

# CHAPTER 35

## Adjectives and Adverbs

- A:** Defining and Using Adjectives and Adverbs
- B:** The Comparative and the Superlative
- C:** A Troublesome Pair: *Good/Well*

### A. Defining and Using Adjectives and Adverbs

**Adjectives** and **adverbs** are two kinds of descriptive words. **Adjectives** describe or modify nouns or pronouns. They explain what kind, which one, or how many.

1. A *black* cat slept on the piano.
2. We felt *cheerful*.
3. *Three* windows in the basement need to be replaced.

- The adjective *black* describes the noun *cat*. It tells what kind of cat, a *black* one.
- The adjective *cheerful* describes the pronoun *we*. It tells what kind of mood we were in, *cheerful*.
- The adjective *three* describes the noun *windows*. It tells how many windows, *three*.

**Adverbs** describe or modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They tell how, in what manner, when, where, and to what extent.

4. Joe dances *gracefully*.
5. *Yesterday* Robert left for a weekend of sky diving.
6. Brigit is *extremely* tall.
7. He travels *very* rapidly on that skateboard.

- The adverb *gracefully* describes the verb *dances*. It tells how Joe dances, *gracefully*.
- The adverb *yesterday* describes the verb *left*. It tells when Robert left, *yesterday*.
- The adverb *extremely* describes the adjective *tall*. It tells how tall (to what extent), *extremely* tall.
- The adverb *very* describes the adverb *rapidly*, which describes the verb *travels*. It tells how rapidly he travels, *very* rapidly.

Many adjectives can be changed into adverbs by adding an *-ly* ending. For example, *glad* becomes *gladly*, *hopeful* becomes *hopefully*, *awkward* becomes *awkwardly*.

Note the pairs on this list; they are easily confused:

Adjectives	Adverbs
awful	awfully
bad	badly
poor	poorly
quick	quickly
quiet	quietly
real	really
sure	surely

8. The fish tastes *bad*.
9. It was *badly* prepared.

- In sentence 8, the adjective *bad* describes the noun *fish*.
- In sentence 9, the adverb *badly* describes the verb *was prepared*.

## PRACTICE 1

Circle the correct adjective or adverb in parentheses. Remember that adjectives modify nouns or pronouns; adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or adverbs.

1. Have you ever seen (real, really) emeralds?
2. Try to do your work in the library (quiet, quietly).

3. We will (glad, gladly) take you on a tour of the Crunchier Cracker factory.
4. Lee, a (high, highly) skilled electrician, rewired his entire house last year.
5. She made a (quick, quickly) stop at the scanner.
6. It was (awful, awfully) wet today; the sleet filled our shoes.
7. The fans from Cleveland (enthusiastic, enthusiastically) clapped for the Browns.
8. Are you (sure, surely) this bus stops in Dusty Gulch?
9. He (hasty, hastily) wrote the essay, leaving out several important ideas.
10. It was a funny joke, but the comedian told it (bad, badly).
11. Tina walked (careful, carefully) down the icy road.
12. Sam swims (poor, poorly) even though he spends hours posing on the beach.
13. Sasha the crow is an (unusual, unusually) pet and a (humorous, humorously) companion.
14. The painting is not (actual, actually) a Picasso; in fact, it is a (real, really) bad imitation.
15. It is an (extreme, extremely) hot day, and I (sure, surely) could go for some (real, really) orange juice.

## B. The Comparative and the Superlative

The **comparative** of an adjective or adverb compares two persons or things:

1. Ben is *more creative* than Robert.
2. Marcia runs *faster* than the coach.

- In sentence 1, Ben is being compared with Robert.
- In sentence 2, Marcia is being compared with the coach.

The **superlative** of an adjective or adverb compares three or more persons or things:

3. Sancho is the *tallest* of the three brothers.
4. Marion is the *most intelligent* student in the class.

- In sentence 3, Sancho is being compared with the other two brothers.
- In sentence 4, Marion is being compared with all the other students in the class.

Adjectives and adverbs of one syllable usually form the **comparative** by adding *-er*. They form the **superlative** by adding *-est*.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
fast	faster	fastest
smart	smarter	smartest
tall	taller	tallest

Adjectives and adverbs of more than one syllable usually form the **comparative** by using *more*. They form the **superlative** by using *most*.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
brittle	more brittle	most brittle
serious	more serious	most serious

Note, however, that adjectives that end in *-y* (like *happy*, *lazy*, and *sunny*) change the *-y* to *-i* and add *-er* and *-est*.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
happy	happier	happiest
lazy	lazier	laziest
sunny	sunnier	sunniest

## PRACTICE 2

Write the comparative or the superlative of the words in parentheses. Remember: use the comparative to compare two items; use the superlative to compare more than two. Use *-er* or *-est* for one-syllable words; use *more* or *most* for words of more than one syllable.\*

- The ocean is \_\_\_\_\_ (cold) than we thought it would be.
- Please read your lines again, \_\_\_\_\_ (slowly) this time.
- Which of these two roads is the \_\_\_\_\_ (short) route?
- Which of these three highways is the \_\_\_\_\_ (short) route?

\* If you have questions about spelling, see Chapter 40, "Spelling," Part G.

5. Leola is the \_\_\_\_\_ (busy) person I know.
6. That red felt hat with feathers is the \_\_\_\_\_ (outlandish) one I've seen.
7. Today is \_\_\_\_\_ (warm) than yesterday, but Thursday was the \_\_\_\_\_ (warm) day of the month.
8. The down coat you have selected is the \_\_\_\_\_ (expensive) one in the store.
9. Each one of Woody's stories is \_\_\_\_\_ (funny) than the last.
10. As a rule, mornings in Los Angeles are \_\_\_\_\_ (hazy) than afternoons.
11. Is Paolo \_\_\_\_\_ (tall) than Louie? Is Paolo the \_\_\_\_\_ (tall) player on the team?
12. If you don't do these experiments \_\_\_\_\_ (carefully), you will blow up the chemistry lab.
13. This farmland is much \_\_\_\_\_ (rocky) than the farmland in Iowa.
14. Therese says that Physics 201 is the \_\_\_\_\_ (challenging) course she has ever taken.
15. Mr. Wells is the \_\_\_\_\_ (wise) and \_\_\_\_\_ (experienced) leader in the community.

### PRACTICE 3

Proofread the following paragraph for comparative and superlative errors. Cross out unnecessary words and write your corrections above the lines.

(1) Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia that offers information about thousands of topics. (2) Created in 2001, it has become one of the most popularest sites on the Internet—and one of the most controversial. (3) Unlike *Britannica* and other encyclopedias of a more early time, Wikipedia is not an expensive set of books; it exists only online at *www.wikipedia.org*. (4) Its most great innovation is also its most biggest problem: readers can also help write content. (5) The "wiki" software allows anyone who visits the site to add or edit an entry. (6) Supporters believe that thousands of

minds produce entries that are often completer and accurater than those in traditional encyclopedias. (7) Yet mistakes and sabotage have occurred. (8) A U.S. Congressperson changed his Wikipedia profile to make it positiver. (9) The entry on Harriet Tubman, rescuer of southern slaves, gave the wrong birthplace and stated as fact several disproved stories. (10) Jokers, vandals, and even racists have planted lies in some entries. (11) Wikipedia's 800 volunteer administrators labor to approve each change, making sure that a revised entry is more effectiver than the previous one. (12) While correcting such errors is more easier and fast than in print encyclopedias, some teachers and professors caution students not to cite Wikipedia as an information source.

## EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.wikipedia.org>

Choose a subject that you know something about and evaluate the Wikipedia entry. First, read the Wikipedia article; take notes or print it. Now visit the library and check the facts. Ask the librarian if you need help. Did you find any false information, or is the entry reliable? How would you rate Wikipedia, based on this one entry?

## C. A Troublesome Pair: *Good/Well*

<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
well	better	best
badly	worse	worst

Be especially careful not to confuse the adjective *good* with the adverb *well*:

1. Jessie is a *good* writer.
2. She writes *well*.

- *Good* is an **adjective** modifying *writer*.
- *Well* is an **adverb** modifying *writes*.

## PRACTICE 4

Fill in either the adjective *good* or the adverb *well* in each blank.

1. Corned beef definitely goes \_\_\_\_\_ with cabbage.
2. How \_\_\_\_\_ do you understand Spanish?
3. He may not take phone messages very \_\_\_\_\_, but he is \_\_\_\_\_ at handling computer problems.
4. Exercise is a \_\_\_\_\_ way to stay in shape; eating \_\_\_\_\_ will help you maintain \_\_\_\_\_ health.
5. Tony looks \_\_\_\_\_ in his new goatee.
6. This is a \_\_\_\_\_ arrangement: I wash, you dry.
7. On rainy nights, Sheila loves to curl up with a \_\_\_\_\_ book.
8. The old Persian carpet and oak desk are a \_\_\_\_\_ match; they go \_\_\_\_\_ together.
9. Both teams played \_\_\_\_\_; it was a \_\_\_\_\_ game.
10. They are \_\_\_\_\_ neighbors and are \_\_\_\_\_ liked in the community.

## PRACTICE 5

Fill in the correct comparative or superlative of the word in parentheses.

1. Lucinda is a \_\_\_\_\_ (good) chemist than she is a mathematician.
2. Bascomb was the \_\_\_\_\_ (bad) governor this state has ever had.
3. When it comes to staying in shape, you are \_\_\_\_\_ (bad) than I.
4. Of the two sisters, Leah is the \_\_\_\_\_ (good) markswoman.
5. You can carry cash when you travel, but using a credit card is \_\_\_\_\_ (good).
6. Our goalie is the \_\_\_\_\_ (good) in the league; yours is the \_\_\_\_\_ (bad).

7. When it comes to bad taste, movies are \_\_\_\_\_ (bad) than television
8. Your sore throat seems \_\_\_\_\_ (bad) than it was yesterday.
9. Gina likes snorkeling \_\_\_\_\_ (good) than fishing, she loves scuba diving  
\_\_\_\_\_ (good) of all.
10. A parka is the \_\_\_\_\_ (good) protection against a cold wind; it is certainly  
\_\_\_\_\_ (good) than a scarf.

## PROOFREADING STRATEGY

To help you proofread for *adjective* and *adverb* errors, use two highlighters to code the text. Read slowly, and **mark every adjective purple and every adverb gray** (or colors of your choice) like the sentences below from one student's paper.

Next check every purple and gray word, one by one. **Ask yourself what word each one describes.** For example, *What word does talented describe?* (*Talented* describes *Jada*, a noun; thus, the adjective *talented* is correct.) *What does the word real describe?* (*Real* describes *talented*, an adjective, so *real* is incorrect.) *What word does beautiful describe?* (*Beautiful* describes *plays*, a verb; so, the adjective *beautiful* is incorrect.)

My friend Jada is <sup>really</sup> **real** ~~talented~~. She writes songs and plays the guitar  
beautifully <sup>amazing</sup> **beautiful**. She has the ~~amazing~~ voice in our group.

## PRACTICE 6

### REVIEW

Proofread the following essay for adjective and adverb errors, using the proofreading strategy described above. Correct the errors by writing above the lines.

#### JULIA MORGAN, ARCHITECT

(1) Julia Morgan was one of San Francisco's most finest architects, as well as the first woman licensed as an architect in California. (2) In 1902, Morgan became the first woman to finish successful the program in architecture at the School of Fine Arts in Paris. (3) Returning to San Francisco, she opened her own office and hired and trained a very talented staff that eventual grew to 35 full-time architects. (4) Her first major commission was to reconstruct the Fairmont Hotel, one of the city's bestest-known sites, which had been damaged bad in the 1906 earthquake. (5) Morgan earned her reputation by designing elegant homes and public buildings out of inexpensively and available materials and by treating her clients real good. (6) She went on to design more than 800 residences, stores, churches, offices, and educational buildings, most of them in California.





San Simeon, Julia Morgan's masterpiece

(7) Her bestest customer was William Randolph Hearst, one of the country's most rich newspaper publishers. (8) Morgan designed newspaper buildings and more than 20 pleasure palaces for Hearst in California and Mexico. (9) She maintained a private plane and pilot to keep her moving from project to project. (10) The most big and famousest of her undertakings was sure San Simeon. (11) Morgan worked on it steady for 20 years. (12) She converted a large ranch overlooking the Pacific into a hilltop Mediterranean village composed of three of the beautifullest guest houses in the world. (13) The larger of the three was designed to look like a cathedral and incorporated Hearst's fabulous art treasures from around the world. (14) The finished masterpiece had 144 rooms and was larger than a football field. (15) San Simeon is now one of the most visited tourist attractions in California and seems to grow popularer each year.

## EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://a4esl.org/q/f/z/zz60fck.htm>

Choose the correct adjective or adverb, and check your answers.

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/9901/gc-advadj.html>

Interactive practice: comparative and superlative forms

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/adjectives.htm>

Everything you wanted to know about adjectives

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