

Extension exercises

Chapter 4: Adjectives | Comments

Course materials

Coursebooks vary very much in the way they approach the teaching of vocabulary and this exercise aims to help you identify the amount and type of attention your books pay to adjectives.

Some books deal explicitly only with the formal characteristics of adjectives (for example, the 'adjective endings' we can use to make adjectives from nouns; comparative and superlative forms). Others introduce only words that happen to occur in texts which are used. Other books have a more systematic approach to vocabulary – words may be introduced according to how commonly they are used in the language, or according to particular topics.

At early levels, adjectives may be introduced in the context of describing, for example, people, shapes, and colours. At higher levels, there may be more analysis of how adjectives are used in descriptive writing to achieve particular effects, and there may be opportunities for learners to use adjectives in this way. More attention is usually paid to subtle distinctions in meaning at the higher levels. Whereas at lower levels, attention to opposites may be confined to one word (for example, *happy/unhappy*), at higher levels the material is more likely to explore how the context of use affects our choice. For example, the following may all be the 'opposite' of *happy*: *unhappy*, *upset*, *depressed*, *miserable*, *wretched*, *sad*.