

Syntactic functions of the adjective

1. Attributive:

Adjectives are attributive when they pre-modify nouns, i.e. appear between the determiner and the head of the noun phrase:

-They do *a lively trade* in souvenirs and gifts.

-*Her main argument* was *a moral one*.

Exercise: Give examples of attributive adjectives in sentences.

2. Predicative:

Predicative adjectives can be:

a. Subject complement:

-*Your daughter* is *pretty*.

-*Whether he will resign* is *uncertain*.

-*Driving a bus* isn't *easy*.

b. Object complement:

-He made *his wife* *happy*.

-I consider *what he did* *foolish*.

-I consider *playing so hard* *foolish*.

Exercise: Give examples of predicative adjectives in sentences.

3. Postpositive:

Adjectives can sometimes be postpositive, i.e. they can sometimes follow the item they modify:

-I met the former *Secretary General* of NATO.

-The *president elect* will be sworn in next week.

Note: Indefinite pronouns ending in *-body*, *-one*, *-thing*, *-where* can be modified only postpositively:

-I want to try *something larger*.

Note: In several compounds the adjective is postposed: *attorney general*, *body politic*, *notary public*, *court martial*, *heir apparent*, *postmaster general*

-Navy commanders recommended that

-he be tried by *court martial*.

Exercise: Give examples of postpositive adjectives in sentences:

4. Head of a noun phrase

Adjectives can often function as heads of noun phrases. The adjectives have generic and plural reference.

-*The wise* look to *the wiser* for advice.

-*The young in spirit* enjoy life.

-*The extremely old* need a great deal of attention.

Exercise 1: Are the underlined words right or wrong? Correct them where necessary:

1. *The old who resists change* can expect violence.
2. *The British has control* of the bridge.
3. *The rich help only the humble people.*

Exercise 2: Give examples of adjectives as heads of NPs in sentences: