ADJECTIVES AS A WORD CLASS

C1 — Advanced

English Grammar Worksheets | Types of Adjectives • Attributive & Predicative Use • Order of Adjectives

4 Worksheets: Meaning Shifts • Classification & Marked Order • Academic Analysis • Synthesis & Argumentation | Answer Key Included

Worksheet 1: Meaning Shifts: Attributive vs Predicative

Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Level: C1 (CEFR)*

At C1 level, control of position is assumed. This worksheet targets adjectives whose **meaning changes with position**, and intensifying adjectives restricted to attributive use.

Reference

Adjective	Attributive meaning	Predicative meaning
late	deceased (the late chairman)	not on time (the chairman was late)
old	long-standing (an old friend)	aged (my friend is old)
heavy	habitual/intense (a heavy smoker)	weighty (the box is heavy)
certain	particular (a certain charm)	sure (she is certain)
present	current (the present situation)	in attendance (everyone was present)
utter / sheer / mere	intensifying, attributive only (utter nonsense, sheer luck, a mere child)	— (no predicative use)

Exercise A – Explain the difference in meaning between each pair in one or two sentences.

1. "my old colleague" vs "my colleague is old"

_____

_____

2. "the late director's decisions" vs "the director's late decisions"

_____

_____

3. "a heavy drinker" vs "a drinker who is heavy"

_____

_____

4. "the present members" vs "the members present"

_____

_____

5. "a certain success" vs "a success that is certain"

_____

_____

Exercise B – Each phrase is ambiguous. Give both readings and identify which reading treats the adjective as classifying.

1. a criminal lawyer

_____

_____

2. an old friend

_____

_____

3. a French teacher

_____

_____

4. a small business owner

_____

_____

Score: _____ / 18

Worksheet 2: Classification, Postposition and Marked Order

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Classifying or qualitative? Decide, and test your answer by trying an intensifier or comparative. Explain any adjective that can be both.

1. a dramatic pause

_____

2. a dramatic society

_____

3. an economic crisis

_____

4. an economical car

_____

5. a scientific method

_____

6. a musical child

_____

Part B – Postpositive structures. Answer each question.

1. Rewrite using postposition: "The tickets that are still available are in the upper tier."

_____

2. "the responsible people" vs "the people responsible": which implies accountability for a specific event, and why?

_____

_____

3. Explain the fixed postposition in: heir apparent, attorney general, the president elect.

_____

_____

4. Why is postposition obligatory with compound indefinite pronouns (something, anyone ...)? Give an example.

_____

_____

5. Rewrite for formality using postposition: "We will contact all the people who are involved."

_____

Part C – Marked order. Each item violates or exploits the default order. State whether the effect is (a) an error, (b) an acceptable contrastive/stylistic choice. Justify briefly.

1. "She rejected the wooden ugly chairs — but kept the plastic ugly ones."

_____

_____

2. "It was a red enormous balloon."

_____

_____

3. "a dirty great hole in the wall" (British colloquial)

_____

Score: _____ / 22

Worksheet 3: Academic Reading and Critical Analysis

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Read the passage and answer the questions.

Contemporary media discourse relies heavily on adjectival framing. A demonstration described as "angry" invites a different reading from one described as "passionate", although the events reported may be identical. Editorial choices extend to position: "the protesters responsible" quietly presupposes wrongdoing in a way that "the responsible protesters" cannot. Meanwhile, ostensibly classifying adjectives — economic, national, scientific — lend claims an air of objective authority, precisely because they resist grading: one cannot be "very economic". The cumulative effect is a prose style that appears neutral while remaining evaluatively saturated.

1. Explain the presupposition triggered by the postpositive adjective in "the protesters responsible".

_____

_____

2. Why does the writer claim that classifying adjectives create "an air of objective authority"? Use the gradability test in your answer.

_____

_____

3. "Angry" vs "passionate": both are qualitative. What besides denotation differs, and what does this show about opinion adjectives?

_____

_____

4. Find one adverb + adjective collocation in the passage and comment on its register.

_____

_____

Part B – Transformation. Rewrite as instructed, preserving core meaning.

1. "The committee that is in charge will publish the results." → Use a postpositive adjective.

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2. "The report was completely wrong from start to finish." → Use an attributive-only intensifying adjective (utter / sheer / complete).

_____

3. "Officials who attended raised objections." → Use "present" postpositively.

_____

4. "The problem is money, mainly." → Use "main" attributively in a formal sentence.

_____

Part C – Guided paragraph (120–150 words). Analyse how adjective choice shapes the portrayal of a person or event in any news story you know. Include: one meaning-shift pair (attributive vs predicative), one postpositive structure, one comment on classifying adjectives. Formal-academic register.

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Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 28

Worksheet 4: Synthesis: Register, Rewriting and Argumentation

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Register transformation. The extract below is from an informal product review. Rewrite it (60–80 words) as a formal consumer report. Attend particularly to adjective choice (gradable intensification, opinion adjectives) and position.

"This laptop is dead gorgeous and mega fast, but the battery life is a total joke. The keyboard feels really cheap and nasty, and the so-called premium speakers are rubbish. Gutted, to be honest."

_____

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Part B – Adversarial description. For each claim, write a two-sentence counter-description of the same referent using different, equally defensible adjectives. Formal register.

1. Claim: "The proposal is a bold, forward-looking blueprint for growth." (Recast it sceptically.)

_____

_____

2. Claim: "The building is a cold, impersonal glass box." (Recast it admiringly.)

_____

_____

3. Claim: "Her negotiating style is aggressive and inflexible." (Recast it favourably.)

_____

_____

Part C – Extended writing. Write a discursive essay introduction (180–220 words) on the proposition: "The adjectives a writer chooses reveal more about the writer than about the thing described." Requirements: at least five of the structures studied in this pack (meaning-shift pair, postposition, nominal adjective, classifying adjective discussed as such, non-gradable adjective with intensifier). Underline them. Formal-academic register.

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Word count: _____ Structures used: ____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only

Worksheet 1

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	old colleague	**Attributive: long-standing professional relationship. Predicative: elderly.**
A2	late	**Attributive: the deceased director. Predicative position (late decisions): delivered behind schedule.**
A3	heavy	**Attributive: drinks a great deal. Predicative: physically heavy.**
A4	present	**Attributive: current members. Postposed/predicative: those in attendance.**
A5	certain	**Attributive: a particular, unspecified success (or: guaranteed — ambiguous). Relative clause: guaranteed.**
B	Ambiguity	**criminal lawyer: lawyer specialising in criminal law (classifying) / lawyer who is a criminal (qualitative). old friend: long-standing (classifying-like) / elderly. French teacher: teacher of French (classifying) / teacher who is French. small business owner: owner of a small business (classifying compound) / business owner who is small.**

Worksheet 2

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	CL / Q	**dramatic pause: Q (very dramatic ✓). dramatic society: CL (drama society sense). economic crisis: CL. economical car: Q. scientific method: CL (but Q in "a very scientific approach"). musical child: Q here (very musical ✓); CL in "musical instrument".**
B	Postposition	**1 The tickets still available are in the upper tier. 2 "the people responsible" — postposition gives the temporary/event-bound reading, hence accountability. 3 Fossilised French legal/administrative word order (noun + adjective). 4 Indefinite compounds cannot be premodified: *useful something; e.g. something useful. 5 We will contact all the people involved / all those involved.**
C	Marked order	**1 (b) contrastive focus licenses material before opinion. 2 (a) error — no contrastive motivation; an enormous red balloon. 3 (b) fixed colloquial intensifying pattern ("dirty great"), acceptable informally.**

Worksheet 3

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	Presupposition	**Postposition selects the event-bound reading: there was wrongdoing and these protesters did it — the wrongdoing is presupposed, not asserted.**
A2	Objective authority	**Classifying adjectives denote category membership, not degree; failing the gradability test (*very economic) makes them read as fact, not opinion.**

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A3	angry vs passionate	**Connotation and evaluative stance differ though the scene is the same; opinion adjectives encode the writer's appraisal, not just properties.**
A4	Collocation	**"evaluatively saturated" (or "ostensibly classifying") — formal academic register; adverb premodifies the adjective to hedge or intensify.**
B	Transformations	**1 The committee in charge will publish the results. 2 The report was utter/complete nonsense (or: a complete fabrication). 3 The officials present raised objections. 4 The main problem is funding.**
C	Paragraph	**Use rubric below.**

Worksheet 4

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Register	**Model: "The laptop is elegantly designed and impressively fast; battery performance, however, is wholly inadequate. The keyboard feels flimsy, and the speakers, marketed as premium, are disappointing." Check: no slang intensifiers, controlled opinion adjectives, appropriate hedging.**
B	Counter-descriptions	**Accept any coherent recast, e.g. 1 "an ambitious but untested wish-list"; 2 "a luminous, rigorously minimal structure"; 3 "assertive and principled".**
C	Essay rubric	**Structural range 0–4; register 0–3; argumentation 0–3; accuracy 0–2; coherence 0–3. (Scale to 35 with Parts A–B.)**