

University of Tikrit

College of Education for Humanities

Department of English



Adjectives

Academic Writing

First year

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2025-2026

Adjectives

Academic writing requires clarity, precision, and formality. One of important language tools that help writers achieve these qualities is the correct use of adjectives. Adjectives play a significant role in describing concepts, defining terms, and evaluating ideas. However, in academic writing, adjectives must be used carefully to avoid exaggeration, subjectivity, or informal tone. This lecture aims to explain what adjectives are, their types, and how to use them effectively in academic writing

1) Definition of Adjectives

- An **adjective** is a word that describes or modifies a **noun** or **pronoun**, often providing information about the qualities or characteristics of someone or something.
- Adjectives can describe these qualities independently or in comparison to something else, and they often appear directly before the noun or pronoun they modify. Examples include words like *enormous*, *doglike*, *silly*, *yellow*, *fun*, and *fast*.
- Adjectives have three forms: **absolute** (describing one thing, like *messy*), **comparative** (comparing two things, like *messier*), and **superlative** (indicating the highest degree, like *messiest*). Comparatives often use *-er* or *more*, while superlatives use *-est* or *most*.
- **Coordinate adjectives** equally modify the same noun and are separated by commas or conjunctions (*long, cold winter*). **Non-coordinate adjectives** form a unit of meaning and are not separated by a comma or conjunctions (*tattered woolen sweater*).
- Adjectives can also describe the **quantity** of **nouns**: *many*, *few*, *millions*, *eleven*.

Here, we'll explore adjectives, how they function, and provide examples to help you use them effectively.

2) Importance of Adjectives in Academic Writing

Adjectives are important in academic writing because they help define and classify concepts. Allow precise description of data and findings. Express evaluation in a formal and objective way. Improve coherence and clarity

For example/ 1) The study presents reliable data.

2) This research addresses a critical issue in education.

How to use adjectives

Use adjectives to tell the reader *what kind* of something you're talking about or *how much* or *how many* of something you're talking about.

Please use **three white** flowers in the arrangement.

Three and *white* are modifying *flowers*.

Often, when adjectives are used together, you should separate them with a comma or conjunction. See “Coordinate adjectives” below for more details.

I'm looking for a **small, good-tempered** dog to keep as a pet.

My new dog is **small and good-tempered**.

Adjectives modify nouns

As you may already know, adjectives are words that modify (describe) nouns. Adjectives do not modify verbs, adverbs, or other adjectives.

Margot wore a **beautiful hat** to the pie-eating contest.

Furry dogs may overheat in the summertime.

My cake should have **sixteen candles**.

The **scariest villain** of all time is Darth Vader.

The adjectives are easy to spot in the sentences above because they come immediately before the nouns they modify.

However, adjectives can modify nouns without appearing before them in a sentence. Acting as a subjective complement with the help of a linking verb, a predicate adjective modifies the subject of a sentence.

A linking verb is a verb like *to be*, *to feel*, *to seem*, or *to taste* that, rather than describing an action, helps to describe a state of being or a sensory experience.

That cow sure is **happy**.

It smells **gross** in the locker room.

Driving is **faster** than walking.

4) Types of Adjectives

1. Descriptive Adjectives: These adjectives describe qualities or characteristics of a noun.

Ex.:

- Important issue
- complex theory

These are the most commonly used adjectives in academic writing.

2. Quantitative Adjectives: They indicate quantity or amount.

Ex.

- Many factors.
- several studies

3. Demonstrative Adjectives: They point to specific nouns.

Ex.:

- This research
- These findings.

4. Possessive Adjectives: They show ownership.

Ex.:

- their arguments.
- his hypothesis

5. Comparative and superlative Adjectives: These adjectives are used to compare ideas or results.

Comparative: more effective, better, less important.

Superlative: the most significant, the best, the least effective.

Ex: This method is more reliable than the previous one

5. Order of Adjectives

When more than one adjective is used before a noun, they usually follow a specific order:

Opinion – Size – Age – Shape – Color - Origin – Material - Purpose – Noun

Example:

- An important new academic study
- A small experimental research group

In academic writing, writers usually avoid long adjective string and prefer clarity.

In conclusion :

In conclusion, adjectives are an essential component of academic writing. They help writers describe ideas accurately, evaluate results objectively, and maintain a formal academic style. However, adjectives should be used carefully and appropriately to avoid vagueness or informality. Mastering the use of adjective enables students to produce clearer, more precise, and more professional academic texts.