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Adjectives & Adverbs

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The ability to use descriptive words when writing or talking is essential to clearly communicating thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Students who struggle to use descriptive words such as adjectives and adverbs may have difficulty effectively expressing their wants, needs, and opinions.

Adjectives

Often called a “describing word,” adjectives modify a noun or pronoun. They add more information to give a more detailed description of what the noun or pronoun is like. Adjectives typically answer the following questions:



Which?

(The *old* cat jumped on my lap.)



What kind?

(I like to eat *spicy* food.)



How many?

(*Nineteen* students are in my class.)



Whose?

(*Becky's* car is the biggest.)

Adverbs

Adverbs modify a verb, adjectives, and other adverbs. They are easier to recognize because often they end with an -ly, as in friendly or clumsily. Most often, adverbs answer the question *how*, but can also answer *when*, *where*, and *why* questions, too.



How?

- Modifying verbs (The athlete ran *quickly*.)
- Modifying adjectives (My grandmother is *exceptionally* nice.)
- Modifying adverbs (It is *almost always* raining on the weekends.)



When?

(I arrived *early* to work.)



Where?

(The exit is over *there*.)



Why?

(My parents made a chore chart so *we could learn to be more responsible*.)
*note – an adverbial phrase answers why my parents made a chore chart.

Kindergarten students are required to retell stories and describe people, places, and events with descriptive details. As early as second grade, students must write opinion pieces, informative texts, and narratives to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings. As students progress through school they develop critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills required for future success. Learning how to identify and use descriptive language builds the foundation to become a clear and cohesive communicator.



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(cont.)

Adjectives and Adverbs Development Tips:



- Encourage your child to be detailed and expressive when recounting their day or making up a story.



- Ask *which, what kind, how, when, where* and similar questions to get your child thinking about and utilizing adjectives and adverbs.



- When you use adjectives and adverbs in your conversation ask your child to repeat them back to you – for example if you say, “at work we had small golden puppies to pet after the meeting,” ask your child what kind of puppies you got to pet.



- Have your child describe their surroundings or specific objects when home or out and about.



- Have your child describe how actions were done – how did the bus driver drive them to school, how did they run in PE or at recess, how did the teacher teach today?



- When looking at pictures, have your child describe everything about the pictures in complete sentences.



Resources:

- “English Language Arts Standards,” Common Core State Standards Initiative, accessed July 26, 2017, <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>
 “What is an Adverb,” Your Dictionary, accessed July 26, 2017, <http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/adverbs/what-is-an-adverb.html>
 “What is an Adjective,” Your Dictionary, accessed July 26, 2017, <http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/adjectives/what-is-an-adjective.html>

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