

NOTE Some suffixes are found only, or typically, with adjectives, eg:

-able: comfortable	-al: seasonal
-ful: playful	-ic: scientific
-ish: greyish	-less: useless
-ous: dangerous	-y: dirty

However, many common adjectives have no identifying form, eg: *good, hot, little, young, fat*.

The adjective and other word classes

Adjective and adverb homomorphs

7.2 Normally there is a regular difference of form between an adjective and a corresponding adverb in that the adverb is distinguished by its *-ly* suffix. In *a rapid car*, *rapid* is an adjective; in *He drove rapidly*, *rapidly* is an adverb.

However, there are some words that have the same form, without the *-ly* suffix, in adjective and adverb functions, eg:

Bill has a *fast* car. [adjective]
 Bill drove *fast*. [adverb]
 Norma arrived in the *late* afternoon. [adjective]
 Norma arrived *late* in the afternoon. [adverb]

Sometimes there is also an *-ly* adverb form but with a different meaning:

Have you seen her *late*ly? ['recently']

And sometimes there are two forms: one may be used as either adjective or adverb and the other is an adverb with an *-ly* suffix:

Take a *deep* breath. [adjective]

Breathe {*deep*. <esp informal>} [adverb]

Finally, there are some words in *-ly* that can function both as adjectives and as adverbs, eg:

I caught an *early* train. [adjective]
 We finished *early* today. [adverb]
 That was a *kindly* gesture. [adjective]
 Will you *kindly* refrain from smoking? [adverb]

They include a set of words denoting time, eg: *daily, hourly, monthly, weekly*.

NOTE [a] Where there is variation, some people prefer the *-ly* form for the adverb function, particularly in formal style. The adjective form cannot precede the verb:

Ted will pay {*dear* / *dearly*} for his mistake.

Ted will {**dear* / *dearly*} pay for his mistake.

[b] When we require adverbs corresponding to *-ly* adjectives such as *friendly, lively*, and *masterly*, we normally use an adjective construction, thereby avoiding the double suffix *-lily*:

She received us in a *friendly* way [NOT: *She received us *friendlily*.]

Adjectives and adverbs beginning with a-

7.3 Some words beginning with *a-* are adjectives and can be used predicatively with both *be* and other copular verbs, but the *a-*adverbs can be used only with *be*. The distinction differentiates adjectives from adverbs.

The patient was {*asleep*. / *hungry*.} [adjectives]
 {*abroad*. / *there*.} [adverbs]

The patient seemed {*asleep*. / *hungry*.} [adjectives]
 {**abroad*. / **there*.} [adverbs]

Another difference is that *a-*adjectives refer to temporary states and cannot be part of the predication after verbs of motion; *a-*adverbs, on the other hand, denote direction after such verbs.

Jean went {**asleep* / **alert*.} [adjectives]
 {*abroad* / *away*.} [adverbs]

Common *a-*adjectives include *ablaze, afloat, afraid, alert, alone, ashamed, asleep, aware, awake*.

NOTE

[a] *Alert* and *aloof* are freely used attributively. Most other *a-*adjectives can occur attributively only when they are modified: *a somewhat afraid soldier, the fast-asleep children, a really alive student* ('lively').

[b] Some *a-*adjectives freely take premodification by *very* and comparison, eg: *very afraid, more alert*. Others do so marginally, eg: *asleep* and *awake*.

Adjectives and nouns

7.4 Nouns commonly function as premodifiers of other nouns (cf 17.35):

the *bus* station, a *business* friend, *student* grants

However, they do not share other characteristics of most adjectives:

(a) There is no corresponding predicative function:

the *bus* station – *The station is *bus*.

(b) They cannot be modified by *very*:

*a very *bus* station