsill and describes her life as an archeologist:

“The life of a field anthropologist can be difficult. You may spend hours at a gritty, sweltering excavation. On the other hand, you may encounter exciting finds that may revolutionize traditional scenarios.”

In her forthcoming book, Dr. McKenzie describes some revolutionizing finds. She notes, for instance, that prolonged droughts did not necessarily drive inhabitants off settled areas, but that warfare played a determining role in the abandonment of certain settlements.

Contrasting Participial Adjectives: *-ing* versus *-ed*

Some participial adjectives have both an *-ing* and an *-ed* form. These are called *contrasting participial adjectives* and are generally derived from verbs that have to do with emotion or mental states. We use the *-ed* participial form when we describe something that **was done by someone or something else**. Consider the sentence:

The girl is bored.

Here the subject noun phrase is *The girl*. This subject is not the one doing the action or the activity resulting in the state of boredom. It is something or someone else who is causing the boredom of *the girl*.

Grammar books often suggest that in many cases, the *-ed* form is related to what we call the passive voice because we can add a *by* phrase (see Chap. 8):

The girl is bored by the book.

However, while the addition of the *by* phrase works with some of the *-ed* adjectives, it does not hold true in all instances. For example:

He's interested in science.

In this sentence, there is no *by* phrase that could connect this sentence to the passive voice.

The *-ing* participial form, in contrast to the *-ed* form, is used when the **subject is the one doing an action or activity that affects others**. Consider the sentence:

The girl is boring the rest of the class.

Here we understand that *The girl* is the one doing an action or activity affecting the state of others.

The following chart lists common participial adjectives that have contrasting meaning in their *-ing* and *-ed* forms

Common Contrasting Participial Adjectives			
amusing	amused	embarrassing	embarrassed
frightening	frightened	interesting	interested
annoying	annoyed	satisfying	satisfied
pleasing	pleased	boring	bored
disappointing	disappointed	comforting	comforted
surprising	surprised	worrying	worried
exciting	excited	confusing	confused

Do ESL/EFL students find the participial adjectives confusing?

- ***Learner difficulties***

English language learners, as well as native speakers, often have difficulty recognizing participial adjectives as adjectives rather than as part of verb phrases. They may confuse an *-ing*, which is part of a verb phrase, with the *-ing* of a participial adjective:

The team *is winning* the game.
My team is the *winning* team.

In the first sentence, *winning* is part of the verb phrase *is winning*. This sentence contrasts with the second sentence where *winning* is a participial adjective modifying the noun *team*.

Recognizing the *-ing* as part of a verb phrase rather than as a participial adjective is even more difficult when it is a more complex verb phrase and/or there are words separating the parts of the verb phrase:

The team *has been winning* all the games.
The team *was already winning* the game when they shot another goal.

Another difficulty ESL/EFL learners have with participial adjectives is distinguishing between those that have contrasting *-ing* and *-ed* forms. It is often difficult for learners to remember and correctly use contrasting participial adjectives such as *bored* versus *boring*.

Finally, learners sometimes become confused when they encounter words that contain *-ing* where it is part of the actual word and not an inflectional ending. Such words include *bring*, *icing*, *everything*, *nothing*, *pudding*, *evening*, *morning*, and *wedding*, among others.

4.2 Section 2: Adverbs***Isn't an adverb a word that ends in -ly and something that describes a verb?***

The common definition of an adverb usually defines adverbs as words that generally end in *-ly* and that describe verbs. However, there are many other adverbs that do not end in *-ly* and that describe many other things.

The adverb class is sometimes called the “trash can” class because grammarians have traditionally placed many words that fit nowhere else into this category. Adverbs can describe just about anything, including a verb, an adjective, a clause, or an entire sentence. Because adverbs can describe so many different things, there are many subclasses of the adverb class, which we examine here. Given the variety of adverbs and their functions, not all grammarians agree on the subclasses.

4.2.1 *-ly* Adverbs

Adverbs that take the derivational *-ly* ending comprise the largest subclass of adverbs. These adverbs are the easiest to identify and understand. These *-ly* adverbs are generally considered prototypical adverbs. Since these adverbs generally modify verbs, they have strong lexical meaning. They are often referred to as *descriptive* or *manner adverbs* because they answer the question “how” or “in what manner” the verb of the sentence does something:

He responded angrily to their accusations.

Question: How did he respond to their accusations?

Answer: He responded *angrily* to their accusations.

She answered the question correctly.

Question: How did she answer the question?

Answer: She answered the question *correctly*.

Many of these *-ly* adverbs are derived from adjectives¹:

Adjective + <i>-ly</i> → Adverb	
sudden	suddenly
soft	softly
beautiful	beautifully
gracious	graciously
nice	nicely

Unlike nouns and adjectives, the position of these adverbs is flexible. Manner (*-ly*) adverbs can occur in initial or final sentence position, or before or after the verb. In verb phrases, these adverbs can occur between the auxiliary verb (helping verb) and the main verb. Generally, the sentence position of an adverb depends on what the speaker wants to stress or emphasize.

What do you mean by “what the speaker wants to stress or emphasize”?

Up until now we have emphasized repeatedly how important word order is in English. Because adverb position, unlike word classes, is not as fixed, speakers can give different nuances of meaning to what they want to say by changing the sentence position of the adverb.

Look at the following examples. As you read each example, think about what difference the speaker is conveying by the different placement of *softly*.

Softly, she called to the children.

She called to the children **softly**.

She **softly** called to the children.

¹See Appendix C for spelling changes after adding *-ly*.

She called **softly** to the children.
 She was **softly** calling to the children.

Are all words that end in *-ly* adverbs?

Although not all words that end in *-ly* are adverbs, most are. There are some adjectives that also end in *-ly*. These include common adjectives such as *friendly*, *lively*, and *lovely*. English also has some nouns and verbs that end in *-ly*, such as *assembly*, *jelly*, *supply*, and *rely*. These *-ly* nouns are not as difficult for ESL/EFL learners as distinguishing between *-ly* adverbs and *-ly* adjectives.

Is there anything to help me distinguish between *-ly* adverbs and *-ly* adjectives?

There is a rule of thumb that you can use to help you distinguish between *-ly* adjectives and *-ly* adverbs:

- If a word ends in *-ly* and you remove this ending and discover a *noun*, then the *-ly* word is an adjective.
- If the word ends in *-ly* and you remove this ending and discover an *adjective*, then the *-ly* word is an adverb.

Adjective → Noun		Adverb → Adjective	
heavenly	heaven	quietly	quiet
cowardly	coward	sweetly	sweet
motherly	mother	brutally	brutal

As always, there are exceptions to this rule of thumb. The word *lowly* is an adjective, but when you remove the *-ly*, the word *low* is also an adjective. Nevertheless, this rule of thumb is useful in most instances and can help identify the word class membership of a particular word.

See how well you do in distinguishing between adjectives and adverbs in Discovery Activity 9. Check your answers in a dictionary.

Discovery Activity 9: Adverb or Adjective?

Look at the following words.

heavenly	fully	princely	richly	nightly	scholarly	sincerely
brightly	newly	yearly	masterly	bestly	nicely	remarkably

1. Remove the *-ly* ending from each word. Decide if the word is an adjective or a noun. Remember:
 - If it is a noun, then the original word ending in *-ly* is an adjective.
 - If it is an adjective, then the original word ending in *-ly* is an adverb.
2. Place the original word with its *-ly* ending under either **Adjective** or **Adverb**.

Example:

heavenly → heaven = a noun

Adjective

Adverb

heavenly

*In addition to the *-ly* or manner adverbs, what are some of the other subclasses of adverbs?*

4.2.2 Subclasses of Adverbs

The subclasses of adverbs are based on the meaning and/or function of the different adverbs in sentences and in discourse. Two commonly accepted subclasses of adverbs are *frequency adverbs* and *time and place adverbs*.

4.2.2.1 Frequency Adverbs

Frequency adverbs describe how often an action takes place; some of these also end in *-ly*. One of these frequency adverbs consists of two words, *hardly ever*.

Common Adverbs of Frequency				
always	generally	usually	hardly ever	seldom
frequently	often	sometimes	never	rarely
occasionally				

Because of the semantic meaning of these adverbs, they are often used with the simple present or simple past tenses (see Chap. 6). The most common sentence position of frequency adverbs is before the verb they are modifying, except when they are used with the verb *be*. Whenever the verb *be* occurs, the frequency adverb follows.

Common Sentence Position of Frequency Adverbs	
Curtis generally comes on time. We never traveled to Malaysia.	before the main verb
Julie is seldom late. The students were often rowdy.	after the verb <i>be</i>

Although the chart illustrates the most common sentence position of frequency adverbs, as we observed previously, their sentence position can vary, depending on the speaker's intent. We can change, for instance, the first sentence to: *Generally, Curtis comes on time*, particularly if we want to emphasize a contrast: *Generally, Curtis comes on time, but today he's late*.

Are these frequency adverbs difficult for ESL/EFL learners?

- **Learner difficulties**

Learners do not have a great deal of difficulty with these adverbs, with the exception of *hardly ever*. First, it consists of two words, *hardly* + *ever*. Second, for many learners the phrase itself does not make sense. Many confuse the *ever* in *hardly ever* with another use of *ever*, meaning *continuously*, as in the sentence *I have lived in this house ever since I was 10*.

Low-proficiency ESL/EFL learners usually require practice in learning the use and the placement of frequency adverbs within the sentence.

Discover Activity 10 asks you to identify the frequency adverbs. Check your answers with a classmate or a friend. If you are unsure about a word, check a dictionary.

Discovery Activity 10: Frequency Adverbs

Look at the following paragraph and underline the frequency adverbs.

Brianna generally starts her mornings with a cup of coffee. She always has a splash of milk and one teaspoon of sugar in her coffee. Depending on her mood, she sometimes eats a slice of toast with a little jam or a bowl of cereal. On days when she is in a hurry, she frequently skips breakfast. Once she is at work, she is often too busy to eat anything until lunchtime. She rarely misses lunch because she is hardly ever home before 6:30 p.m. She occasionally stops at a restaurant on her way home from work, but she usually prefers to wait until she gets home to eat. She is hardly ever ready for bed before midnight.

4.2.2.2 Time and Place Adverbs

Time and place adverbs include both single words and phrases. **Time adverbs** refer to the time at which something occurred. This time reference can be:

- **definite** (e.g., *yesterday, today, tomorrow, last week, next month, a year ago*) or
- **indefinite** (e.g., *now, then, soon, just, before, still, already, next*)

Some of the time adverbs can also function as nouns. We can distinguish their function because when these words are used as nouns, they are the subject of the main verb.

Adverbs of Time versus Nouns	
as adverb of time	as noun
I rode my bike yesterday. I'll ride my bike tomorrow. <i>Yesterday</i> and <i>tomorrow</i> are each modifying the entire sentence.	Yesterday was a sunny day. <i>Yesterday</i> is the subject of the verb <i>was</i> . Tomorrow will be a sunny day. <i>Tomorrow</i> is the subject of the verb <i>will be</i> .

Adverbs of place refer to location, direction, or position. They answer the question *where*. Adverbs of place usually occur after the main verb or after the clause they are modifying. These adverbs, unlike many other types of adverbs, do not modify adjectives or other adverbs.

Common Adverbs of Place				
above	back	behind	below	east
down	far	here	there	west
near	inside	outside	inside	north
over	under	towards	away	south

Place adverbs also include those that end in *-wards* or *-ward* (e.g., *backwards* or *westward*) and those that end in *-where* (e.g., *anywhere* or *everywhere*).

Many common adverbs of place also function as prepositions. We can distinguish the function because when these words are used as prepositions, they must be followed by a noun.

Adverbs of Place versus Prepositions	
as adverb of place	as preposition
Maya left her cell phone <i>behind</i> . I am going <i>inside</i> to look for my book. Eva flew Sunday and Adam the day <i>after</i> . <i>Behind</i> is modifying left. <i>Inside</i> is modifying am going. <i>After</i> is modifying flew.	I'm driving <i>behind</i> a truck. They found the money <i>inside</i> a bag. Ariel had breakfast <i>after</i> her jog. <i>Behind</i> is modifying a truck . <i>Inside</i> is modifying a bag . <i>After</i> is modifying her jog .

4.2.2.3 The “Other” Adverbs

Most grammarians agree on the different subclasses of adverbs that we have considered up to this point. For the remaining categories, there is less general agreement. Both the labels and the number of subclasses vary among grammar texts because there are different ways of interpreting the functions and uses of these adverbs. The subclasses discussed here should provide you with a general feel for and understanding of these adverbs, which are more difficult to classify than manner, frequency, or time and place adverbs. These are also the adverbs ESL/EFL learners have more trouble understanding the nuances of meaning they can convey.

4.2.2.3.1 Degree Adverbs

Adverbs that alter the tone or force of an adjective or adverb are called *degree adverbs*. Degree adverbs are generally divided into two categories, *intensifiers* and *downtoners*.

Intensifiers are adverbs such as *very* or *extremely* that strengthen or intensify the meaning of an adjective or another adverb. When these adverbs modify adjectives, they are used with gradable adjectives that can take the comparative and superlative forms (*-er*, *-est* or *more*, *the most*). Intensifiers normally precede the adjective or adverb they are modifying:

Jan writes *extremely* well.
 Jan is *very* busy.

In the first sentence, the intensifier *extremely* modifies the adjective *well* and emphasizes how well the subject (Jan) writes. In second sentence, *very* modifies the adjective *busy* and emphasizes how busy Jan is.

Downtoners are adverbs that decrease or lessen the tone of an adjective or another adverb. Like intensifiers, downtoners modify gradable adjectives. They normally precede the adjective or adverb they are modifying:

Hannah read the book *fairly* quickly.
 The ending is *somewhat* sad.

In the first sentence, *fairly* is modifying the adverb *quickly* and downplays the force of the adverb *quickly*. In the second sentence, *somewhat* is modifying the adjective *sad* and downplays the force of the adjective *sad*.

4.2.2.3.2 Attitude Adverbs

Attitude adverbs are those adverbs that convey the attitude or opinion of the speaker. These adverbs modify a clause or sentence. Words such as *frankly*, *unfortunately*, *obviously*, and *surprisingly* are some examples of attitude adverbs. Some grammarians also place adverbs that are related to possibility into this category, based on the notion that such adverbs convey the speaker's attitude regarding the degree of truth or probability of an action or event. Such adverbs include *probably*, *perhaps*, *of course*, *maybe*, and *possibly*.

To illustrate the nuance of meaning conveyed by degree and attitude adverbs, try this next Discovery Activity. Discuss your responses with your classmates.

Discovery Activity 11: Degree and Attitude Adverbs

A.

Look at the following sentences.

- Add an intensifier and then a downtowner to the original sentence. Consider how each one changes the tone of the sentence.
- Choose from this list or supply your own:

really very exceedingly especially barely hardly moderately rather

Example:

Janet has written an interesting paper.

Janet has written an *immensely* interesting paper.

Janet has written a *moderately* interesting paper.

- Riley is a capable dog trainer located in southern Florida.
- The *Star Wars* movies have been profitable.

B.

One of the most famous movie lines is Rhett Butler's last line in *Gone With the Wind*² when Rhett tells Scarlett, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

At the time the movie was released in 1939, the U.S. government exercised strict censorship rules on swearing. The producer of the film was given the choice of paying a \$5,000 fine or changing the script to: "Frankly, my dear, I just don't care." He chose to pay the fine.

²If you are unfamiliar with *Gone With the Wind*, you can view a clip of this scene on the Internet.

1. How might deleting *frankly* have altered the impact of this movie line?

“My dear, I don’t give a damn.”

or

“I just don’t care.”

2. What conclusions might you draw about the use of the adverbs *frankly* and *just*, and the interjection *damn* here?

Discussion: Discovery Activity 11

Excerpt A:

By adding two different types of degree adverbs to the original sentence in (a) and (b), you alter the tone of the sentence.

Excerpt B:

In Rhett’s utterance, both *frankly* and *damn* serve to underscore Rhett’s disgust with Scarlett. *Frankly* is an attitude adverb and *damn* is an interjection, both of which work in tandem to convey forcefully the depth of Rhett’s feelings. *Frankly* is accepted in standard speech, while *damn* is less so, although this has changed significantly in the decades since *Gone With the Wind* first appeared.

When the movie was originally released in 1939, the public use of *damn* was startling in an era of strict censorship rules on swearing, and its use evoked a strong emotional impact in the audience at that time. Even today, the use of choice of *damn* evokes a stronger emotional reaction than the blander *I just don’t care*, even though the latter includes the adverb *just*. Eliminating *frankly* and/or *just* in either version above, with or without *damn*, also lessens the impact of the utterance.

4.2.2.3.3 Focus Adverbs

Focus adverbs such as *especially*, *specifically*, or *merely* serve to draw attention to a sentence element or to add to or restrict another adverb or another construction in the sentence. The sentence position of most focus adverbs is flexible. Different sentence position may change the meaning of the sentence.

Try the next Discovery Activity to see how changing the position of a focus adverb draws your attention to different parts of the sentence. The answers are in the Answer Key.

Discovery Activity 12: Focus Adverbs and Sentence Position

1. Look at the following sentences in each group.
2. Discuss how the change in sentence position of the italicized focus adverb affects the meaning of the sentence.

Group A

- (a) Lauren *especially* wants to attend this dance.
- (b) *Especially* Lauren wants to attend this dance.
- (c) Lauren wants to attend *especially* this dance.

Group 2

- (d) *Only* you can use your skills to fix the problem.
- (e) You can use *only* your skills to fix the problem.
- (f) You have the skills to fix *only* the problem.

Do ESL/EFL learners find these “other” subcategories of adverbs difficult?

- ***Learner difficulties***

For learners of English, degree, attitude, and focus adverbs are more difficult to learn than other adverbs. They are often used to communicate nuances and shades of meaning as you saw in the examples and Discovery Activities. These nuances are part of what we call a speaker’s *pragmatic knowledge*. Pragmatic knowledge includes, among other things, making the appropriate word choices in a particular situation to convey a specific meaning. This knowledge becomes increasingly important as learners are exposed to and interact with more complex language, both written and spoken.

Since context and shared knowledge are essential to understanding these subtleties in meaning, exposure to and discussion of authentic excerpts can help ESL/EFL learners at higher levels of proficiency understand the gradations of meaning and intent speakers or writers are conveying.

4.3 Summary

Adjectives	Adverbs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe nouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and clauses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprise a large, open class with one main subcategory: participial adjectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprise a large, open class with various subcategories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can be identified on the basis of morphological, semantic, and syntactic clues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are generally identified on the basis of morphological and semantic clues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have three sentence positions: pronominal (before a noun), postnominal (after a noun), or after a linking verb are primarily found in prenominal or predicate position occur infrequently in postnominal position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have variable sentence position

Types of Adverbs	Examples
frequency	always, often, generally, usually, frequently, hardly ever
time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> definite 	yesterday, tomorrow, today, last week, last month, a year ago, the day after tomorrow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> indefinite 	soon, recently, then, now, then, just, before, still, already, next, nowadays, immediately, yet, since, for
place (position or direction)	here, there, up, down, outside, inside, indoors, back, upstairs, forward, backward; words ending in <i>-where</i> (e.g., everywhere)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can combine with prepositions to form adverbial phrases 	down here, down there, up here, up there, over here, over there
movement	words ending in <i>-ward(s)</i> (e.g., backward[s], forward[s], northward[s], onward[s]); words ending in <i>-wise</i> (e.g., clockwise, lengthwise) Note: <i>towards</i> is a preposition, not an adverb
compass points	north, south, east, west
degree	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> intensifiers 	very, extremely, totally, completely, really, particularly especially
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> downtoners 	fairly, somewhat, rather, quite, slightly, almost, merely
attitude	frankly, unfortunately, obviously, surprisingly
possibility	maybe, possibly, perhaps, of course
focus	especially, specifically, particularly, even, just, only

4.4 Practice Activities

Activity 1: Identifying Adjectives

Underline the adjectives you find in the following excerpts.

A.

“The disguise is impeccable,” says the Master dryly. “I’d never have known you but for your dulcet tone.” [Maguire, G. (1999). *Confessions of an ugly stepsister* (p. 43). New York: HarperCollins.]

B.

Caspar is here to learn the trade of drafting, but he’s a hopeless fool... He will canter into a low lintel one day and brain himself... He is bereft of any real talent, or...my current rival ...would have taken him in. Casper is almost as useless as you girls. This should make you feel in good company. [Maguire, G. (1999). *Confessions of an ugly stepsister* (p. 43). New York: HarperCollins.]

C.

It might seem bizarre that science is using art to learn about the mind—looking for hard facts in the most ethereal of places. But great artists turn out to be the world’s first neuroscientists. [Lehrer, J. (July 1, 2009). Unlocking the mysteries of the artistic mind. *Psychology Today* <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200907/unlocking-the-mysteries-the-artistic-mind>]

D.

Abstract art seems so bizarre—so unrepresentative of anything at all—but it takes advantage of the innate properties of the brain. The geometric brushstrokes are a nod to the quirks of our visual neurons, which prefer straight lines. [Lehrer, J. (July 1, 2009). Unlocking the mysteries of the artistic mind. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200907/unlocking-the-mysteries-the-artistic-mind>]

Activity 2: Identifying Adjectives and Adverbs

1. Underline the adjectives and adverbs in the excerpts.
2. Discuss the clue(s) that helped you identify each adjective (e.g., semantic, morphological, structural).

A.

In one classic skit from a 1970 episode of *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*, a waitress rattles off the contents of a menu in which all the items contain Spam. As she does this, she is repeatedly drowned out by a table of helmeted Vikings who sing, “Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam! Lovely Spam! Wonderful Spam!” For the techies, that perfectly captured the essence of relentless, annoying, repetitious, unwanted electronic solicitation. [Swidey, N. (October 5, 2003). Spambusters. *Boston Globe*, p. 12.]

B.

Consider Leonardo da Vinci's portrait of the Mona Lisa, perhaps the most famous painting in the world. The smile is notoriously enigmatic, a precise summary of an ambiguous emotion. But what is it about those slyly upturned lips that make the portrait so intriguing? [Lehrer, J. (July 1, 2009). Unlocking the mysteries of the artistic mind. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200907/unlocking-the-mysteries-the-artistic-mind>]

Activity 3: Comparatives and Superlatives

Create a comparative and a superlative sentence for each adjective.

silly bad delicate fun expensive quiet priceless cold good generous

Example: That is a silly joke. That was the silliest joke I've ever heard.

Activity 4: Contrasting Participial Adjectives: –ing Versus –ed Adjective**Part A**

1. Read the following sentences. Consider the difference in meaning in each pair.
 2. How can you explain the differences in each pair?
- 1(a) The annoyed neighbors moved away.
 - 1(b) The annoying neighbors moved away.
 - 2(a) The worried mother looked for her children.
 - 2(b) The worrying mother looked for her children.
 - 3(a) The amusing boy has many friends.
 - 3(b) The amused boy has many friends.
 - 4(a) The intriguing detective was last seen at a bar.
 - 4(b) The intrigued detective was last seen at a bar.

Part B

The samples below were produced by learners.

1. Underline the incorrect uses of participial adjectives.
2. Why do you think the learners made these mistakes? What suggestion(s) could you offer to help avoid such mistakes?
 - (a) The news puzzled the charmed girl I met last night.
 - (b) The test results were disappointed to me but I was cheered up by the news that I could earn extra points on the next project.
 - (c) Their loved mother comforted the frightening children.
 - (d) My disappointed children complained to their surprising father.
 - (e) My friend John is a talented athlete who is interesting in soccer and basketball.

Activity 5: More Adjectives

1. Underline all the adjectives in the following excerpts.
2. Which ones are participial adjectives (*-ing or -ed*)? Remember, to be a participial adjective, it must modify a noun (prenominally, postnominally, or after a stative/linking verb).

A.

Laurence Canter leans forward, scrunches up his sunburned nose, and says with a smile, “I don’t know—do I seem that evil to you?” But in 1994, Canter was the most loathed and feared man on the Internet. Laurence Canter is the father of modern spam. [Swidey, N. (2003, October 5). Spambusters. *Boston Globe*, p. 12].

B.

She was very old and small and she walked slowly in the dark pine shadows, moving a little from side to side in her steps, with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grand-father clock. She carried a thin, small cane made from an umbrella, and with this she kept tapping the frozen earth in front of her. This made a grave and persistent noise in the still air, that seemed meditative like the chirping of a solitary little bird. She wore a dark striped dress reaching down to her shoe tops, and an equally long apron of bleached sugar sacks, with a full pocket. [Welty, E. (1941). A worn path. *The collected works of Eudora Welty*. Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Byq6h70zkproWGFLc3BwOUFvMUK/edit>]

Activity 6: Nouns Functioning as Adjectives

Underline the nouns functioning as adjectives.

A.

Elizabeth gathered up all the allowance she had been saving and hurried to the pet store. She bought three large fish tanks and hauled them home. [Robinson, R. (2005). *Faucet fish*. New York: Dutton Children’s Books. Picture Book, No page numbers.]

B.

[The letters] were not the usual household inventories that occasionally surfaced, like timeworn family flotsam...We pried them open one by one and soon realized there were intimate love letters that dated back to the 1750s. [di Robilant, A. (2003). *A Venetian affair* (p. 4). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.]

C.

I work for a company that doles out a paltry amount of sick days and paid time off. Because I was nearing the end of the year and had already put in a holiday vacation request and bought plane tickets, I hung on to one day to last the rest of the year. [Appiah, K. (2015, December 30). The Ethicist. *New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/03/magazine/is-it-ok-to-go-to-work-while-sick-and-sneezing.html?ref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fmagazine>]

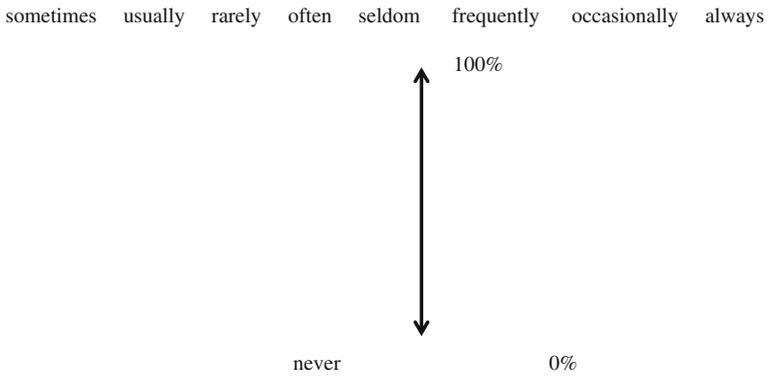
Activity 7: Finding Nouns Functioning as Adjectives

1. Find an article in a newspaper, magazine, or from another text.
2. Underline all the nouns you find that are functioning as adjectives, that is, modifying another noun. Be sure to identify the noun being modified.

Activity 8: Frequency Adverbs

Frequency adverbs refer to how often an action occurs. These adverbs can be placed on a scale or range from 100 to 0 %, like the one below.

1. Consider the frequency reference of each adverb. How often does it show an action happens?
2. Rank each frequency adverb below on the left side of the scale and add a percentage to the right side of the scale.



3. Compare your placement of adverbs with your classmates. Do you all have the same placement?
4. How could using such a scale help learners of English practice frequency adverbs?

Activity 9: More Adjectives and Adverbs

1. Find all the adjectives and adverbs in the excerpts.
2. If you are unsure if a word is an adjective or an adverb, try using one of the test frames discussed in the chapter.
3. Identify any nouns functioning as adjectives, that is, modifying a noun.

A.

Over repeated cycles of invention there are rich rewards for those who harness new technologies.... Five hundred years ago the conscious of a middle-aged monk plunged Europe into turmoil.

B.

The monk was Martin Luther, by any measure an unlikely revolutionary; until this point he was an unknown professor at one of Europe's more obscure universities. But what made Luther so special, and this too has resonance today, was that he used new media to circumvent the traditional gatekeepers and ordered structures of legitimacy and communication.

C.

[I]n a series of bold experiments, Cranach completely re-shaped the Reformation book, clothing Luther's works in a new and utterly distinctive livery... It brought design sophistication previously seen only on the largest and most expensive books to the humble pamphlet.

D.

Crucial matters of salvation and church practice were no longer the exclusive preserve of a privileged elite, but freely debated on the market square and in the home.

[Pettegree, A. (2015, December 28). Martin Luther: Revolutionary disruptor and start-up success story. *Literary Hub*. Retrieved from <http://lithub.com/the-unheralded-monk-who-turned-his-small-town-into-a-center-of-publishing/>]

Activity 10: Error Analysis

The following excerpts were written by learners of English. There are errors in adjective and adverb use and form.

1. Underline each adjective and adverb error you find. Ignore any other errors.
2. For each error
 - (a) correct it.
 - (b) consider why the learner may have made it.

Example:

People, have you ever thought that pandas are very endangered animals?

Pandas are very interested animals.

Confusion between the -ing and -ed participial adjective forms.

A.

The giant pandas are more cute than a bear. They are more cuddly than a cat. And they are more big than a tiger. They are unfriend to each other. Some people burn the wood to make houses, so giant pandas' territories are getting more small.

B.

For many centuries, they treated women unequal, due to their more weak physical body structure. It took women a long time to gain their rights to work, but social convention holds women back from being more successfully than men. The worse problem facing women is discrimination. Basically, people just don't believe women can be successfully as men. Also, women often get paid lesser than men although they have the same qualifications. So they can work more than men but their pay is more cheaper and they have to work more harder to make as much money the men.

4.5 Answer Key

Discussion: Discovery Activity 3

Excerpt A: delicious, creamy

Excerpt B: little, empty, small, old

Excerpt C: giant, big

Discussion: Discovery Activity 5

- (a) The new students had excellent scores on the tests.

New modifies *students*; *excellent* modifies *scores*.

-ent at the end of a word often indicates membership in the adjective class.

Other adjectives ending in *-ent* include *prudent* or *absorbent*.

When teaching *-ent* as an indicator of adjective class membership, it is important to point out that many words that end in *-ent* are not adjectives (e.g., *accident* and *basement* are nouns that end in *-ent* and the irregular past tense of the verb *lend* is *lent*).

- (b) Some of the concerns we had were important.

Important follows *be*, modifying the noun phrase *some of the concerns*.

-ant at the end of a word generally indicates membership in the adjective class.

Other adjectives ending in *-ant* include *hesitant* or *significant*.

- (c) Some parents are unhappy with the current changes in the curriculum.

Unhappy comes after the stative/linking verb *be*, modifying the noun phrase *many parents*.

Many words ending in *-y* are adjectives, and there are many nouns that also end in *-y* (e.g., *essay*, *turkey*, *dictionary*, *story*, *monkey*, *driveway*, *candy*, and the days of the week).

Current modifies *changes*.

- (d) Although their home is humble, they are content to live as they do.

Humble comes after the verb *be*, modifying the noun phrase *their house*.

Content comes after the verb *be*, modifying the noun *they*.

- (e) The cold, snowy weather over the long weekend kept resulted in slow sales for retailers.

Cold and *snowy* both modify *weather*; *long* modifies *weekend*; and *slow* modifies *sales*.

- (f) When the viewers saw the movie, they were ecstatic over the ambitious plot and the stupendous special effects.

Ecstatic comes after the stative/linking verb *be* and modifies the noun *they*.

Ambitious modifies *plot*.

Stupendous and *special* both modify *effects*.

The endings *-ic*, *-ous*, and *-ial* generally indicate membership in the adjective class (e.g., *nomadic*, *pragmatic*, *hectic*; *outrageous*, *fabulous*, *sagacious*; and *official*, *martial*, *social*).

Discussion: Discovery Activity 6

Part I

- Do you own any light cotton dresses?
- The pirates' swift ship outran the ponderous tanker.
- Her elderly mother received a box of expensive Swiss chocolates for her birthday.
- Mr. Branch was a little squat man with bushy black hair. OR Mr. Branch was a squat little man with black bushy hair.
- Rapunzel's long golden hair was wrapped in a priceless silk scarf.
- The flower consists of delicate blossoms on a slender green stalk with broad rectangular leaves.
- The busy young architect displayed his plans on a drawing board.

Part II

General description	Size	Shape	Color	Place of origin	Material	Use
light	little	squat	black	Swiss	cotton	drawing
swift	long	bushy	golden		silk	
ponderous		slender	green			
elderly		broad				
expensive		rectangular				
priceless						
delicate						
busy						
young						

Discussion: Discovery Activity 7

Excerpt A

issue, graduate, climate

Excerpt B

baseball, tree, pajama, fish, school

Excerpt C

vegetable, container, backyard

Discussion: Discovery Activity 8*Excerpt A*

participial adjectives: *rewarding, sprawling, reduced, raised, existing, growing* (two times), *untrammelled*

Excerpt B

participial adjectives: *potted, sweltering, exciting, forthcoming, revolutionizing, prolonged, settled, determining*

played is the past tense form of the verb *play* and not a participial adjective.

Discussion: Discovery Activity 12*Group A*

- (a) *especially* focuses on the verb *wants*.
- (b) *especially* focuses on the person *Lauren* (versus some other person).
- (c) *especially* focuses on the noun phrase *this dance* (as opposed to another dance).

Group B

- (d) *only* focuses on the person *you* (versus some other person).
- (e) *only* focuses on the noun phrase *your skills* (as opposed to something else).
- (f) *only* focuses on the noun phrase *the problem* (as opposed to something else).

Other interpretations are possible, particularly in spoken English. Intonation and word or phrase stress in combination with different positions of the focus adverb will convey different meanings.