

Verbs and Nouns Used as Adjectives

Verbs Used as Adjectives

The *present participle* and the *past participle* of some verbs can be used as adjectives. The *present participle* is the form that ends in *-ing* (see also page 42):

surprise	It is surprising news.
excite	You have an exciting job.
bore	That is a boring program.

Review the present participles in the following list:

boring	gratifying
captivating	inspiring
caring	interesting
confusing	satisfying
daring	surprising
exciting	terrifying
fascinating	threatening
frustrating	

These adjectives describe a person or thing that “performs the action of the verb.”

A caring mother	=	a mother who <i>cares for</i> her children.
A boring movie	=	a movie that <i>bore</i> s the audience.
A threatening storm	=	a storm that <i>threatens</i> to begin soon.

exercise

10-1

Select the word that best completes each sentence:

1. We left the movie before it ended because it was _____.
caring captivating boring exciting
2. The math test was too hard for me; I thought the word problems were very _____.
frustrating exciting boring satisfying
3. I don't like horror movies because they are _____.
interesting terrifying inspiring gratifying
4. Helping other people is extremely _____.
threatening confusing gratifying terrifying
5. That novel has a lot of different stories happening at the same time; it is very _____.
caring terrifying surprising confusing
6. The circus trapeze artist performed a lot of dangerous stunts. He was a _____ young man.
daring confusing frustrating threatening

The *past participle* of the verb can also be used as an adjective. This is the verb form that often ends in *-ed* or *-en*. There are also quite a few irregular past participles that have different endings. (See page 144.) Following are examples of past participles that are commonly used as adjectives:

She is **excited** about her trip.

The toy is **broken**.

We were **surprised** to hear the news.

The child is **lost**.

Review the past participles in the following list:

broken	gratified	surprised
captivated	grown	terrified
closed	hidden	threatened
confused	inspired	torn
dead	interested	upset
drunk	lost	withdrawn
excited	married	worn
fascinated	satisfied	wounded
forbidden	shut	woven
forgotten	sold	written
found	spoken	
frustrated	stolen	

exercise

10-2

Choose appropriate words from the previous list to fill in the blanks.

1. She needed glasses to read the _____ words.
2. He couldn't hear the _____ words.
3. Police detectives are searching for the _____ painting.
4. It is very dangerous to drive if you are _____.
5. She lives alone now, as her children are all _____.
6. The _____ soldiers were taken to a hospital.
7. _____ fabric is sturdier than knitted fabric.
8. He used his _____ T-shirt for a rag.
9. The people could not read that book because it was on the king's list of _____ books.
10. Our new neighbor doesn't talk very much; she is shy and _____.

Often, the *present participle* adjective defines the *cause* of something. The *past participle* adjective defines the *person affected*:

The information was **surprising**.
The game was **exciting**.
The girl is **fascinating**.

We were **surprised**.
The fans were **excited**.
The man is **fascinated**.

exercise

10-3

Select the present participle *adjective* or the past participle *adjective*, depending on which best completes each sentence.

1. We thought the movie was **fascinating/fascinated**.
2. The children were not very **interesting/interested** in the story.
3. That is very **surprising/surprised** news.
4. I thought the questions were **confusing/confused**.
5. That movie was so scary, I was really **terrifying/terrified**.
6. When the band arrived, we were very **exciting/excited**.
7. My friend was **captivating/captivated** by that novel.
8. That store has a lot of **satisfying/satisfied** customers.
9. Waiting in line can be very **frustrating/frustrated**.
10. We were **inspiring/inspired** by our leader's speech.

Nouns Used as Adjectives

Certain nouns can be used as adjectives to tell what the noun described is made of:

a **cardboard** box = a box made of cardboard
a **glass** table = a table made of glass

exercise

10-4

Write definitions for the following items.

1. a gold necklace _____
2. a metal hook _____
3. a plastic tray _____
4. a silver bracelet _____
5. an oak floor _____
6. a wicker basket _____

7. a dirt road _____
8. a silk blouse _____
9. a wool skirt _____
10. a cotton blanket _____

Certain nouns can be used as adjectives to tell what the noun described is meant to contain. In some cases the two words are written together as one word:

a **mailbox** = a box for mail
 a **bookcase** = a case for books

exercise
10-5

Write definitions for the following items.

1. a jewelry box _____
2. an ashtray _____
3. a trash can _____
4. a picture frame _____
5. a flour sack _____
6. a key ring _____
7. a grocery bag _____
8. a glove compartment _____
9. a lunchbox _____
10. a garbage pail _____

Certain nouns can be used as adjectives to tell the purpose of the noun described:

A **potato peeler** is used for peeling potatoes.
 A **dishwasher** is used for washing dishes.

exercise

10-6

Write what each of the following is used for.

1. a nutcracker _____
2. a can opener _____
3. a fire extinguisher _____
4. a CD player _____
5. an ice pick _____
6. a hair dryer _____
7. nail polish remover _____
8. a pencil sharpener _____
9. spot remover _____
10. a floor polisher _____

Certain nouns can be used as adjectives to tell what is sold in the type of store described:

a shoe store	=	a store where shoes are sold
a grocery store	=	a store where groceries are sold

exercise

10-7

Write five other types of stores or shops.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Certain nouns define other nouns by their type:

a motorcycle	=	a cycle with a motor
schoolwork	=	work that is done at school

exercise

10-8

Write the names of the items described.

1. a lock for a bicycle _____
2. a key for a mailbox _____
3. a garden of roses _____
4. work that is done at home _____
5. a desk for a student _____

Some adjectives are formed by adding the suffix *-ed* to a noun. These adjectives often follow another descriptive adjective to which it is closed up or connected by a hyphen:

a three- legged stool	=	a stool with three legs
a red headed woodpecker	=	a woodpecker (bird) with a red head
a brown- eyed girl	=	a girl with brown eyes

Review the following noun + *-ed* adjectives:

evenhanded	fair, just
hardheaded	stubborn
hard-nosed	hardheaded
hotheaded	temperamental
levelheaded	sensible
long-winded	capable of giving long, boring speeches
single-minded	focused on one goal
sure-footed	cautious, secure

exercise

10-9

Circle the most appropriate adjective to fill in each blank.

1. We didn't want to do business with him because he was so _____.
 evenhanded hardheaded sure-footed
2. I wasn't worried on the hike because our leader was _____.
 hard-nosed sure-footed long-winded
3. He got the job done efficiently because of his _____ approach.
 single-minded long-winded hotheaded

4. The meeting went on for hours because of too many _____ speakers.
 sure-footed single-minded long-winded
5. The school principal treats all cases equally; she is very _____.
 evenhanded single-minded hard-nosed
6. Try not to make him angry. He's so _____ he might make a scene.
 single-minded sure-footed hotheaded

Compound Adjectives

A noun connected to its modifiers by hyphens can be used as an adjective. The noun is used in singular form, even though it is modified by a plural marker:

a twenty-dollar ticket	=	a ticket that costs twenty dollars
a ten-foot pole	=	a pole that is ten feet long
a two-year lease	=	a lease that lasts two years

exercise

10-10

Write definitions for the following.

- a five-year plan _____
- a three-year warranty _____
- a lifetime guarantee _____
- a ten-minute discussion _____
- a three-pound weight _____
- a two-week vacation _____
- a two-year contract _____
- an all-day meeting _____
- an all-night party _____
- an everyday occurrence _____