ESOL E2 – Order of adjectives

# of 19 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on the order of adjectives.

In this session you will learn:

* The different types of adjective
* The order adjectives are placed in

# of 19 – What is an adjective?

Adjectives are describing words. Adjectives are used to describe nouns (people, places or things).

In a sentence, an adjective can go before the noun it is describing, or after the noun it is describing. Compare these two examples:

1. The car I drive is **red**.
2. I drive a **red** car.

In both sentences, the adjective ‘red’ is describing the noun ‘car’.

# of 19 – Adjectives - example

Let’s look at another example. Compare these two sentences:

1. It is a **beautiful** necklace.

2. The necklace is **beautiful**.

In both sentences, the adjective ‘beautiful’ is describing the noun ‘necklace’.

# of 19 – Types of adjectives

There are many different types of adjectives. This is because there are many different things to say about any noun.

Adjectives can give us the following information about a noun.

**Quantity:**

An adjective can describe the number or amount of something.

Example:

There were **three** plates on the table.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘three’ is describing the noun ‘plates’.

**Opinion:**

An adjective can describe someone’s opinion about a noun.

Example:

The **bad** weather ruined my weekend.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘bad’ is describing the noun ‘weather’.

**Size:**

An adjective can describe the size of a noun.

Example:

The **tall** man had to bend down to enter the room.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘tall’ is describing the noun ‘man’.

**Age:**

An adjective can describe the age of a noun.

Example:

The **old** car needs a service.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘old’ is describing the noun ‘car’.

**Shape:**

An adjective can describe the shape of a noun.

Example:

The **round** window looked out onto the garden.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘round’ is describing the noun ‘window’.

**Colour:**

An adjective can describe the colour of a noun.

Example:

The **red** coat was wet from the rain.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘red’ is describing the noun ‘coat’.

**Origin:**

An adjective can describe the origin of a noun.

Example:

The **American** movie was very popular.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘American’ is describing the noun ‘movie’.

**Material:**

An adjective can describe the material that an noun is made of.

Example:

The **wooden** table had a vase of flowers on it.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘wooden’ is describing the noun ‘table’.

**Purpose:**

An adjective can describe the purpose of the noun.

Example:

The **sports** car was very expensive.

In this sentence, the adjective ‘sports’ is describing the noun ‘car’.

# of 19 – Question 1

Which of the following adjectives describe a noun’s size?

Select all that apply

1. Big
2. Round
3. Small
4. Large
5. Red
6. Tiny

Answers: **Big, Small, Large, Tiny**

# of 19 – Question 2

Which of the following adjectives describe a noun’s shape?

Select all that apply.

1. Oval
2. Rectangular
3. Beautiful
4. Enormous
5. Leather
6. Square

Answers: **Oval, Rectangular, Square**

# of 19 – Question 3

Which of the following adjectives describe the material that a noun is made of?

Select all that apply.

1. Plastic
2. Silk
3. Blue
4. Metallic
5. Old
6. Wooden

Answers: **Plastic, Silk, Metallic, Wooden**

# of 19 – Opinion adjectives - general

Some adjectives give a general opinion. These adjectives can be used to describe almost any noun.

Here is an example:

Let's look at some examples of general adjectives:

Good, Bad, Lovely, Beautiful, Important, Awful, Nasty, Horrid

All of these general adjectives could be used to describe a person, place or thing.

# of 19 – Opinion adjectives - specific

Some adjectives give a specific opinion. These adjectives can only be used to describe particular types of noun.

**Food and drink:**

Some adjectives can only be used to describe food or drink.

Examples:

Tasty, Delicious

**Furniture:**

Some adjectives can only be used to describe furniture.

Examples:

Comfortable, Uncomfortable

**People and animals:**

Some adjectives can only be used to describe people and animals.

Examples:

Intelligent, Friendly

# of 19 – Question 4

Below is a specific adjective, which type of noun can the specific adjective be used with?

‘Polite’

1. Food and drink
2. Furniture and buildings
3. People and animals

Answer: **People and animals**

# of 19 – Question 5

Below is a specific adjective, which type of noun can the specific adjective be used with?

‘Appetizing’

1. Food and drink
2. Furniture and buildings
3. People and animals

Answer: **Food and drink**

# of 19 – Order of adjectives

Sometimes we use more than one adjective in front of a noun. When we use several adjectives together, we need to decide what order to put them in.

Adjectives are usually used in this order:

1. Quantity
2. Opinion
3. Size
4. Age
5. Shape
6. Colour
7. Origin
8. Material
9. Purpose

For example, we might say:

I bought a **gorgeous black silk** purse.

The adjectives ‘gorgeous’, ‘black’ and ‘silk’ are all describing the noun ‘purse’.

Notice the order of the adjectives: ‘gorgeous’ (opinion), then ‘black’ (colour), then ‘silk’ (material)

# of 19 – Order of adjectives - example

1. Quantity
2. Opinion
3. Size
4. Age
5. Shape
6. Colour
7. Origin
8. Material
9. Purpose

Let's look at another example:

I bought **six tiny blue** buttons.

The adjectives ‘six’, ‘tiny’ and ‘blue’ are all describing the noun ‘buttons’.

Notice the order of the adjectives: ‘six’ (quantity), then ‘tiny’ (size), then ‘blue’ (colour).

# of 19 – Using more than one adjective

We often have two adjectives in front of a noun.

For example:

* Have you seen my **red leather** bag?
* I’ve lost my **big orange** umbrella

Sometimes we have three adjectives in front of a noun, but this is unusual.

For example:

* I can’t find my **new blue silk** scarf
* I don’t like that **disgusting pink plastic** toy

It is possible to use more than three adjectives in front of a noun, but this is very rare.

For example:

* I loved the **two beautiful little old French** chairs
* I bought a **lovely little hand-made glass** vase

# of 19 – Question 6

Put the adjectives into the sentence into the right order.

The bowl was made of a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ material.

* metallic
* beautiful
* green

Answer: The bowl was made of a **beautiful green metallic** material.

# of 19 – Question 7

# Put the adjectives into the sentence into the right order.

# Panettone is a \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ cake.

# round

# bread-like

# Italian

# Answer: Panettone is a **round Italian bread-like** cake.

# of 19 – Question 8

Put the adjectives into the sentence into the right order.

She was a \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ woman.

* tall
* Irish
* young

Answer: She was a **tall young Irish** woman.

# of 19 – Question 9

Put the adjectives into the sentence into the right order.

I love my \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ shoes.

• red

• old

• running

Answer: I love my **old red running** shoes.

# of 19 – End

# Well done. You have completed this session on the order of adjectives.

# In this session we have covered:

# The different types of adjectives

# The order adjectives are placed in

# If you have any questions about any of these topics, make a note and ask your tutor for more help.