**ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS**

The **family** is spending **its** vacation in Rockport, Maine. [All the family members went to one place together.]

The parallel sentence to the last example above would be **The family are spending their vacations in Maine, Hawaii, and Rome**, which might mean that each family member is going to a different place. But such a sentence is awkward. Therefore, revise the sentence.

The **family members** are spending **their** vacations in Maine, Hawaii, and Rome. [Substituting a plural noun family members for the collective noun family sounds more natural.]

**EXERCISE 10-5** Underline the correct pronoun in parentheses. For help, consult 10n through 10s.

**EXAMPLE** Many people wonder what gives certain leaders (his or her, their) spark and magnetic personal appeal.

1. Power and authority alone don’t guarantee charisma; (it, they) must be combined with passion and strong purpose.
2. (He, She, He or she, They) can inspire followers to believe that the leader’s goals are the same as (his, her, his or her, their) own.
3. Today, a number of major corporations offer (its, their) employees charisma-training courses to enhance leadership qualities.
4. Usually, it’s not the quiet, low-profile manager but rather the charismatic manager with strong leadership qualities who convinces others that (his, her, his or her, their) best interests are served by the course of action (he, she, he or she, they) is/are proposing.
5. Charisma trainers advise would-be leaders to start by bringing order to (his, her, his or her, their) activities; in stressful times, anyone who appears to have some part of (his, her, his or her, their) life under control makes others relax and perform (his, her, his or her, their) responsibilities better.

**CHAPTER 11**

Adjectives and Adverbs

11a What are the differences between adjectives and adverbs?

The differences between adjectives and adverbs relate to how they function. **Adjectives** modify nouns and pronouns. **Adverbs** modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. What’s the same about adjective and adverbs is that they
What are the differences between adjectives and adverbs?

are both MODIFIERS—that is, words or groups of words that describe other words. Box 11-1 compares adjectives and adverbs in action.

ADJECTIVE  The brisk wind blew. [Adjective brisk modifies noun wind.]

ADVERB  The wind blew briskly. [Adverb briskly modifies verb blew.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences between adjectives and adverbs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What Adjectives Modify</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>nouns</td>
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<td>pronouns</td>
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<td><strong>What Adverbs Modify</strong></td>
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<td>adverbs</td>
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<td>adjectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>independent clauses</td>
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</table>

Some people think that all adverbs end in -ly. But this isn’t correct. While many adverbs do end in -ly (eat swiftly, eat frequently, eat hungrily), some do not (eat fast, eat often, eat seldom). To complicate matters further, some adjectives end in -ly (lovely flower, friendly dog). Use meaning, not an -ly ending, to identify adverbs.

ESL NOTES: (1) In English, the adjective is always singular, even if its noun is plural: The hot [not hots] drinks warmed us up. (2) Word order in English calls for special attention to the placement of adjective and adverbs. Here is an example using the adverb carefully: Thomas closed [don’t place carefully here] the window carefully (see 41b and 41c).

**EXERCISE 11-1**  Underline and label all adjectives (ADJ) and adverbs (ADV). Then, draw an arrow from each adjective and adverb to the word or words it modifies. For help, consult 11a.
ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

EXAMPLE  Leaky faucets are unexpectedly leading to genuine romance in super-sized hardware stores.

1. While shopping for new faucets and drills, today's singles also carefully look for possible mates at discount home improvement stores across the country.
2. Understandably, many people find these stores a healthy alternative to dark bars and blind dates.
3. Recently, an employee in the flooring department quietly confided that the best nights for singles are Wednesdays and Thursdays, while weekends generally attract families.
4. A young single mom returns home excitedly because a quick trip to the lumber department for a new door resulted in a date for Saturday night.
5. A lonely widower in his fifties jokingly says he wishes he had developed earlier an interest in wallpapering and gardening.

11b  When should I use adverbs—not adjectives—as modifiers?

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Don’t use adjectives as adverbs.

NO  The candidate inspired us great. [Adjective great cannot modify verb inspired.]
YES  The candidate inspired us greatly. [Adverb greatly can modify verb inspired.]
NO  The candidate felt unusual energetic. [Adjective unusual cannot modify adjective energetic.]
YES  The candidate felt unusually energetic. [Adverb unusually can modify adjective energetic.]

11c  What is wrong with double negatives?

A double negative is a nonstandard form. It is a statement with two negative modifiers, the second of which repeats the message of the first. Negative modifiers include no, never; not, none, nothing, hardly, scarcely, and barely.

NO  The factory workers will never vote for no strike.
YES  The factory workers will never vote for a strike.
NO  The union members did not have no money in reserve.
YES  The union members did not have any money in reserve.
YES  The union members had no money in reserve.
Do adjectives or adverbs come after linking verbs?

11d Do adjectives or adverbs come after linking verbs?

LINKING VERBS connect a SUBJECT to a COMPLEMENT. Always use an adjective, not an adverb, as the complement.

The guests looked happy. [Verb looked links subject guests to adjective happy.]

The words look, feel, smell, taste, sound, and grow are usually linking verbs, but sometimes they’re simply verbs. Check how any of these verbs is functioning in a sentence.

Zora looks happy. [Looks functions as a linking verb, so the adjective happy is correct.]
Zora looks happily at the sunset. [Looks doesn’t function as a linking verb, so the adverb happily is correct.]

bad, badly
The words bad (adjective) and badly (adverb) are particularly prone to misuse with linking verbs.

NO The students felt badly. [This means the students used their fingers badly.]
YES The student felt bad. [This means the student had a bad feeling about something.]

good, well
The word good is always an adjective. When the word well refers to health, it is an adjective; at all other times, well is an adverb.

Evander looks well. [This means that Evander seems to be in good health, so the adjective well is correct.]
Evander writes well. [This means that Evander writes skillfully, so the adverb well is correct.]

EXERCISE 11-2 Underline the correct uses of negatives, adjectives, and adverbs by selecting between the choices in parentheses. For help, consult 11a through 11d.

EXAMPLE Because she was only five when her father died, Bernice King, Martin Luther King’s youngest child, (barely, bare) remembers the details of her father’s (solemnly, solemn) funeral, yet her father’s image lives (strong, strongly) within her.

1. Although she did feel (badly, bad) about her father’s death when she was younger, King’s daughter has managed to put his influence on her to good use by speaking (passionately, passionate) about issues her father first introduced.
ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

2. In her (widely, wide) acclaimed book of sermons and speeches, titled *Hard Questions, Hard Answers*, Bernice King strives to deal with the (intensely, intense) topic of race relations.

3. Bernice King believes, as did her father, that all people must connect (genuinely, genuine), or they won’t (never, ever) manage to coexist.

4. Bernice King decided to enter the ministry after she heard a (deeply, deep) voice within her directing her to this (extremely, extreme) (spiritually, spiritual) profession.

5. Bernice King entered the public eye in 1993, when she gave a (locally, local) televised Martin Luther King Day sermon at her father’s church, and since then she has lived (happily, happy) in her home in Atlanta with memories of her father that are (peacefully, peaceful) recollections.

What are comparative and superlative forms?

When you write about comparisons, ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS often carry the message. The adjectives and adverbs also communicate degrees of intensity. When a comparison is made between two things, a **comparative** form is used. When a comparison is made about three or more things, a **superlative** form is used.

**Regular forms of comparison**

Most adjectives and adverbs are regular. They communicate degrees of intensity in one of two ways: either by adding *-er* and *-est* endings or by adding the words *more, most, less,* and *least* (Box 11-2).

---

**BOX 11-2 SUMMARY**

| **POSITIVE** | Use when nothing is being compared. |
| **COMPARATIVE** | Use when two things are being compared. Add the ending *-er* or the word *more or less.* |
| **SUPERLATIVE** | Use to compare three or more things. Add the ending *-est* or the word *most or least.* |

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>green</td>
<td>greener</td>
<td>greenest</td>
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<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>happier</td>
<td>happiest</td>
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<tr>
<td>selfish</td>
<td>less selfish</td>
<td>least selfish</td>
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<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>more beautiful</td>
<td>most beautiful</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

That tree is **green**.
That tree is **greener** than this tree.
That tree is the **greenest** tree on the block.
What are comparative and superlative forms?

The number of syllables in the adjective or adverb usually determines whether to use -er, -est or more, most and less, least.

- **One-syllable words** usually take -er and -est endings: large, larger, largest (adjectives); far, farther, farthest (adverbs).

- **Adjectives of two syllables** vary. If the word ends in -y, change the y to i and add -er, -est endings: pretty, prettier, prettiest. Otherwise, some two-syllable adjectives take -er, -est endings: yellow, yellower, yellowest. Others take more, most and less, least: tangled, more tangled, most tangled; less tangled, least tangled.

- **Adverbs of two syllables** take more, most and less, least: sweetly, more sweetly, most sweetly; less sweetly, least sweetly.

- **Three-syllable words** take more, most and less, least: dignified, more/most dignified, less/least dignified (adjective); carefully, more/most carefully, less/least carefully (adverb).

**ALERT:** Be careful not to use a double comparative or double superlative. Use either the -er and -est endings or more, most or less, least.

He was younger [not more younger] than his brother.

Her music was the loudest [not most loudest] on the stereo.

Children are more easily [not more easier] influenced than adults.

**Irregular forms of comparison**

A few comparative and superlative forms are irregular. Box 11-3 on the next page gives you the list. We suggest that you memorize them so they come to mind easily.

**ALERTS:** (1) Be aware of the difference between less and fewer. They aren’t interchangeable. Use less with noncount nouns, either items or values: The sugar substitute has less aftertaste. Use fewer with numbers or count nouns: The sugar substitute has fewer calories. (2) Don’t use more, most or less, least with absolute adjectives, that is, adjectives that communicate a noncomparable quality or state, such as unique or perfect. Something either is, or is not, one of a kind. No degrees of intensity are involved: This teapot is unique [not the most unique]; The artisanship is perfect [not the most perfect].

**EXERCISE 11-3** Complete the chart after Box 11-3 on the next page. Then, write a sentence for each word in the completed chart. For help, consult 11e.

**EXAMPLE** funny, funnier, funniest: My brother has a funny laugh; he thinks Mom has a funnier laugh; the person who has the funniest laugh in our family is Uncle Dominic.
ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Irregular forms of comparison for adjectives and adverbs

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<td>good (adjective)</td>
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<tr>
<td>well (adjective and adverb)</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>best</td>
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<td>bad (adjective)</td>
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<td>worst</td>
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<tr>
<td>badly (adverb)</td>
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<td>some</td>
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<td>most</td>
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<tr>
<td>little*</td>
<td>less</td>
<td>least</td>
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The Wallaces saw a **good** movie.
The Wallaces saw a **better** movie than the Pascals did.
The Wallaces saw the **best** movie they had ever seen.
The Millers had **little** trouble finding jobs.
The Millers had **less** trouble finding jobs than the Smiths did.
The Millers had the **least** trouble finding jobs of everyone.

* When you’re using little for items that can be counted (e.g., pickles), use the regular forms little, littler, littlest.

Why avoid a long string of nouns as modifiers?

Nouns sometimes modify other nouns: truck driver, train track, security system. Usually, these terms create no problems. However, avoid using several nouns in a row as modifiers. A string of too many nouns makes it difficult for your reader to figure out which nouns are being modified and which nouns are doing the modifying. You can revise such sentences in several ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE</th>
<th>COMPARATIVE</th>
<th>SUPERLATIVE</th>
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<tr>
<td>small</td>
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<td>some</td>
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</table>
Why avoid a long string of nouns as modifiers?

**Rewrite the sentence**

**No** I asked my adviser to write two college recommendation letters for me.

**Yes** I asked my adviser to write letters of recommendation to two colleges for me.

**Change one noun to a possessive and another to an adjective**

**No** He will take the United States Navy examination for navy engineer training.

**Yes** He will take the United States Navy's examination for naval engineer training.

**Change one noun to a prepositional phrase**

**No** Our student adviser training program has won many awards.

**Yes** Our training program for student advisers has won many awards. [This change requires a change from the singular adviser to the plural advisers.]

**Exercise 11-4** Underline the better choice in parentheses. For help, consult this entire chapter.

**Example** Alexis, a huge and powerful six-year-old Siberian tiger, (curious, curiously) explores her new zoo home together with five other tigers.

1. The new tiger home at the world-famous Bronx Zoo is a (special, specially) designed habitat, planted with (dense, denser) undergrowth so that it (close, closely) imitates the tigers’ natural wilderness.

2. Like tigers in the wild, the six tigers in this habitat, which (more, many) experts consider the (more authentic, most authentic) of all artificial tiger environments in the world, will face some of the physical challenges and sensory experiences that keep them happy and (healthy, healthier).

3. Research shows that tigers feel (bad, badly) and fail to thrive in zoos without enrichment features placed in (good, well) locations to inspire tigers to stalk (stealthy, stealthily) through underbrush, loll (lazy, lazily) on heated rocks, or tug (vigorous, vigorously) on massive pull toys.

4. Wildlife zoologists think that the new Tiger Mountain exhibit will also serve zoo visitors (good, well) by allowing them to observe and admire the amazing strength, agility, and intelligence of a (rapid, rapidly) dwindling species.

5. Today, (fewer, less) than 5,000 Siberian tigers remain in the wild, which makes it imperative for zoos to raise people’s awareness of the (great, greatest) need to prevent the extinction of these big cats that are considered among the (more, most) powerful, beautiful animals in the world.