

SAMPLE LESSON FROM WORDSMITH APPRENTICE

PART TWO:

MODIFIERS AND MORE COMPLEX SENTENCES

A sentence is built on a subject and a verb. Everything else in the sentence is a **modifier**. Modifiers explain something about the subject, verb or object in the sentence.

It's as difficult to imagine language without modifiers as it is to imagine a world without color. How could you tell someone about your best friend if you had no words to say how tall he is, or how often she smiles, or how much he makes you laugh, or how easy she is to talk to? We use modifiers to express what someone or something is like.

In the next section, you will learn about the three major types of modifiers: *adjectives*, *adverbs*, and *prepositional phrases*.

PART II: MODIFIERS

MODIFIERS COMPLETE SENTENCES

LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THEM, WRITERS ADVISE

You've learned the basic form of a sentence. *Everything else* in the sentence is a modifier of some kind. In this section we will learn what the chief modifiers are.

ADJECTIVES SPOTTED BESIDE NOUNS

Adjectives are usually placed before the nouns they modify. But there is one exception: sometimes, adjectives follow a linking verb.

When an adjective follows a linking verb, it is called a **complement**. This is because the adjective goes along with (or "complements") the subject.

But nouns can be complements, too! How can you tell if the word after a linking verb is a noun or an adjective? Compare the sentences below:

a. Mr. Jones is a policeman.

Mr. Jones is brave.

b. The girls are students.

The girls are lonely.

In your mind, read the underlined word in each sentence *before* the subject: "Policeman Mr. Jones." "brave Mr. Jones." Which combination sounds better?

If "brave Mr. Jones" sounds better, then "brave" must be an adjective. If "lonely girls" makes more sense than "students girls," then "lonely" is an adjective. If any word sounds correct and makes sense when you hear it in front of a simple noun, like "girl" or "man"...it's an adjective.

Circle the adjectives in each word group that will complete the sentence. Think carefully--some groups contain more than one adjective. Check your answers on page A.

1. The (is, grow, pretty, tapes) girl sighed.
2. The (lose, newspaper, red-headed, friendly) boy smiled.
3. Tony was (pleased, were, squirrel, upset).
4. The (books, handsome, around, bashful) gentlemen paused.
5. The students are (run, noisy, beside).

I COMPLETED THIS EXERCISE ON _____

Every word in a sentence has a job to do. *The job of the adjective is to modify, or describe, a noun.*

That's easy to remember, isn't it? You can begin helping us with adjectives right away.

PART II: MODIFIERS

WRITERS IN SOCIAL WHIRL

The following two articles will be part of our society page, once you fill in all the blank spaces with a word that seems to fit. Ask a parent, older brother, or sister to help if you can't think of any suitable words. You should be able to come up with all kinds of words, but they will share one thing in common: *all will be adjectives*. The spaces simply could not be filled with anything else!

LOCAL CELEBRITIES PULL FOR CHARITY

The third annual Hospital Auxiliary Tug-of-War and Mud Slide was a _____ success. Our city's finest took part, including Mayor O.B. Juste, Channel 4's _____ meteorologist Sunny McCloud, the suave and _____ attorney, Owen Sosume, and local author Tourna Paige. Shortly after noon at Central Park, captains Juste and Paige chose their teams, which then took their places on opposite sides of a _____ mud puddle created for this _____ occasion. To the _____ cheers of their fans, the two teams seesawed back and forth until Paige's _____ band gave a mighty tug and pulled our _____ mayor and his team into the _____ puddle. A _____ time was had by all, and the hospital auxiliary reports that the two _____ tug-of-war teams raised over \$2000 to buy new play equipment for the children's ward.

I COMPLETED THIS ASSIGNMENT ON _____

DREW — SAWYER NUPTIALS

Ms. Nancy Drew and Mr. Thomas T. Sawyer were wed last Thursday in a _____ ceremony at First Community Church. The bride wore a _____, _____ gown with _____ sleeves and a _____ train. The church sanctuary, decorated by Wedding Belles, Inc., bloomed with a romantic and _____ blend of _____ roses, _____ doves, and festoons of _____ ribbon. The bride's attendants wore formal-length _____ dresses and carried bouquets of _____ daisies. The bride and groom repeated their vows in the _____ light of one hundred candles. To close the ceremony, all the guests were invited to rise and sing one _____ chorus of " _____ ." (Write title of favorite song here)

I COMPLETED THIS ASSIGNMENT ON _____

ADVERBS ANSWER FOUR QUESTIONS

Adverbs are a bit harder to recognize than adjectives because they can be placed almost anywhere in a sentence. But they are modifiers, too. Adverbs modify verbs, as you might easily guess. But sometimes they modify adjectives and other adverbs!

The job of an adverb in the sentence is to tell *when, where, how, or how much*. Let's explore these words a little further.

PART II: MODIFIERS

If the adverb modifies a **verb**, it will tell *when, where or how* something happened. In the list of adverbs below, draw lines to match each word with the question that it answers.

yesterday	
there	when?
well	
often	where?
now	
badly	how?
very	
	how much?

At times, however, an adverb can modify an adjective, or even another adverb. When that happens, the adverb tells *how much*. Some examples are:

pretty scary (adverb modifies an adjective)
very loud (adverb modifies an adjective)
fairly often (adverb modifies another adverb)

One more interesting fact you should know about adverbs is that they can often be formed from adjectives by adding the letters "-ly."

beautiful becomes beautifully;
easy becomes easily;

cold becomes _____;
warm becomes _____;
quick becomes _____;
shaky becomes _____;

Notice that the letter "y" at the end of **easy** is turned into an "i" before adding "ly."

Remember that the "y" at the end of **shaky** must be changed to an "i" before adding the "ly" ending.

Can you think of some adjective-to-adverb transformations?

becomes _____;
becomes _____;
becomes _____.

I COMPLETED THESE EXERCISES ON _____.

This "adding -ly" trick will not work for every adjective, and every word with "-ly" on the end is *not* an adverb. But it's interesting to see how words sometimes change *form* in order to show a change in *function*.

[Back](#) | [Sample Lessons](#)