

# Adjectives

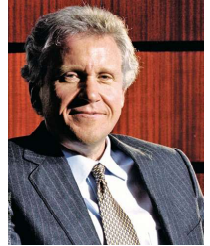
Adjective is a word that describes a noun or pronoun.

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:

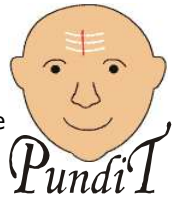
### By using as + adjective + as

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 <b>of Punjab</b> is better than <b>Bihar</b> .	The climate <b>of Punjab</b> is better than <b>that of Bihar</b> .	
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 <b>adjective</b> (or an <b>adverb</b> ) has " <b>comparatively</b> " before it, the <b>adjective</b> (or <b>adverb</b> ) should be used in the <b>positive degree</b> , not in the <b>comparative degree</b> .
7	The <b>higher</b> a man rises, the <b>humble</b> he grows.	The <b>higher</b> a man rises, the <b>humbler</b> he grows.	When <b>comparative degree adjective</b> is split up and used in two <b>parts</b> of the sentence, the <b>comparative degree</b> should be used in both the parts.
8	The <b>nobler</b> a man is, the <b>most respect</b> he gets.	The <b>nobler</b> a man is, the <b>more respect</b> he gets.	
9	He runs <b>as fast</b> , if not <b>faster than</b> you.	He runs <b>as fast as</b> , if not <b>faster than</b> you.	Where the comparative and positive degree adjectives are used, positive degree adjective should be used with <b>as ... as</b> (not with one as only) and comparative degree adjective with <b>than</b> .
10	This hall is <b>as large</b> , if not <b>larger than</b> that.	This hall is <b>as large as</b> , if not <b>larger than</b> 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

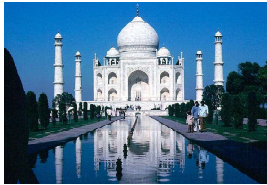
### Proper nouns

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.

**Quite a mouthful!**

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

CONFUSION COMPOUNDED!			
	Confused	Corrected	The clarification
5	He was the <b>foremost</b> man to reach here.	He was the <b>first</b> man to reach here.	<b>First</b> is first merely in serial order without any suggestion of <b>more</b> or <b>less</b> in importance, while <b>foremost</b> means <b>most important</b> without any reference to serial order.
6	Jawaharlal Nehru was the <b>first</b> statesman of his time.	Jawaharlal Nehru was the <b>foremost</b> statesman of his time.	
7	The <b>latest</b> person in the queue is my friend.	The <b>last</b> person in the queue is my friend.	<b>Last</b> is the antonym of <b>first</b> , while <b>latest</b> is the antonym of <b>earliest</b> . Therefore, <b>last</b> has the sense of <b>place</b> in serial order, while <b>latest</b> has the sense of <b>time</b> .
8	What is the <b>last</b> news about his condition?	What is the <b>latest</b> news about his condition?	
9	Which is the <b>next</b> railway station from here?	Which is the <b>nearest</b> railway station from here?	<b>Nearest</b> means nearest in distance, while <b>next</b> means <b>after this or that</b> in serial order.
10	My seat was <b>nearest</b> to the door.	My seat was <b>next</b> to the door.	
11	There is nothing <b>farther</b> to say.	There is nothing <b>further</b> to say.	<b>Farther</b> means away in distance, while <b>further</b> means 'in addition to' but is also used sometimes for distance.
12	Lucknow is <b>further</b> from Agra than Kanpur.	Lucknow is <b>farther</b> from Agra than Kanpur.	
13	<b>Lesser</b> visitors came to see the Taj this year.	<b>Fewer</b> visitors came to see the Taj this year.	<b>Fewer</b> is used for number, <b>less</b> for quantity, and <b>lesser</b> for less in importance. 
14	Popcorn without butter has <b>fewer</b> fat than popcorn with butter.	Popcorn without butter has <b>less</b> fat than popcorn with butter.	
15	I have not read the <b>less</b> poets of the Elizabethan Age.	I have not read the <b>lesser</b> poets of the Elizabethan Age.	
16	I have <b>ten rupees fewer</b> at the moment.	I have <b>ten rupees less</b> at the moment.	If in a certain sentence there is a <b>definite numeral adjective</b> , followed by a <b>plural noun</b> , use <b>less</b> in place of <b>fewer</b> .
17	There are <b>two members lesser</b> in the team.	There are <b>two members less</b> in the team.	
18	He is the <b>eldest</b> man in the village.	He is the <b>oldest</b> man in the village.	<b>Elder</b> and <b>eldest</b> are used for members of the same family. <b>Elder</b> means senior in age and <b>eldest</b> means senior-most in age. <b>Older</b> and <b>oldest</b> are used for other people or things, in the same sense of age.
19	He is my <b>older brother</b> .	He is my <b>elder brother</b> .	
20	<b>My oldest</b> brother is like my father.	<b>My eldest</b> brother is like my father.	
21	I don't want to read <b>some</b> more books.	I don't want to read <b>any</b> 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 <b>any</b> tea?	Will you please have <b>some</b> 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
<b>These</b> kind of questions is often asked in examinations.	<b>This</b> kind of questions is often asked in examinations.
The <b>later</b> part of the novel is not neatly written.	The <b>latter</b> part of the novel is not neatly written.
What is <b>last</b> news?	What is the <b>latest</b> news?
I have an <b>older</b> brother.	I have an <b>elder</b> brother.
Mohan is the <b>eldest</b> boy in the town.	Mohan is the <b>oldest</b> boy in the town.
After this he made no <b>farther</b> statement.	After this he made no <b>further</b> statement.
This is the <b>next</b> post-office to my house.	This is the <b>nearest</b> post-office to my house.
Mohan is <b>wiser</b> than <b>strong</b> .	Mohan is <b>more wise</b> than <b>strong</b> .
Satish is cleverer than <b>any</b> student in his class.	Satish is cleverer than <b>any other</b> student in his class.
India's fielding is <i>inferior</i> <b>than</b> South Africa's.	India's fielding is <i>inferior</i> <b>to</b> South Africa's.
Our field is <b>more square</b> than theirs.	Our field is <b>as square as</b> theirs.
Of the two boys, his brain is <b>the sharpest</b> .	Of the two boys, his brain is <b>sharper</b> .
Alexander was the <i>most powerful</i> of <b>all other</b> kings.	Alexander was the <i>most powerful</i> of <b>all</b> kings.
The orientation of Indira Awas Yojana is better than other housing schemes.	The orientation of Indira Awas Yojana is better than <b>that of</b> other housing schemes.
Zarda mangoes are <b>more sweeter</b> than the Maldah ones.	Zarda mangoes are <b>sweeter</b> than the Maldah ones.
Staying indoors is <b>more preferable than</b> going out an summer day.	Staying indoors is <b>preferable to</b> going out on a summer day.
No <b>less</b> than forty VIPs were involved in the hawala scam.	No <b>fewer</b> than forty VIPs were involved in the hawala scam.
I saw only the <b>two first</b> episodes of the serial.	I saw only the <b>first two</b> episodes of the serial.
Of Manohar, Shyam and Joshi, the <b>latter</b> is a driver.	Of Manohar, Shyam and Joshi, the <b>last</b> is a driver.
It grew <b>hot and hot</b> .	It grew <b>hotter and hotter</b> .
He is <b>as good</b> if not <i>better than</i> his brother.	He is <b>as good as</b> if not <i>better than</i> his brother.
I have fallen in love with the <b>beautiful</b> woman's daughter.	I have fallen in love with the woman's <b>beautiful</b> daughter.