
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

Adjectives and adverbs



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Catherine

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Catherine.

Finn

And me, Finn. Hello.

Catherine

In this programme we're talking about adjectives and adverbs.

Finn

We'll tell you what they are and how they're used.

Catherine

We'll give you some tips to help you understand the difference between them.

Finn

And we'll also have a quiz to test your understanding.

Catherine

Right. Let's get started. Finn, can you tell us about adjectives first.

Finn

OK. Certainly, let's start with a simple example. What am I holding up?

Catherine

You've got two biscuits, Finn . One is **plain** and one is **chocolate**.

Finn

Yes. Do you like both?

Catherine

I do.

Finn

Me too. In that sentence there were two adjectives, **plain** and **chocolate**. What do those words do?

Catherine

Well, Finn. Those words describe the biscuits.

Finn

That's right. Adjectives are describing words: they tell us about nouns. In this case they tell us about the biscuits. A **plain** biscuit. A **chocolate** biscuit.

Catherine

Fantastic. What else do adjectives describe?

Finn

Lots of things. They can also describe pronouns. Listen out for the adjective **happy** in this example. Here's Neil

Neil

Peter played well. After the game he was happy.

Finn

The adjective **happy** - what did that refer to?

Catherine

It referred to the pronoun **he**, which in this example was Peter.

Finn

Yes, Peter was **happy**. He was **happy**. He was a **happy** Peter.

Catherine

So adjectives are words that give us information or additional information about nouns. When it comes to adverbs there is a bit of a clue in the name, isn't there, Finn? Ad – verb, add information about a verb.

Finn

That is one thing that adverbs do. They give us information about verbs. They can tell us how someone does something or how something happens. Now, let's listen again to the example. As well as the adjective **happy** there's also an adverb in the sentence. What is it?

Neil

Peter played **well**. After the game he was **happy**.

Catherine

The adverb there was **well**. Peter played **well**. The word **well** isn't describing Peter himself: it's describing how he did what he did.

IDENT

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

Catherine

And we're talking about adjectives and adverbs.

Finn

We've seen that adjectives describe nouns and adverbs talk about verbs.

Catherine

You mentioned that referring to verbs was only one thing that adverbs do. So, where else can we use them?

Finn

Adverbs can also describe adjectives, and even other adverbs. Remember the biscuits?

Catherine

I'm looking at them right now, Finn.

Finn

Look good, don't they?

Catherine

They do!

Finn

What do you feel when you see the biscuits?

Catherine

I feel hungry!

Finn

Is hungry an adjective or adverb?

Catherine

It is an adjective because it's describing me, my feeling – and I'm a noun!

Finn

You are a noun! And now if I ask you how hungry you are, what would you say?

Catherine

Well the chocolate biscuit in particular is making me feel **very** hungry.

Finn

Very hungry. **Very**. Hungry. What is the word **very** referring to? Is it you, the noun?

Catherine

No, it's the adjective **hungry**.

Finn

Exactly. **Very** is an adverb. So as well as adding information about verbs, adverbs can also tell us about adjectives. And they can even tell us about other adverbs. Let's hear our earlier example again please, Neil?

Neil

Peter played well. After the game he was happy.

Finn

Remember that the word **well** is an adverb. But how **well** did Peter play?

Neil

Peter played **really well**.

Finn

That's right. So here the word **really** is telling us about the adverb **well**. How **well**? **Really well**. **Really** is also an adverb.

Catherine

So adverbs can tell us about verbs, adjectives and other adverbs.

Finn

And adjectives describe nouns and pronouns. And now, it's quiz time.

Catherine

We are going to give you a word, and read a sentence which contains the word. You need to decide if the word we give you is an adjective or an adverb.

Finn

OK. So, here's the first one. The word is **blue** and here's the sentence.

Catherine

The sky is dark **blue**. The sky is dark **blue**.

Finn

So, is **blue** an adjective or adverb?

Catherine

It's an adjective. **Blue** is describing the noun sky. Now number two: it's actually the same sentence but this time, think about the word **dark**. Is **dark** an adjective or an adverb?

Finn

The sky is **dark** blue.

Catherine

Right. So, is **dark** an adjective or adverb?

Finn

Dark here is an adverb. Now number three. This time there are three words to listen out for: **delicious**, **very** and **slowly** – are they adjectives or adverbs?

Catherine

Catherine ate the **delicious** biscuit **very slowly**.

Finn

No, she didn't. She ate it very fast. But, did you get them? **Delicious** is an adjective. It describes the noun biscuit.

Catherine

Slowly is an adverb.

Finn

And finally, **very** is also an adverb.

Catherine

So that's our introduction to adjectives and adverbs

Finn

There's more about this on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for soon more 6 Minute Grammar.

Both

Bye.

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