

Chapter 10.

Adjectives and the Adjective Group

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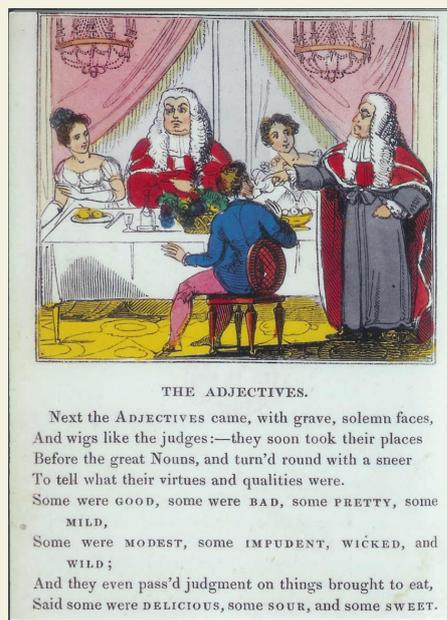
The MEANING and USE of adjectives

Web activity 1.

Below are additional texts to examine to be used with the texts in exercise 22 in chapter 10:

Here are some suggestions for further group work on the excerpts:

1. Draw the setting described in a text. Ask another group to guess which text it is.
2. Write a poem to describe some other colour as in the poem “Blind Colours”.
3. Write a poem to describe girls, boys, teachers, mums, dads, stars or something else inspired by “Men are”.
4. Suggest more tasks yourself in which you focus on adjectives in the texts.



Text 1-H¹



Text 1-I

*Great Expectations*²

I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. From that room, too, the daylight was completely excluded, and it had an airless smell that was oppressive. A fire had been lately kindled in the damp old-fashioned grate, and it was more disposed to go out than to burn up, and the reluctant smoke which hung in the room seemed colder than the clearer air – like our own marsh mist. Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimneypiece faintly lighted the chamber...

Text 1-J

*The Story of an Hour*³

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

Text 1-K

*The Sick Rose*⁴

*Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.*

Web activity 2.

The following text contains no adjectives. Add as many adjectives as possible to make it more interesting and to create a certain mood: horror, romance, fairytale, crime fiction, social realism etc. Afterwards compare with other students and discuss the effects of the adjectives.

In the evening the boy went to bed at 9 because he had to get up at 7. First he went into the bathroom, brushed his teeth, put on his pyjamas and washed his face with water. Then he went downstairs to say goodnight to his mum and dad who were both watching a film in the livingroom. The cat, Yoda, had curled up at his dad's feet.

Web activity 3.

1. Since adjectives add colour to a text, we should avoid vague adjectives such as *big, nice, good, bad* that do not mean so much. Otherwise the text will be boring and not sufficiently precise. In the following text, replace the feeble adjectives with more precise synonyms. Instead of *nice* or *good* you could perhaps use *excellent, brilliant, wonderful, first-class, fine, pleasant* or *lovely*. Find more synonyms yourself. (You could use the synonym function in Word).
2. Discuss your suggestions with other students.

The weather was bad and I felt it was going to be a bad day even though I had arranged to meet one of my nice friends for a good lunch. I decided to wear my nice dress. On my way to the nice



café I passed some big buildings. In the café I noticed one of my nice friends at once. He wore a nice jacket with big buttons. He certainly looked good. After the good lunch, we went for a nice walk and had a good discussion about sports. The weather was good now and it turned out to be a good day after all.

Web activity 4.

1. Write the beginning of an application for a teaching position. Describe yourself as a teacher by using adjectives. Here is an example: *I'm a hardworking, energetic and reliable teacher....*
2. Afterwards discuss the effect of adjectives on the description of yourself.

Web activity 5.

1. Here are some examples of activities that involve the meaning and use of adjectives. Discuss them from a teacher's perspective regarding their learning potential, the appropriate level, whether they are introductory activities or activities for automatization etc.
2. Sum up when and how to teach adjectives to learners.



The sequence of activities⁵ starts with a picture with many people. The picture is unfortunately not included here.

The first task is:

1. How do they look?

Tell your partner about one of the persons.

Let your partner guess who it is. Take turns.

2 A colourful person or a monster *in pairs*

Draw a person with lots of clothes on – or a fantasy creature. Make sure that your partner doesn't see it.

Colour your drawing in.

Describe your person or creature to your partner.

Your partner has to draw the person or creature that you describe.

Check your partner's copy.

*This is a monster.
He's yellow. He's
ugly - he has ...*

*My person is a woman.
She has long wavy brown hair.
She has big green eyes.
She is wearing ...*

3 Two stories *in pairs*

Read the two texts together with your partner. Decide which is better. Give some reasons why.

Diana met this guy at the library. She knew him from school and when he offered her a ride on his motorbike she said yes. Besides having a motorbike he had blue eyes and long eyelashes. He took her out into the countryside and they had a picnic by a stream in the shade under some trees...

Diana met this gorgeous guy at the local library. She knew him from school and when he offered her a quick ride on his big shiny motorbike she said yes. Besides having a big motorbike he had bright blue eyes and long black eyelashes. He took her out into the beautiful countryside and they had a delicious picnic by a small stream in the cool shade under some tall trees...



4 Discuss *in class*

What words have you used to describe the people in task 1? List them on the blackboard.

What do we call this word class in Danish and in English?

What do you use these words for?

Why are they important in a text?

► Make a rule to explain what you use adjectives for.



5-2.

Word search on adjectives

1. Find all the adjectives in the word search by using two different colours: one for the positive adjectives and another for the negative ones.
2. Did you find any words that are clearly not adjectives? How do you know?

Adjectives

Find the words in the grid. Words can go across and down only.

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A T T E N T I O N - W M D T M T H C H A R M I N G
F X I C N U G D A M A Z I N G K P A T H E T I C A
A Y N L N N U U D W T P T H A M S H O C K I N G P
N B T R H I N L I F E R T L P R P O W E R F U L P
T E E T I N S L S H R E R A P G H N U G L Y N Y E
A A L V D S U P A U R T M M A K G U S Q V D E V A
S U L G E P C E S M I T N U L G L S U L Z I X D L
T T I R O I C A T O B Y T S L V P E P P I S P T I
I I G A U R E C R U L K E I I S W L E R N G E W N
C F E B S I S E O R E C M N N W E E R E N U C O G
B U N B L N S F U L K M P G G E A S B F O S T N F
M L T I L G F U S E J T T R W E K S N R V T E D D
R G N N W D U L Q S H M I P N T F W R E A I D E R
E K F G F H L L K S V R N L O V E L Y S T N X R E
M O V I N G H J X W N N G V A W F U L H I G K F A
A N K T Q A T T R A C T I V E P Y M F I V R N U D
R H T L U P S E T T I N G C U T E N K N E N C L F
K R E P U L S I V E K A D O R A B L E G Q F N J U
A C Y N A S T Y V V Z K H D L B O R I N G L W M L
B L D F A S C I N A T I N G T U N P L E A S A N T
L E K F D E P R E S S I N G I N E F F E C T U A L
E V X K G K L N F U N N Y D H O P E L E S S H R L
M E F F E C T I V E G T R A G I C F A B U L O U S
F R Y W L H E A R T B R E A K I N G T W T G S A D
B S I C K E N I N G I N T E R E S T I N G T J D T
    
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www.WordSearchMaker.com

adorable	charming	fantastic	intelligent	remarkable	ugly
amazing	clever	fascinating	interesting	repulsive	unexpected
amusing	cute	funny	lovely	sad	uninspiring
appalling	depressing		moving	shocking	unpleasant
appealing	disastrous	heartbreaking	nasty	sickening	unsuccessful
	disgusting	hideous	pathetic	superb	upsetting
attractive	dreadful	hopeless	peaceful	sweet	useless
awful	dull	humourless	powerful	tempting	weak
beautiful	effective	ineffectual	pretty	terrible	wonderful
boring	fabulous	innovative	refreshing	tragic	

5-3.

1. Find some photos, e.g. use: <http://www.public-domain-photos.com/people>
2. In pairs: Place the photos on the table and take turns to describe what a particular person looks like and let your partner guess who you are thinking about. You may use the adjectives from the word search in example 2.
3. Choose a specific person. What is his or her job, what does his or her house look like and what are they like as persons? Now write about your specific person: e.g. imagine that he or she was a criminal. What crime did he or she commit? Write a wanted poster in which you use your description.
4. Write a story in which you use your description of the character.

5-4.

1. In small groups: take turns describing a student or a thing in your classroom. The others should



try to guess. The student who guesses correctly gets a point and gets to describe the next person or thing. Who will win?

2. Play the board game "Who is who" if you can get hold of it.

5-5.

1. Listen twice to a piece of instrumental music. Write down as many adjectives as possible that spring to mind.
2. You are now going to pretend that you will be using the music for a film shot. Write a description of the setting.
3. A person is going to appear in the first scene. Write a description of them.
4. In groups: read aloud the descriptions and compare. Did you agree?

5-6.

Advertising project (In groups)

1. In groups: find some advertisements and discuss the importance of adjectives in advertisements. (See "Help for finding advertisements and discussing the importance of adjectives" below).
2. Practice making slogans (see "Help for the slogan card game" below).
3. Brainstorm on which things are often advertised on TV or in magazines. Decide on an object you want to advertise. What does it look like and what is great about it? Create a new brand. Write the advert/commercial and include at least one slogan in which you use adjectives in the comparative and/or the superlative and possibly also rhyme or other stylistic features:

Brown, red or fair? WISHES is the most excellent shampoo for any hair.

Help for finding advertisements and discussing the importance of adjectives:

1. Find some ads in English-speaking newspapers or magazines. You may e.g. google ads or use these links:

- a. <http://www.google.dk/images?hl=da&biw=1028&bih=644&q=%22advertisements%22&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&sa=X&ei=gZlZTfHsEYnPsgbVsYyEDg&ved=0CEAQsAQ>
- b. <http://justcreativdesign.com/2008/07/30/192-of-the-best-smart-clever-creative-advertisements/>

2. What is the product they are advertising? Describe the product by using as many adjectives as possible - use the adjectives from the word search in web activity 5-2. Which adjectives are used in the ad - and what is the effect?
3. Who is the target group and how can you see this?
4. What information do you get about the product?
5. What do you think of this ad? (use adjectives in your description)
6. Why are adjectives important in ads?

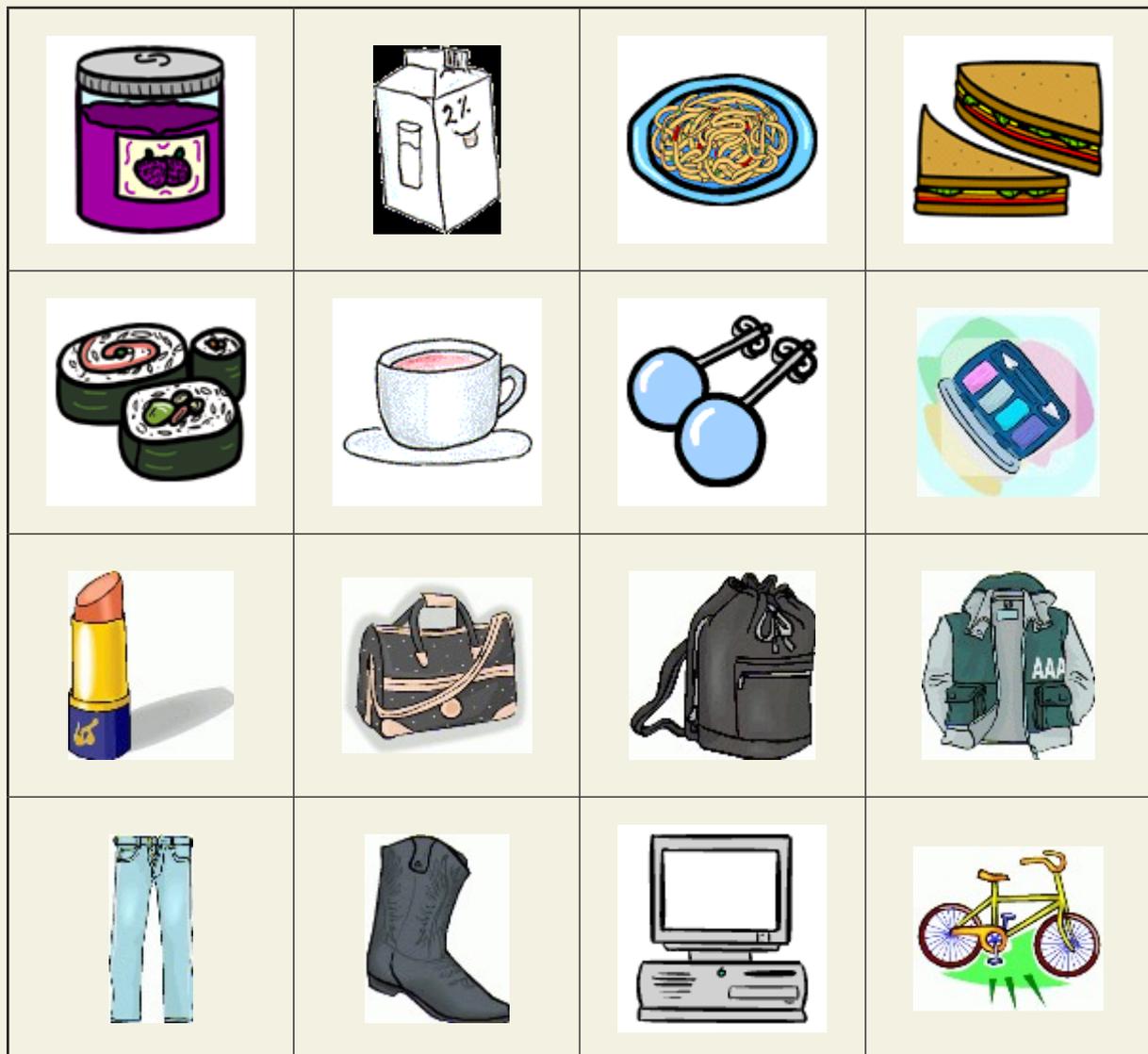
Help for the slogan card game:

1. Cut out the pictured cards from below and put them on the table, facing upwards.
2. Individually: spend some time writing down a brainstorm with a description of the picture on your card by using a lot of catchy and creative adjectives
3. Next, try to produce a catchy slogan based on your brainstorm (don't use any known brand names)
4. Take turns saying your slogan. The others should guess what it is.
5. Repeat this activity. Who won the most cards?
6. Afterwards help each other build more catchy slogans for other cards and/or develop some of the slogans that someone has already created.
7. Write down the best slogan in your group and tell it to your class.



Here is an example with a slogan for a meatball:

This is the hottest, most intensive Lavaball your tongue has ever tasted. Feel the yummy cow running right into your stomach. Smell the burning heat of the meat.



5-7.

Many text book systems integrate an introduction to adjectives as part of topics for beginners. You might e.g. discuss how the material *Pit Stop #3⁵* handles this in a text on shopping for learners in Year 3.

5-8⁶

The song below is part of the introduction to a chapter. The pupils are told to identify the adjectives in the text and to write new verses or change the adjectives to give the text a different meaning.

TELL ME ABOUT IT

The adjective song

Chorus

There's a way I found to describe a noun:
Use an adjective (and tell me about it).
Is it big or small, will you tell me all?
Use an adjective (and tell me about it).
Adjectives are worth exploring.
Without them nouns would be so boring.
Use an adjective, and tell me about it now.

1

Well I've got a car ...
It's a big red car.
Why don't you jump inside,
And we'll go for a ride.
Down the avenue.
Just me and you.
And we can see
What adjectives do.

Say we're on our way,
What a beautiful day.
It's a clear blue sky,
Look two birds flew by.
They were flying high
As we drove on by
In our big red car.
Give the chorus a try:

Repeat chorus

3

Can you see the old farm,
With it's antique charm
I can see a mare,
She's an old grey mare.
Dancin' around
Not makin' a sound
Now our big red car
Is homeward bound.

Under sparkling stars,
In our big red car
Now our day is done,
Aren't adjectives fun?

Oh what a way
To spend the day
Just seeing the world
In an adjective way.



Web activity 6

The odd-one-out

1. Find the word that is not an adjective in each group and prove it by using the odd-one-out word in sentences.
2. Discuss how you could adapt this task for pupils
 - a. *inventive, teacher, skilled, optional*
 - b. *public, education, private, co-operative*
 - c. *interdisciplinary, teach, bilingual, advanced*
 - d. *elementary, blackboard, supplementary, foreign*
 - e. *introductory, awfully, academic, oral*
 - f. *hardly, written, basic, compulsory*

The comparison of adjectives

Web activity 7.

Here are examples of activities on the comparison of adjectives. Discuss them from a teacher's perspective: level, learning potential etc.

7-1.

In pairs: Each student writes 10 statements in which he compares English teaching and pupils of today with English teaching and pupils 50 years ago. Afterwards he reads the statements aloud to his partner who should say whether he agrees or not. Here are some examples of adjectives you can use:

colourful, creative, eager, helpful, autonomous, intelligent, sweet, clever, bright, noisy, argumentative, interesting, dull, quiet, stressful, challenging, talkative, rigid, communicative, modern, authentic and educational:

Pupils are more independent today than 50 years ago.



7-2.

Happy Families (form)

Game for groups of 3 students

good/well	better	best
bad/ill	worse	worst
far	farther/further	farthest/ furthest
old	older/elder	oldest/eldest
near	nearer	nearest/next
many/much	more	most
little	less/lesser/smaller	least/smallest
late	later/latter	latest/last
interesting	more interesting	most interesting
right	more right	most right
wrong	more wrong	most wrong
real	more real	most real
fine	finer	finest
angry	angrier	angriest
afraid	more afraid	most afraid



Rules:

1. The game is about collecting as many tricks of cards as possible. A trick consists of all three forms of an adjective: the base form, the comparative and the superlative
2. Shuffle the cards and give 6 cards to each player
3. Put the rest of the cards in a pile
4. The first player asks one of the others for a specific card. He/she must use the right inflection of the adjective:

Peter, do you have the comparative of good, which is better?

(If the adjective has double forms, he/she must say both.)

Two things can happen now:

- a. If Peter has the card, the player gets it, but only if he/she can use the adjective(s) correctly in a sentence that the other players approve of. Then he/she can ask for a new card.
- b. If Peter hasn't got the card or if the player cannot think of a sentence with the adjective that the other players approve of, he/she must take a card from the pile and then it is Peter's turn to ask.

Discussion afterwards:

1. What do you learn about adjectives from playing the game?
2. What do you think of the task from a teacher's perspective and could it be transferred to school, also to be used for vocabulary acquisition?

7-3.

Plan a holiday abroad

You are three friends who are going to plan your holiday. Unfortunately, you are a bit poor.

1. Discuss the options you have and argue what you would rather do. You need to explain by using adjectives e.g. *dangerous, interesting, hot, cold, expensive, cheap, easy, difficult, challenging and safe*

"I would rather go to Istanbul than to Cairo because it is less dangerous when it comes to terrorism. I think Istanbul is more interesting than Berlin."

- go to Istanbul, Cairo or Berlin
 - go in March, August or December
 - go by plane, by train or by cruise ship
 - stay in a backpackers' hostel, a five-star hotel or a camping site
 - rent a car, use public transport or rent bikes
 - bring your own food, go to restaurants or buy local food in supermarkets
 - go sightseeing, go to the beach, go to the cinema
 - ??
2. Can you think of other situations in which pupils could compare adjectives by discussing choices?



7-4.

Discuss the following activity from Pit Stop 5⁷ from a teacher's perspective.

Working with Language – ADJECTIVES

Adjective Hunt

Circulate around the class, find a person and ask a question:

Are you taller than Mads?

No, I'm shorter than Mads.

Are you more beautiful than Cathrine?

Yes!

If you get a **yes**, fill in names and adjective.

Let the person you asked put a signature next to the sentence.

Try to get as many different adjectives as possible.

_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature
_____	is	<input type="text"/>	than	_____	signature

7-5

In pairs: Below you see some teachers A-G. You should help each other identify the names of them by discussing the information in the chart as well as the list of clues. You already know that E is Dorothy. Write the names of the others next to the letters.

A † B † C †
 D † E † *Dorothy* F †
 G †

Name	Special subjects	Age	Hair colour	Job	Eyes	Height
Lucinda	P.E	76	White	OAP	Green	5'9½"
Benny	German	20	Brown	Student teacher	blue	5'9½"
Sussie	Music	25	blond	Student teacher	green	5'2"
Freddy	Biology	43	Grey	Teacher	brown	6'3"
Christina	Home economics	31	black	Substitute teacher	blue	5'5"
Gary	Danish	44	Bald	Teacher	brown	5'11"
Dorothy	English	61	brown	OAP	grey	5'11"

- The oldest person is behind the youngest woman
 - The tallest woman is behind someone who is thirty years younger than she is
 - The shortest person is in front of someone with green eyes
 - The tallest man is next to the tallest woman
 - The 31-year-old substitute teacher is not next to anybody
 - The German teacher is not quite as tall as the person next to him on the right
 - The man who is on the right of the youngest person is behind the tallest person
 - The man who is on the right of the youngest person is behind the tallest person
 - The youngest person is as tall as the person next to him on the left
- In groups discuss the learning outcome of this exercise regarding adjectives. How could you change the task to make students participate even more in it and how could you adapt it for pupils?
 - Suggest other tasks based on the information in the table and sentences
 - Create a similar problem-solving task with a picture of people, a chart and a list of clues. Exchange your task with another group who should try to solve it.



Activity 7-6⁸

Compare these houses in as many ways as you can think of:



1



2



3



4

After reading about adjectives and the Adjective Group

Web activity 8.

A. Reflections in relation to didactics

- a. Sum up what is most important to know about adjectives for an English teacher.
- b. Sum up what is difficult for Danes.
- c. Discuss how you would handle the progression of adjectives in your English teaching, if possible compare with what it says in Faghæftet for engelsk.
 - When would you start teaching adjectives – why?
 - What is most important for the pupils to learn?
 - What is easiest?
 - What needs internalization already for young learners?
- d. Examine how adjectives are presented in textbook systems or grammars for pupils.
 - What is the language view?
 - What is the acquisition view: inductive or deductive?
 - What is the balance between FORM/USE/MEANING?
 - Are the adjectives presented in context?
 - Do the tasks involve interaction?
 - Is speaking as well as writing included?

- e. Think back at your own experience as a learner: Did you change your opinion about how to teach adjectives?

B. Reflect on what you have learned:

- Which areas relating to adjectives do you master now and in which areas do you need to improve?
 - o Why do we use adjectives in English?
 - o What do adjectives describe and classify?
 - o What are classifying and specifying adjectives
 - o What is the typical structure of the Adj. Group?
 - o What can adjectives function as?
 - What is the problem regarding predicative and attributive uses?
 - Mention how adjectives can differ in meaning depending on whether they function as PrM or PoM
 - What is the problem about adjectives as Head in NGs? What is the solution?
 - o Describe and give examples of the two types of comparison in English – what does the choice depend on?
 - What is the irregular comparative?
 - What is the false comparative?

Web activity 9.

Identify, correct and explain all mistakes concerning adjectives:

- a. *The two old saw the thief and caught him.*
- b. *This is Rowling's last novel that has just come out and I look forward to reading her next.*
- c. *He lives in the most inner Copenhagen.*
- d. *The house is very decaying and the roof has fallen down.*
- e. *A man opened the door and he had two bigger dogs.*
- f. *My friend is elder than me.*
- g. *The sad about this book is that the hero dies.*
- h. *He is more rich than me.*
- i. *The typical homeless sleeps in the park and he has few belongings.*
- j. *He is a very glad boy that likes everybody.*
- k. *This book is expensiver than the big over there.*
- l. *He is the most quick dog I have ever seen.*
- m. *I am a very awake pupil and always try to answer the teacher's questions.*
- n. *The young doesn't seem interested in talking to me today, said the old woman.*
- o. *The housing situation in Copenhagen is more worse than in Odense.*

Links to interactive exercises

- SchoolhouseRock, "Unpack your adjectives": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbqZfQNBFS0>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/topic/adjectives>
- <http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/vtc/ngfl/english/caerphilly/adjectives/>
- <http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/interactives/languages/words/adjectives/>
- http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/vtc/ngfl/english/monmouthshire/choose_adj_monmouthshire.html (choose the appropriate adjective)
- <http://www.saintambrosebarlow.wigan.sch.uk/Y5Spelling/comparativeadjectives1y5t3.htm> (the comparative)



- <http://www.saintambrosebarlow.wigan.sch.uk/Y5Spelling/superlativesy5t3.htm> (the superlative)
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises/adjectives-gradable-non-gradable> (gradable <-> non-gradable adjectives)
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises/adjectives-prepositions> (collocations with adjectives and prepositions)
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises/adjectives-ending-ed-and-%E2%80%93ing> (adjectives in –ed and –ing)
- http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/adjectives_quiz2.htm (recognizing adjectives in a text)
- <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/writing/magnetX.htm> (the order of adjectives)

Quotes

- 1 *The Infant's Grammar*, Harris and son, 1824 – reprinted on a post card from the British Library
- 2 Dickens, Charles: *Great Expectations*, Penguin Classics, 1965, p. 112
- 3 Chopin, Kate: "The Story of an Hour": http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_2/chopin.html
- 4 Blake, William: "The Sick Rose": <http://www.online-literature.com/blake/623/>
- 5 Flemmer, Vibeke et al, *Pit Stop, Task Book 6*, Alinea, 2005
- 6 Boesen, Joan, Jesper Roos Jacobsen & Helle Kirstine Petersen, *Wonderkids, Teacher's Guide*, Alinea, 2006, p. 106
- 7 Flemmer, Vibeke, & Lene Jensen, *Pit Stop #5*, , Alinea, 2005, Copy sheet 24
- 8 This exercise was made by Katharina Fogtmann-Schultz, student at University College Nordjylland.

