**Adjectives Describing Appearance**

**Example:***Scarlett O'Hara was not****beautiful****, but men seldom realized it when caught by her charm as the Tarleton twins were. But it was an****arresting****face,****pointed****of chin,****square****of jaw. Her eyes were****pale green****without a touch of****hazel****, starred with****bristly black****lashes and slightly****tilted****at the ends.*  
**- Gone with the Wind (Margaret Mitchell)**  
  
Appearance of a person can be described in numerous ways. Now, take a look at the aforementioned example. Here, the highlighted words are adjectives describing appearance of the character. The word Beautiful is commonly used to describe a woman. Similarly, the other words, arresting, pointed, square, pale green, etc., describe different facial features. Here are examples of adjectives describing appearance or facial features:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Adorable | Attractive | Alluring |
| Beautiful | Bewildered | Boorish |
| Bright | Confident | Cheerful |
| Cultured | Clumsy | Drab |
| Dull | Dynamic | Disillusioned |
| Elegant | Energetic | Fair |
| Fancy | Filthy | Gentle |
| Glamorous | Handsome | Homely |
| Hurt | Ill-mannered | Jolly |
| Lovely | Magnificent | Neat |
| Nervous | Pleasant | Perfect |
| Plucky | Prim | Smiling |
| Splendid | Self-assured | Snobbish |
| Thoughtful | Tense | Timid |
| Upset | Vivacious | Wonderful |
| Worried | Wild | Zaftig |

**Adjectives Describing Personality**

**Example:** *The****unique****, the****complex****, the****extraordinary****and****irreplaceable****Diana whose beauty, both****internal****and****external****, will never be extinguished from our minds.*  
**-The Tribute by Earl Spencer, the brother of Princess Diana, at her funeral.**  
  
The words, unique, complex, extraordinary and irreplaceable are used to describe the personality of the Princess. While the words, internal and external are other types of adjectives.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Aggressive | Ambitious | Amused |
| Brave | Barbarous | Cruel |
| Combative | Co-operative | Cowardly |
| Dangerous | Diligent | Determined |
| Disagreeable | Evil | Erratic |
| Frank | Fearless | Friendly |
| Generous | Gifted | Helpful |
| Harmonious | Hesitant | Instinctive |
| Jealous | Knowing | Kind-hearted |
| Loner | Mysterious | Naughty |
| Pleasing | Placid | Punctual |
| Quiet | Rigid | Successful |
| Sedate | Sincere | Selfish |
| Talented | Thrifty | Truculent |
| Unbiased | Voracious | Witty |
| Wise | Warm | Zany |

**Adjectives Describing Feelings**

**Example:** *She wasn't****bitter****. She was****sad****, though. But it was a****hopeful****kind of sad. The kind of sad that just takes time.*  
**- The Perks of Being a Wallflower (Stephen Chbosky)**  
  
Here the words bitter, sad are negative words that describe one's feelings. On the other hand, hopeful is a feeling that describes optimism. These type of adjectives are used to describe people's emotions and feelings.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Afraid | Angry | Anxious |
| Bad | Bored | Berserk |
| Calm | Confused | Comfortable |
| Creepy | Depressed | Disturbed |
| Dominating | Deceitful | Envious |
| Elated | Faithful | Fine |
| Frustrated | Good | Gloomy |
| Grieving | Horrible | Happy |
| Hungry | Ill | Jovial |
| Kind | Lively | Mature |
| Nice | Proud | Peaceful |
| Protective | Sorrowful | Silly |
| Somber | Sore | Tired |
| Troubled | Testy | Unwell |
| Unhappy | Vengeful | Wicked |
| Weary | Wrong | Zestful |

**Adjectives Describing Shape**

**Example:** *The two Bludgers are****round****,****jet******black****balls, made of iron*  
**- Harry Potter (J.K. Rowling)**  
  
These adjectives are usually used to describe a thing. Round is a descriptive adjective that tells us more about the shape of the ball; while jet black, another adjective, describes its color.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Broad | Crooked | Circular |
| Distorted | Flat | Hollow |
| Narrow | Round | Square |
| Skinny | Steep | Wide |

**Adjectives Describing Size**

**Example:** *They would not allow me to be a dwarf, because my littleness was beyond all degrees of comparison; for the queen's favorite dwarf, the****smallest****ever known in that kingdom, was near thirty feet high.*  
**- Gulliver's Travels (Jonathan Swift)**  
  
These adjectives are also commonly used to describe things. Here, *smallest* is a superlative degree (degree of comparison) used to describe the size of the dwarf.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Big | Colossal | Great |
| Gigantic | Huge | Large |
| Miniature | Mammoth | Petite |
| Tall | Thin | Tiny |

**Adjectives Describing Time**

**Example:** *Let others praise****ancient****times; I am glad I was born in these.*  
**- Ovid**  
  
You may not be aware, but, there are many adjectives that are used to describe time, other than early and late. Here ancient describes time. The aforementioned and the following examples can be used.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ancient | Annual | Brief |
| Early | Fast | Late |
| Modern | Old | Rapid |
| Swift | Slow | Young |

**Adjectives Describing Quantity**

**Example:** *The world is full of abundance and opportunity, but far too****many****people come to the fountain of life with a sieve instead of a tank car... a teaspoon instead of a steam shovel. They expect****little****and as a result they get****little****.*  
**- Ben Sweetland**  
  
Many is another common adjective used to describe the quantity or number of something. Similarly, little is the adjective here that describes the amount of expectations of people.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Abundant | Bountiful | Considerable |
| Empty | Extra | Few |
| Heavy | Myriad | Many |
| Multiple | Numerous | Substantial |

**Adjectives Describing Sound**

**Example:** *I detest****heavy****perfume and****shrill****voices.*  
**- Renee Vivien**  
  
In this example, the adjective shrill expresses the type of voice. Heavy is another adjective used in the sentence that describes the nature of the perfume.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Blaring | Cooing | Deafening |
| Loud | Melancholic | Noisy |
| Soft | Shrill | Squeaking |
| Silent | Thundering | Whispering |

**Adjectives Describing Taste**

**Example:** *But all that being said about modulation, if you're serving people****delicious****food, they won't complain.*  
**- Sally Schneider**  
  
The following adjectives are used to describe different types of food. The adjective, delicious, used here is one of the most commonly-used attribute for food.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bitter | Delicious | Fresh |
| Hot | Icy | Juicy |
| Spicy | Sweet | Sour |
| Salty | Tasty | Tasteless |

**Adjectives Describing Touch**

**Example:** *Ignorance is like a****delicate****fruit; touch it, and the bloom is gone.*  
**- Oscar Wilde**  
  
These adjectives are used to describe things. In the above example, delicate describes the nature of the fruit. If you take a look at the following examples, you will find that these adjectives can be used to detail many types of nouns.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hard | Loose | Rough |
| Smooth | Slippery | Sticky |
| Sharp | Scattered | Soft |
| Tender | Uneven | Wet |

**Adjectives Describing Color**

**Example:** *Autumn seemed to arrive suddenly that year. The morning of the first September was****crisp****and****golden****as an apple..."*  
**- Harry Potter (J.K. Rowling)**  
  
Using colors as adjectives is one of the most common forms of describing nouns (appearance of things, people, etc.) Here the word golden describes an apple, an indirectly, it describes the autumn. Crisp is the other adjective used here to describe the apple.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Azure | Aqua | Blue |
| Black | Crimson | Cyanv |
| Gold | Green | Magenta |
| Orange | Pink | Turquoise |

**Usage of Descriptive Adjectives**

If you wish to use more than one descriptive adjective, you need to follow certain rules of usage. The descriptive adjective follows the opinion adjective. To understand this, consider the following example.  
e.g. A **beautiful**, **green** emerald.  
In the above example, both 'beautiful' and 'green' are descriptive adjectives. But, the adjective 'beautiful' is an opinion or a general adjective that may differ from person to person. On the other hand, 'green' is a specific adjective that defines an emerald. Therefore, when more descriptive adjectives have to be used, they should follow the manner illustrated below.  
e.g. A **black**, **wooden** door.  
e.g. A **magnificent**, **huge** bungalow.

Descriptive adjectives are primarily differentiated into simple adjectives and compound adjectives.

**Simple Adjectives**

Simple adjectives are single words that are commonly used to describe a noun. These are commonly used in verbal communication when describing a thing or a person.  
e.g. **good, happy, bad, thin, lovely, picturesque**

**Compound Adjectives**

Two or more adjectives, used consecutively to describe the same noun, are known as compound adjectives. They are hyphenated in order to avoid confusion. The most common compound adjectives are the ones formed when adjectives precede nouns like 'blue-sky', or when adjectives are preceded by verbs as in 'feel-good'. When two or more colors are used as adjectives, there is always a hyphen between them.  
e.g. **middle-aged, short-sighted, bluish-green**

If there is no hyphen between two adjectives, there can be an ambiguity in the meaning of the sentence. The following example will be helpful to illustrate this.  
e.g. A **man-eating** tiger.  
As the adjectives are hyphenated, it is clear that they describe the noun, 'tiger'. Now, consider the following example,  
e.g. A man eating tiger.  
Here, as there is no hyphen between the two words, it is difficult to interpret the two words, 'man and eating', as a compound adjective (man-eating). The sentence clearly means that a man is eating a tiger.

To understand the usage of adjectives clearly, they are also further classified into the following sub-types.

**Predicate Adjectives**

Predicate adjectives affirm an attribute of the subject. In simpler words, these adjectives modify the subject in the sentence. There is always a linking verb that connects the subject to the predicate adjective.  
e.g. The cake is **tasty.**  
Here the predicate adjective 'tasty' describes the subject 'the cake'.

**Adjective Degrees**

When an adjective describes a single noun, it is the positive degree of adjective; whereas when the adjective denotes comparison between two nouns, it is the comparative degree of adjective. The superlative degree of adjective is used when the comparison is between many nouns.  
e.g. A is a **tall** building (positive degree)  
e.g. B is **taller** than A (comparative degree)  
e.g. C is the **tallest** building (superlative degree)

**Participial Adjectives**

When participles express a quality of the nouns, i.e. when they function as adjectives, they are known as participial adjectives. There are two types of participial adjectives; the ones ending with 'ing' and the ones ending with 'ed'.  
e.g. The program was **boring**  
e.g. We were **bored** at the program.

**Limiting Adjectives**

Limiting adjectives are used to specify only certain nouns. They are limited to the noun that they describe, and hence, are known as limiting adjectives. The types of limiting adjectives are possessive adjectives, demonstrative adjectives, numerical adjectives, interrogative adjectives, and proper adjectives.  
e.g. **His** book (possessive adjective)  
e.g. **Shakespearean** drama (proper adjective)  
e.g. **Those** people are **my** colleagues (pronominal adjective)

The aforementioned descriptive adjectives list will help in expressing a person, thing, action, etc., in a better way in oral as well as written communication. In order to improve your language and vocabulary, you can also look for synonyms of these adjectives and use them in speech or writing. Good luck!