

Back to Basics: Adjectives

Adjectives are words that add clarity to your writing. An adjective is a word that modifies, or describes, a noun or pronoun.

So if you want to describe a person, place, thing, or idea, you would use an adjective. They can come before or after the nouns or pronouns they are modifying, and sometimes, they might even be separated by a verb.

The adjectives in the examples below are underlined, and the nouns they are modifying are bold.

The dog played with a green **ball**.

I don't like rainy **days**.

Jared loves loud **music**.

Papa's **house** is blue.

The **movie** is scary.

You can use several adjectives in your sentences to paint a clearer picture, or you can even use a few adjectives to describe one noun or pronoun.

Again, I will show you some examples with the adjectives underlined and the nouns or pronouns in bold. If more than one noun or pronoun is being modified, I will note which adjectives are modifying which noun or pronoun by making them the same color.

The big brown **dog** played with a green **ball**.

The old **cat** likes to chase fat **squirrels**.

She hurried across the cold wood **floor**.

The **music** I like is fast, loud, and fun.

Did you notice something about the times more than one adjective was used to describe a word? Sometimes they are separated by a comma or the word “and,” but sometimes they are not. Why is that?

Some adjectives are so important to the word they are describing, they can't be moved away from them without making the sentence sound weird. These are usually adjectives for where it came from, what it is made of, or what type it is. When you have one of these adjectives and another one describing the same word, you don't need a comma because the first adjective is describing the other one and the noun or pronoun at the same time.

The floor above isn't just a wood floor. It's a cold wood floor.

How do you tell if you need a comma or not if you aren't sure? One way is to try reading the sentence with “and” between the two adjectives. If it makes sense that way, you need to either keep the and or replace it with a comma. If it does not make sense with and between the two, you don't need to add the word and or a comma either one..

Take one of the examples above. Cold and wood floor sounds odd, but fast and loud and fun music sounds fine.