The Adjective

Adjectives

1c. An adjective is a word that is used to modify a noun or a pronoun.

An adjective helps to define or describe a noun or pronoun by telling what kind, which one, or how many about that noun or pronoun.

**WHAT KIND?** clean room, brown hair, French pen pal, easy test

**WHICH ONE?** first choice, that calendar, this box, next class

**HOW MANY?** many fish, six songs, some ideas, few coins

**NOTES** A, an, and the are special adjectives that we call *articles*. A and an are *indefinite articles* because they refer to any member of a group. The is the *definite article* because it refers to a specific member of a group.

**EXERCISE A** Underline each adjective in the following sentences. Each sentence has more than one adjective. Do not underline the articles a, an, and the.

**Example 1.** Find a safe path around those four huge rocks. [*Safe modifies path. Those, four, and huge modify rocks.*]

1. There is a large family of healthy ducks by the lake. [Which word modifies family? Which word modifies ducks?]
2. During the hot afternoon, several deer crossed the grassy meadow.
3. Look at the small, brown rabbit near the trees.
4. A gray dove looked for tiny seeds beneath a leafy, green bush.
5. Did you see the beautiful fur on that fox?

**Pronoun or Adjective?**

Some words, such as *either, neither, which, this, these, or that*, may be used as either pronouns or adjectives. When these words take the place of nouns or other pronouns, they are pronouns. When they modify nouns or pronouns, they are adjectives.

**PRONOUNS** I wore this. She knows neither. Which won?

**ADJECTIVES** I wore this hat. She knows neither boy. Which team won?

**NOTES** When the *demonstrative pronouns* this, that, these, and those modify nouns or pronouns, they are called *demonstrative adjectives*. 
EXERCISE B Underline each adjective in the following sentences. Then, draw an arrow from each adjective to the noun or pronoun it modifies. Do not underline the articles a, an, and the.

**Example 1.** That **young** vine is dangling from this **tree**. [*That and young modify vine. This modifies tree.*]

6. Either coach can train the new team. [Which two words modify nouns?]

7. Which long table will seat the hungry students?

8. Those three rosebushes won’t bloom for many weeks.

9. Recent graduates helped several teachers purchase those.

10. We realized that neither frog had been making that unusual noise.

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**NOTE** Many words that can stand alone as nouns can also be used as adjectives. Adjectives formed from proper nouns are called *proper adjectives.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOUNS</th>
<th>stone</th>
<th>history</th>
<th>Maine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADJECTIVES</td>
<td>stone fence</td>
<td>history lesson</td>
<td>Maine lobster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Adjectives in Sentences**

An adjective usually comes before the noun or pronoun it modifies. However, sometimes the adjective follows the word it modifies, and occasionally a word or words may come between the adjective and the word it modifies.

**EXAMPLE** The bus, **large** and **yellow**, carried us to school. [*Large and yellow both modify and follow bus.*]

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**EXERCISE C** Decide whether each of the underlined words in the following sentences is used as an adjective, a noun, or a pronoun. If the word is used as an adjective, write *ADJ* on the line provided. If the word is used as a noun, write *N* on the line provided. If the word is used as a pronoun, write *PRO* on the line provided.

**Example** *ADJ* 1. We ate lunch at the **kitchen** table. [*Kitchen modifies table.*]

11. Is this the homemade pickle **relish**? [*Does this modify a noun, or does it refer to a noun?*]

12. The relish in this jar is **delicious**!

13. The relish was made from **California** cucumbers.

14. This is the relish from **California**.

15. This sandwich, because it’s dry and plain, needs relish.