

Adjectives and adverbs - essay



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Adjectives and adverbs Many languages, including English, distinguish between adjectives, which qualify nouns and pronouns, and adverbs, which modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Not all languages have exactly this distinction and many languages, including English, have words that can function as both. For example, in English fast is an adjective in " a fast car" (where it qualifies the noun car), but an adverb in " he drove fast" (where it modifies the verb drove).

Determiners Main article: Determiner (linguistics)

Linguists today distinguish determiners from adjectives, considering them to be two separate parts of speech (or lexical categories), but formerly determiners were considered to be adjectives in some of their uses. In English dictionaries, which typically still do not treat determiners as their own part of speech, determiners are often recognizable by being listed both as adjectives and as pronouns. Determiners are words that are neither nouns nor pronouns, yet reference a thing already in context. Determiners generally do this by indicating definiteness (as in a vs. the), quantity (as in one vs. some vs. many), or another such property.

Form A given occurrence of an adjective can generally be classified into one of four kinds of uses: 1. Attributive adjectives are part of the noun phrase headed by the noun they modify; for example, happy is an attributive adjective in " happy people". In some languages, attributive adjectives precede their nouns; in others, they follow their nouns; and in yet others, it depends on the adjective, or on the exact relationship of the adjective to the noun. In English, attributive adjectives usually precede their nouns in simple phrases, but often follow their nouns when the adjective is modified or qualified by a phrase acting as an adverb. For example: " I saw three happy kids", and " I saw three kids happy enough to jump up and down with glee." See also Postpositive

adjective. 2. Predicative adjectives are linked via a copula or other linking mechanism to the noun or pronoun they modify; for example, happy is a predicate adjective in " they are happy" and in " that made me happy." (See also: Predicative (adjectival or nominal), Subject complement.) 3. Absolute adjectives do not belong to a larger construction (aside from a larger adjective phrase), and typically modify either the subject of a sentence or whatever noun or pronoun they are closest to; for example, happy is an absolute adjective in " The boy, happy with his lollipop, did not look where he was going." 4. Nominal adjectives act almost as nouns. One way this can happen is if a noun is elided and an attributive adjective is left behind. In the sentence, " I read two books to them; he preferred the sad book, but she preferred the happy", happy is a nominal adjective, short for " happy one" or " happy book". Another way this can happen is in phrases like " out with the old, in with the new", where " the old" means, " that which is old" or " all that is old", and similarly with " the new". In such cases, the adjective functions either as a mass noun (as in the preceding example) or as a plural count noun, as in " The meek shall inherit the Earth", where " the meek" means " those who are meek" or " all who are meek".

Adjectival phrases Main article: Adjectival phrase An adjective acts as the head of an adjectival phrase. In the simplest case, an adjectival phrase consists solely of the adjective; more complex adjectival phrases may contain one or more adverbs modifying the adjective (" very strong"), or one or more complements (such as " worth several dollars", " full of toys", or " eager to please"). In English, attributive adjectival phrases that include complements typically follow their subject (" an evildoer devoid of redeeming qualities