



STUDY NOTES

EPISODE 15 SEA FLOOR

ORDERING ADJECTIVES

In both the Writing and Speaking modules of the IELTS test, it may be necessary to provide descriptions of people, places and things. This is an important skill in communication.

To write good descriptions, it is necessary to organise the descriptions logically, and to provide specific details.

These study notes focus on the order in which you would need to place adjectives before a noun when describing someone or something.

Adjectives are used for descriptions, and precede the noun they modify or qualify. When a series of adjectives are used, they are generally put in a certain order. This is sometimes called the **Royal Order of Adjectives**.

There are generally 6 categories and 4 sub-categories that define the **Word Order of Adjectives**:

1. Determiner/Number
2. Opinion/Observation
3. Physical Description: Size, Age, Shape, Colour
4. Origin
5. Material
6. Qualifier/Compound Noun/-ing Nouns
7. Head Noun

Study Tips

In IELTS Writing Task 1, it is important to use adjectives to describe the kind of changes and/or trends found in graphs, tables or charts.

Adjectives are equally important in IELTS Writing Task 2 and the Speaking test, when describing persons, places or things. This provides the opportunity to present a broad range of vocabulary discussing the various IELTS topics whether relating to the environment, education, society, etc.

In formal academic writing remember to limit your descriptions to two or three adjectives. In a literary or poetic style of writing, it is more acceptable to use longer strings of adjectives.



| WORD ORDER OF ADJECTIVES | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--|-----------|
| Determiner Number | Opinion Observation | Physical Description | | | | Origin | Material | Qualifier Compound Noun* -ing nouns | Head Noun |
| | | Size | Age | Shape | Colour | | | | |
| the | satisfactory | petite | old | short | white | Australian | silk | business | |
| a (an) | useful | tiny | elderly | long | cream | English | porcelain | dining | |
| my | comfortable | small | mature | square | black | Chinese | gold | motor | |
| her | interesting | diminutive | adult | oval | jet black | Indonesian | silver | baseball | |
| their | inexpensive | little | ancient | round | grey | Aboriginal | wooden | football | |
| three | charming | microscopic | antique | spiral | blue | Thai | metal | dining | |
| (a) few | appalling | miniature | centenarian | spherical | indigo | Japanese | plastic | fashion | |
| half (of) | exciting | huge | ageless | triangle | violet | Korean | copper | dressing | |
| first | boring | gigantic | geriatric | oblong | purple | Indian | leather | building | |
| third | beautiful | enormous | young | circular | pink | Renaissance | glass | | |
| each | lovely | big | new | rectangular | red | Olympic | steel | | |
| Darwin's | delicious | large | immature | cubic | reddish | European | aluminium | | |
| Pasteur's | intelligent | sizable | under-aged | cylindrical | magenta | French | concrete | | |
| | nice | spacious | juvenile | geometric | green | American | ivory | | |
| | awful | queen-size | adolescent | heart-shaped | emerald | Canadian | oak | | |
| | | king-size | minor | flat | yellow | | maple | | |
| | | | modern | | orange | | teak | | |
| | | | | | | | mahogany | | |

- * **Compound nouns** consist of two or more nouns. The first part of the phrase describes the use, type or purpose of the Head Noun. For example, *wrist watch, head band, microwave oven, disc player, key ring, wedding ring*
- The adjectives are always in the singular, for example **expensive business suits**
 - It is best to avoid long strings of adjectives as this may sound unnatural in English. Limit your descriptions to two, three or maximum four adjectives.



Punctuation of adjectives

- A comma can be used between two adjectives if they belong to the same category, for example a *big, spacious* room

EXAMPLES

| WORD ORDER OF ADJECTIVES | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----|-------|--------|---------|----------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Determiner Number | Opinion Observation | Physical Description | | | | Origin | Material | Qualifier Compound Noun | Head Noun |
| | | Size | Age | Shape | Colour | | | | |
| many | interesting | | | | | | | lectures | |
| Pasteur's | | | new | | | | | theory | |
| | | huge | old | | | | steel | building | |
| the | terrifying | vast | | | blue | Pacific | | Ocean | |
| two | expensive | | | | | | business | ventures | |
| a | | microscopic | | oval | | Chinese | glass | design | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |