

Adjectives

As in French, adjectives are used to describe a noun and are usually found in proximity to the noun which they modify. However, there are also a number of differences between the way adjectives are used in the two languages. Here, we will look at how we place adjectives in English sentences.

Plural nouns, singular adjective

The most notable difference between adjectives in French and in English is that adjectives in English never take an 's', regardless of whether the noun they are modifying is plural.

- The events in the HALLOWEEN movie are extremely **scary**.
- **Fun** teachers are among those who contribute to the Crash Course YouTube channel.

Before or after the noun?

As in French, the adjective can go either before or after the noun in English, but in very different circumstances.

The most common instance is for the adjective to come before the noun. This usually happens when there is no verb separating the adjective and the noun.

- The Crash Course Youtube channel is watched by **assertive students**.
- This **modernist novel** is famous for its complexity of language.

However, in some sentence structures, the adjective can come after the noun. This is particularly the case when the verb in the sentence is a state verb. State verbs are verbs that don't indicate actions; instead, they are used to talk about appearances and senses. The most common state verb is the verb 'to be', but it is certainly not the only one.

In sentences with state verbs, the adjective can come after the state verb if the adjective modifies the subject of that verb.

- This modernist **novel** is **famous** for its complexity of language.

In the above sentence, '**novel**' is the grammatical subject of the sentence, and the adjective '**famous**' modifies the noun 'novel'. Here are two other examples with sentences using state verbs other than 'to be':

- To authorities in Britain and the United States, ULYSSES initially appeared **pornographic**.
- As a result of the suffragette movement, Emmeline Pankhurst became **well known** all over the world.

The order of adjectives

Similarly to French, when more than one adjective is used to describe a noun in a sentence, the order of which adjectives come first is determined in a very precise way. In fact, the order of adjectives **before** nouns depends on the types of adjectives used.

This is the order in which adjectives appear in sentences:

1. Opinion: pretty, horrible, lovely...
2. Size: huge, tiny, big, little...
3. Age: old, young, new...
4. Shape: round, square, triangular...
5. Colour: black, red, yellow...
6. Origin: British, Chinese, French...
7. Material: woollen, wooden, silk...
8. Purpose: writing (paper), school (shoes)...

- HALLOWEEN is a (1) scary (6) American (8) horror film.
- ULYSSES is a (2) long (6) Irish novel published in 1922.

In sentences where the adjective comes after the noun, if there is more than one adjective, we usually use 'and' before the last adjective. The comma before the 'and' is optional, and is inserted mainly to control the pace of the sentence.

- The suffragette movement was long and violent.

In sentences where the adjective comes before the noun, it is also common to use 'and' when there is more than one adjective; we usually include the 'and' when the adjectives don't reinforce each other. However, it is also possible to not use 'and', usually done when the adjectives reinforce each other.

- James Joyce had a bitter, poverty-ridden childhood.
- James Joyce had a prolific and financially successful career as a writer.

Answers are on page 49.

EXERCISE 1 Correct the following sentences.

- 1/ Modernist novels are difficult for most people to understand.

- 2/ HALLOWEEN is the movie scariest I've ever seen.

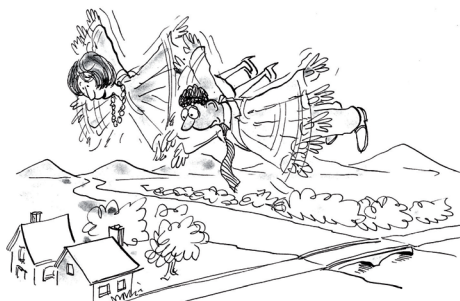
- 3/ ULYSSES is an Irish beautiful masterpiece.

- 4/ YouTube channels successful are the ones that get at least 1,000,000 views per month.



EXERCISE 2 Insert the adjectives into the sentences below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ London was a city at the beginning of the 20th century. (dark, modern, huge)
_____ 2/ Puerto Rico has had a relationship with the United States. (complicated, long).
_____ 3/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a candidate from the Bronx, won the election. (Puerto Rican, determined, underdog)
_____ | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4/ In HALLOWEEN, Jamie Lee Curtis plays a woman who is attacked by Michael Myers. (Midwestern, beautiful, 17-year-old)
_____ 5/ Michael Myers wore a mask. (white, scary, plastic)
_____ 6/ Laurie Strode lived in a house. (white, large, wood-frame)
_____ 7/ Laurie Strode lived in a town. (quiet, small)
_____ 8/ The protesters prepared signs for the demonstration. (green, white, purple, large, cardboard)
_____ 9/ James Joyce and Nora Barnacle lived in many cities. (exciting, large, cosmopolitan)
_____ 10/ In his youth, Joyce worked on a typewriter. (black, old, metal, worn-down)
_____ |
|--|--|



"Sometimes, it's good to get a different perspective."

EXERCISE 3 Unscramble the following sentences.

- 1/ boring Joyce black wore hats. _____
- 2/ Jamie Lee Curtis and beautiful when, ambitious she actress young HALLOWEEN starred in was a.

- 3/ big Joyce's car was first black American a Ford T.

- 4/ tool YouTube cheap is by a educators pedagogical used.

- 5/ wore 1920's dresses women plain England, cotton In.

- 6/ bloodier, Young these prefer longer, more violent people horror days films.

- 7/ understand is Irish ULYSSES a beautiful to novel and difficult.

- 8/ well-educated, politicians tend to centrist American elections in Tall, succeed.

"I've seen this before: a communicator paralysed by poor listening skills."

