

MODIFIERS

I. MODIFIERS OF NOUNS

A. **Classification of nouns:** Nouns can be classified in different ways

1. **Common and proper* nouns:** Door, chair, house / Peter, Erick, Europe

*They are not syntactically classified.

2. **Masculine and Feminine:** King, roaster / Queen, hen

3. **Simple and compound:** Chair / Rocking chair

4. **Countable and uncountable:**

Countable nouns have 2 forms: one for singular and the other for plural.

Uncountable nouns only have 1 form, the one that is used in singular.

a. **No-counts:** They are used to refer to different things, for example:

-**Mass nouns:** Such as gases, fluids, liquids, etc.: *Water, oxygen, sugar, salt, hair, etc.*

-**Abstractions:** Words used to describe emotions, feelings, ideas, concepts, etc.: *freedom, motherhood, truth, etc.*

-**Academic areas:** *Mathematics, history, French, etc.*

-**Sports and recreational activities:** *Tennis, painting, etc.*

-**Words that refer to a group of some things that share**

characteristics: *furniture, luggage, machinery, cutlery, flatware, silverware.*

b. **Problems:**

-In English, some uncountable nouns are different from Spanish: e.g., *Bread* is uncountable, but in Spanish the word “pan” is countable.

-Some nouns can be uncountable and countable and mean different things.

Word	Countable meaning	Uncountable meaning
Business	Shop/store <i>They've got a small catering business.</i>	Trade <i>It's been a pleasure to do business with you.</i>
Company	Enterprise <i>The largest computer company in the world.</i>	Visitor or a person that is with you <i>I enjoy Jo's company. I didn't realize you had company.</i>
Change	Transformations <i>important changes to the tax system.</i>	Coins, money <i>That's 40p change.</i>
Glass	Container, the object you use to see well <i>a sherry glass. I wear glasses for driving.</i>	Material <i>The vegetables are grown under glass.</i>
Iron	Appliance <i>a steam iron</i>	Material <i>patients with iron deficiency</i>

Light	Lamp, bulb <i>Check your car before you drive to make sure that your lights are working.</i>	Physical phenomenon <i>a room with good natural light.</i>
Paper	Newspaper, exams, articles <i>The papers (= newspapers in general) soon got hold of the story.</i>	Material <i>a package wrapped in brown paper.</i>
Room	In buildings <i>He walked out of the room and slammed the door.</i>	Space, possibility <i>Is there enough room for me in the car?</i>
Tea	Cup of tea <i>Two teas, please.</i>	The drink, leaves of tea <i>Would you like tea or coffee?</i>
Work	Book, music, art <i>the collected / complete works of Tolstoy</i>	Job, task, place of job, effort <i>She had been out of work (= without a job) for a year. She earned her grades through sheer hard work.</i>
Water	The water in a specific lake, sea, ocean, etc. <i>We were still in British waters.</i>	The liquid <i>There is hot and cold running water in all the bedrooms.</i>

B. Modifiers

1. Articles: They can be definite (the) or indefinite (a / an).

- a. **A / an:** It is used to refer to ONE thing only such as a job. Also, you use it when you mention something for the first time. Remember that **an** is used when the following word starts with a vowel sound.
- b. **The:** You use it when something has been mentioned before, when you want to be emphatic and with some expressions of time and place. You also use it with geographical features: *Mountain ranges (no 1 mountain), oceans, seas, rivers, countries which are republics or unions, groups of countries and islands (archipelagos), superlatives, and when something is unique.*

2. Possessives:

- a. **Possessive adjectives:** *my, your, his, her, its, their, your and our.*

- b. **Possessive -'s:**

*Neil's house Rebecca's house Charles's house Jesus' words
The Smiths' car The Joneses' car The witches' spells
The men's clothes The geese's food supply was endangered.*

Some people consider it is wrong to use the possessive 's with unanimated things. However, these rules are not universally endorsed/ accepted. For some *The table's leg* would be wrong because table is an unanimated thing. However, some people argue that it is possible to use it when the unanimated thing makes movements: *The train's arrival.*

- Expressions of time: *Tomorrow's concert. Two years' experience.*
- Companies: *Apple's new Iphone 5*

- *Cities: London's water problems*

3. **Demonstratives:** They are this (close object/people), that (distant objects/people) for singular and these (close object/people) and those for plural (distant objects/people).
4. **Numbers:** They can be cardinal or ordinal numbers.
 - a. **Cardinal:** *Two chapters*
 - b. **Ordinal:** *The first chapter*

You can use them at the same time: *The first two chapters.*

5. **Indefinite adjectives:**
 - a. **Another:** It is used with singular nouns. *Another book.* However, it can be followed by **of** and a plural noun, or by **a number** and a plural noun.
We've still got another (= a further) forty miles to go.
I got another of those calls yesterday.
 - b. **Other:** It can be used with singular and plural nouns. *Other books, some other time, the other book.*
The other can also be a noun instead of an adjective. *Can you pass me that book, please? No that one, but the other.*
Others, the others are not indefinite adjectives, they are nouns.
 - c. **Much and many:** They are used to refer to big amounts of something. Much is used with uncountable nouns and many with countable nouns. *She has many cats / He doesn't have much money.*
 - d. **Little and few:** They are used to mean "not much" (Little: uncountable) and "not many" (Few: countable).
However, little and few can have different meanings depending on the use of other words before them:

Countable	Few (A negative concept): She has few friends (= Not many).
	A few (A positive concept): She has a few friends (=Several).
	Quite a few (More positive concept): She has quite a few friends (= a lot).

Uncountable	Little (A negative concept): She has little time (= Not much).
	A little (A positive concept): She has a little time (=enough).
	Quite a little (More positive concept): She has quite a little time (= a lot of time).

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- e. **A lot of (Different from the adverb “ a lot”):** It can be used with countable and uncountable nouns. *This soup’s got a lot of salt. I’ve got a lot of gadgets.*
She studies a lot: It is an adverb that means (during a lot of time, etc.)
- f. **No (emphatic) (Different from the adverb “not”):** I have no money. This is not the adverb because you need to use the auxiliaries or got *I haven’t got money, I don’t have money.*
- g. **Enough:** It is used with countable and uncountable nouns to mean “as many or as much as you need or want”. It goes always before the noun. When it goes after an adjective, it is an adverb *She is old enough to drink beer.*
- h. **Some and Any:**
 - 1. **Some:** It is used with countable and uncountable nouns. It is also used in questions and offers when you expect a positive answer.
Give me some salt, some friends, Would you like some cheese? Didn’t you borrow some books of mine?
 - 2. **Any:** It is used in negative statements with singular and plural nouns. It is also used in questions.
I don’t want any more vegetables, is there any wine left?
- i. **Either / neither:** They are used to mean one (of two) or no one. They are always singular.
Neither answer is correct.
You can park on either side of the street.
- j. **Each and every:** Each means one thing/person of a group or a pair Every refers to all the members of a group.
She knows every student in the school.
Each answer is worth 20 points. / Each day that passed he grew more and more desperate.

II. ADJECTIVES: is a 'describing' word; the main syntactic role of which is to qualify a noun or noun phrase, giving more information about the object signified.

- A. Classification:** There are two ways to classify the adjectives in English.
 - 1. **According to the form:** They can be simple or compound.
 - a. **Simple adjectives:** They only have one word: *Beautiful, gorgeous, hard, strong.*
 - b. **Compound:** They have more than one word and they can be hyphenated or not: *the above-mentioned problem, up-to-date methods, hard-to-find information, old-fashioned books, a four-door*

car, a five-star hotel. (The last two ones are in singular always because adjectives are never pluralized).

2. According to their position in the sentence (syntactical classification):

They can be attributive, predicative or postpositive.

- a. **Attributive:** Any adjective that goes before a noun. *A red car.*
- b. **Predicative:** Any adjective in the position of a subject complement or an object complement. You can easily recognize them because they go with linking verbs and copula BE. *She is beautiful, I consider you interesting.*
- c. **Postpositive:** They go after the noun and without the use of any other word. *Notary public.*

Besides, they can go after pronouns: *Anyone intelligent can do it.*

B. Order of adjectives: You will realize you are not going to find all the kinds together in most of the cases.

#	Kind	Examples
1	Opinion	<i>Lovely, good, bad</i>
2	Size	<i>Small, large, little</i>
3	Shape	<i>Round, oval, square</i>
4	Condition (weather)	<i>Muddy, sunny, rainy</i>
5	Age/temperature	<i>Young, elderly, hot, cool</i>
6	Color	<i>Black, blue, scarlet</i>
7	Origin (epoch) (place) (material)	<i>Victorian, Pre-Columbian, Colonial, Persian, Japanese, Italian, wooden, crystalline</i>
8	Purpose*	<i>Sleeping (bag), diet (coke)</i>

C. Participles: We have two kinds of participles *Present –ing, Past –en.*

- a. **Kinds:** Ask sts to indicate the noun that is modified

1. Present Participle

- We suffer from rising prices.
- Peter is the boy waving his arms.
- I read an interesting book.

2. Past Participle

- He sells used cars.
- My mother is the woman seated by the door.

b. Differences in meaning between the Present and the Past Participle

- 1. Reactions and causes:** The Present Participle indicates the cause of a determined feeling, e.g. *a boring movie, an exciting experience, an amazing show, a challenging exercise*. The Past Participle indicates the reaction you experience, e.g. *The movie made me feel bored, I felt excited because of that experience, I was amazed at her knowledge of French literature*.
- 2. Still-in-progress actions:** The Present Participle expresses an action which stills in progress.
A growing boy is the one in the process of growing.
Boiling water is water in the process of boiling.
- 3. Finished processes:** The Past Participle indicates that a process has finished.
A grown boy is the one who already finished his process of growing.
Boiled eggs are the eggs that were boiled and can be eaten now.

III) NOUNS: Always before nouns: n + N, never N + n. One noun that is modified by one or more nouns.

-Brick building

-Research project

-A faculty member

-English grammar book

*n: modifier

*N: Noun that is modified

IV) INFINITIVES: When you want to modify a noun with an infinitive it always comes after the noun.

-*This is a good book to read*

-*An article to be read*

-*I have promises to keep*

V) PP: Remember that prepositional phrases contain noun phrases

-*I need some information on linguistics.*

VI) ADVERBS OF PLACE: (abroad, inside, outside, there, here, near, etc.)

-The students outside are making noise.

-The items here are in order.

-Is the boss in?

Modifiers of verbs

The natural modifiers of verbs are adverbs. However, prepositional phrases can also modify verbs.

I. Adverbs

a. Adverbs of frequency:

-They *rarely* speak Russian

-Have you ever had an interview?

More often	Always
	Very often
	Frequently
	Usually/ Generally
	Often
	Sometimes
	Occasionally
	Rarely
	Hardly ever / seldom
Less often	Never

REMEMBER: Adverbs of frequency usually go between the subject and the verb (different from Copula BE, when they go after copula BE. However, changes in the position of the adverbs can be applied to give emphasis on it.

b. Adverbs of manner: They go after the verb. They also go after the D.O.

-She waited *patiently*.

-I handle things *differently*.

REMEMBER:

-Most of words with the suffix –ly are adverbs of manner: *mercifully, quickly, rapidly, nicely*.

- However, there are some adverbs of manner that do not have this suffix: *Hard, straight, fine, bad, good and well, etc.*

-Other words ended in –ly are not adverbs of manner: *friendly, ugly*.

-You can replace the suffix –ly by using phrases with way and fashion: *She behaved nicely OR she behaved in a nice way OR she behaved in a nice fashion.*

c. Adverbs of place: *downstairs, upstairs, abroad, far, inside, outside, there, aside, here, near, (go) overseas, etc.*

-*She went away.*

-*Let's go out for dinner.*

d. Adverbs of time: *Immediately, then, early, late, just, tomorrow, today, tonight, now, finally, nowadays, nowhere, again.*

-*He finally arrived.*

-*Visit us again.*

II. PPs: They can also modify the verb, so they are adverbial. However, depending on the verb, they can go inside or outside the VP.

-*We live in Bucaramanga. (Inside)*

-*They came by bus. (Outside)*

-*We study in the morning. (Outside)*

Adverbs as modifiers

Adverbs can modify anything, not only verbs.

A. Adverbs modifying adjectives: (intensifiers)

-*That was a very funny film.*

-*He is quite right.*

-*The exam was pretty difficult.*

B. Adverbs modifying other adverbs:

-*They are drinking very heavily*

-*He didn't injure himself that severely.*

C. Adverbs modifying prepositions:

-*The nail went right through the wall.*

-*He made his application well within the time.*

D. Adverbs modifying determiners

-Nearly everybody came to the party.

-Over two-hundred deaths were reported.

E. Adverbs modifying Noun Phrases

-He had quite a party.

-It was rather a mess.

F. Adverbs modifying Nouns

-The then president. The away times. Premodifies (adverbs of time)

-The students here. Postmodifies (adverbs of place)

-The example above, the above example.

Modifiers of adjectives

A. Intensifiers:

-That was a very neat job.

-Yesterday was too hot.

B. Adverbs of manner and other adverbs:

-Your essay was nicely done.

-The lecture was well presented.

-The book is extremely expensive.

-The well-known story of his life.

C. PP's

-Are you ready for your interview?

-He's angry at me.

D. Infinitives

-That's difficult to believe

E. Noun

-Her razor-sharp comments.