

13. ADJECTIVES

Read the following sentences. Underline the nouns in each sentence once. Then answer the questions in the spaces provided.

A. Four boys stuffed slimy worms into the big buckets.

1. *How many* boys? _____
2. *What kind* of worms? _____
3. *Which* buckets? _____

B. For heat, tight-fisted Mr. Scrooge daily used two lumps of bituminous coal.

1. *Which* Mr. Scrooge? _____
2. *How many* lumps of coal? _____
3. *What kind* of coal? _____

The words you have written in the spaces above modify (describe) other words in three ways. They answer the questions which one? what kind? and how many? *Big* tells which bucket, and *tight-fisted* tells which Mr. Scrooge. *Slimy* tells what kind of worms and *bituminous* tells what kind of coal. *Four* and *two* tell how many boys and how many pieces of coal. Sometimes it is difficult to make a distinction between which one and what kind. *Slimy* could just as easily tell which worms as well as what kind of worms. Both answers would be correct.

Definition

An adjective describes or limits a noun or pronoun by telling *which one, what kind, or how many*.

Adjectives help you to see objects more clearly. For example, *slimy* lets you imagine the feel of the worms. If you were to say *wiggly* or *whip-like*, you could even begin to see the worms move. In the same way, *tight-fisted* creates the image of a Mr. Scrooge who is miserly and ungenerous. The more vivid and precise the adjectives you use, the clearer the picture you create.

Now read the italicized sentence below. Underline the nouns once. Then answer the questions in the spaces provided.

In colonial times young girls in needlework schools embroidered many samplers to learn the alphabet and Biblical passages.

1. What words answer *what kind*? _____
2. What words do the answers to 1 describe? _____
3. What word answers *how many*? _____
4. What word does the answer to 3 describe? _____
5. What words answer *which one*? _____
6. What words do the answer to 5 describe? _____

What do the words *samplers, schools, passages, times, and girls* have in common? Yes, each has an adjective to describe it. Also, each is the same part of speech: a noun. Remember, adjectives always modify nouns or pronouns.

HINT

- A. The adjective is usually located in front of the noun that it modifies.

Maria put on a *dazzling* hat.

- B. Nouns sometimes function as adjectives:

Helen put on her *baseball* cap.

In the above sentence, *baseball*, which names something, also describes what kind of cap Helen put on. *Baseball* is a noun functioning as an adjective in this sentence.

- C. The three articles (*a, an, and the*) always function as adjectives:

I'll use *the* spoon.

The tells which spoon the writer will use.

- D. Possessive nouns (such as *Henry's, America's, and dog's*) and possessive pronouns (*my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, and theirs*) always function as adjectives:

Take *Henry's* answers and compare them with *your* answers.

The adjectives *Henry's* and *your* both tell which answers will be compared.

Practice finding the adjectives in the following sentences. Underline and write *adj.* above each adjective.

1. The imaginative Anne Shirley helped shy Matthew and peevish Marilla discover companionship.
2. Tricky Rumpelstiltskin thought he had trapped the hapless spinning girl into giving him her first-born child.
3. Some people think the advertising on children's television programs traps viewers into wanting too many toys.

You should have found four adjectives in the first sentence, five in the second sentence, and four in the last.

ADJECTIVE EXERCISES

- A. *Directions:* After each noun, list in the spaces provided three adjectives that precisely and vividly describe it.

EXAMPLE: oatmeal *mushy, beige, lumpy*

1. feather _____
2. diamond _____
3. fish _____
4. sunlight _____
5. school _____
6. fire _____
7. snow _____
8. spiders _____
9. summer _____
10. friend _____

- B. *Directions:* Change the words listed below into adjectives. Write the answers in the spaces provided.

EXAMPLE: become *becoming*

1. begin _____
2. change _____
3. mercy _____
4. shine _____
5. come _____
6. courtesy _____

7. curiosity _____
8. who _____
9. twelve _____
10. vigor _____
11. they _____
12. ridicule _____
13. religion _____
14. desire _____
15. disaster _____
16. eight _____
17. differ _____
18. imagination _____
19. it _____
20. mischief _____

C. *Directions:* Read each sentence. List all the adjectives (except the articles *a*, *an*, and *the*) in the space provided.

EXAMPLE: The humorous Mr. O'Dell told many jokes.

humorous many

STRANGE BUT TRUE BASEBALL FACTS

1. The first baseball game was played in Hoboken, New Jersey, on June 19, 1846.

2. Baseball's basic rules were not created by Abner Doubleday, but by Alexander J. Cartwright.

3. Cartwright laid out the present dimensions of the playing field.

4. The first professional team was the Cincinnati Red Stockings.

5. The Red Stockings toured in 1869, and they had an undefeated season.

6. In the late 1800s there were different rules.

7. It took nine balls for a walk instead of today's four balls.

8. A batter could request a high pitch or a low pitch.

9. Pitchers made underhand throws and not overhand ones.

10. The pitching distance from homeplate to the pitcher's mound was forty-five feet and not the sixty feet and six inches of today.

11. The game of baseball has created unbelievable stories.

12. Baseball has no time clock.

13. In 1952, in a famous game between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Cincinnati Reds, a half-inning lasted one hour.

14. In that one hour the Dodgers scored fifteen runs in twenty-one times at bat.

15. In another instance Cleveland Indians' pitcher, Eddie Lopat won eleven straight victories against the Yankees.

16. In his next game this streak was broken.

17. A Yankees fan dropped a black cat at Lopat's feet and jinxed him.

18. He gave up five runs in the first inning, and the Yankees eventually won.

19. About a hundred years ago, pitcher Fred Goldsmith proved that a curve ball really curves.

20. He placed three poles in a straight line.

21. His pitch skirted the right of the first pole, the left of the second pole, and the right of the third pole.

D. *Directions:* Write ten sentences using any adjectives from the right column below to describe a noun from the left column. You may reuse adjectives.

EXAMPLE:

voice

scratchy

The scratchy voice travelled through the telephone wire and hit her ear like a rusty knife.

Noun

Adjective

noise

American

teacher

scary

music

wheezy

bus

sixty-five

motorcycle

talking

sight

raspy

goose

eye-dazzling

rainbow

colorful

sandwich

noisy

garden

elderly

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____