

Academic Word Families

Word Classes

AN INTRODUCTION



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We use words when we talk to and write to each other. There are thousands of different words in any language, and they all have their own meanings. Grammar is the way we put these words together so that they make sense.

Words can be divided into classes according to the way in which they are used. The eight main word classes can be represented in a diagram like this:





A noun is the name of something: a thing or a person or a place, or a feeling or a state of mind. Nouns have some typical noun endings.

-age: *beverage, courage, pilgrimage, etc.*

-ation, -tion, -sion, -ion: *explanation, education, division, invasion, etc.*

-er, -or: *painter, actor, motivator, etc.*

-ity: *reality, immunity, eternity, etc.*

-ment: *experiment, department, entertainment, etc.*

-ness: *brightness, happiness, sadness, etc.*

-ist: *Islamist, biologist, guitarist, etc.*

-ing: *building, saving, writing, etc.*



Adjectives

A noun by itself does not offer much information. If a man wanted to buy a shirt in a store, he would need to narrow down what he was looking for by using descriptive words like **thin** or **silky**. These words are known as adjectives.

Adjectives describe nouns (or pronouns) and tell you more about them. They might tell you what things look, sound, or feel like.



Adjectives have some typical adjective endings.

-able, -ible: *acceptable, suitable, credible, etc.*

-al: *accidental, seasonal, political, etc.*

-ful: *careful, faithful, beautiful, etc.*

-ic: *romantic, Islamic, dramatic, etc.*

-ish: *childish, foolish, etc.*

-ive: *active, comprehensive, affirmative, etc.*

-less: *careless, hopeless, harmless, etc.*

-ous: *famous, dangerous, furious, etc.*

-y: *tasty, moody, hungry, etc.*



Adjectives

Most adjectives are always adjectives. That is, we don't use them as verbs or nouns or anything else. Grammarians call this kind of adjectives as **descriptive adjectives**.

Descriptive adjectives represent the largest number of adjectives for example tall, short, small, yellow, sloppy, difficult, etc.

But some adjectives look like verbs. In fact they are parts of verbs, but they do the work of adjectives.

a **boring** lesson

an **exciting** story

a **bored** student

an **excited** kid



Adjectives

92.6 ADJECTIVES WITH "-ING" AND "-ED"

"-ING" ADJECTIVES

Adjectives that end in "-ing" describe the effect something has.

The spider is frightening.

↖ The spider causes fright.

"-ED" ADJECTIVES

Adjectives ending in "-ed" describe how something is affected.

The man is frightened.

↖ The man experiences fright.





A verb is the most important word in a sentence; without it, the sentence would not make sense. Verbs describe what a person or thing is doing or being.

Verbs also have some typical verb endings.

-ate: *translate, demonstrate, assassinate, etc.*

-en: *strengthen, madden, happen, etc.*

-ify: *magnify, purify, beautify, etc.*

-ise, -ize: *maximize, summarize, popularise, etc.*

We can classify verbs into **main verbs** and **auxiliary**.

WHAT ARE ADVERBS?

- An adverb is a word that changes or simplifies the meaning of a verb, adjective, other adverb, clause, or sentence.
- Adverbs typically answer questions such as how?, in what way?, when?, where?, and to what extent?. This function is called the adverbial function, and is realised not just by single words but by adverbial phrases and adverbial clauses.



ADVERBS OF MANNER

Describe how something happens. Where there are two or more verbs in a sentence, adverb placement affects the meaning.

- Carefully
- Correctly
- Eagerly
- Easily
- Loudly
- Patiently
- Quickly
- Quietly

Example:

- *She decided to write her paper.* (no adverbs)

- *She **quickly** decided to write her paper.* (her decision was quick)

- *She decided to write her paper **quickly**.* (her writing was quick)



ADVERBS OF PLACE

Describe where something happens. Most adverbs of place are also used as prepositions.

- Abroad
- Anywhere
- Downstairs
- Here
- Home
- In
- Nowhere
- Out
- Outside
- Somewhere
- There
- Underground
- Upstairs.

Example:

• *I wanted to go **upstairs**.*

• *She has lived **in** the city since June. (in the city prepositional phrase)*



ADVERBS OF PURPOSE

Describe why something happens.

- So
- so that
- To
- in order to
- Because
- Since
- Accidentally
- Intentionally
- Purposely.

Example:

• Jenny walks carefully **to** avoid falling.

• Bob **accidentally** broke the vase.



ADVERBS OF FREQUENCY

Describe how often something happens.

- Always
- Every
- Never
- Often
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Usually.

Example:

•Mackenzie gets a ride from her brother **every** day.

•The fish **usually** swims near the top of its tank.



ADVERBS OF TIME

Describe when something happens.

- After
- Already
- During
- Finally
- Last
- Next
- Now
- Recently
- Soon
- Then
- Tomorrow
- When
- While
- Yesterday.

Example:

•He came home **before** dark.

•It will be too dark to play outside **soon**.



WARNING!

The adverbs never go between the verb and the object.

Ejemplos:

- You speak English **perfectly**.
- ~~You speak **perfectly** English~~