

Adjectives with special characteristics

Masquerading as adverbs ¹							
<i>authorly</i>	<i>friendly</i>	<i>jolly</i>	<i>monthly</i>	<i>princely</i>	<i>slatternly</i>	<i>ugly</i>	<i>westerly</i>
<i>beastly</i>	<i>frilly</i>	<i>kindly</i>	<i>motherly</i>	<i>quarterly</i>	<i>slovenly</i>	<i>unearthly</i>	<i>wifely</i>
<i>bodily</i>	<i>gentlemanly</i>	<i>kingly</i>	<i>muscly</i>	<i>queenly</i>	<i>sly</i>	<i>unfriendly</i>	<i>wily</i>
<i>brambly</i>	<i>gangly</i>	<i>knobbly</i>	<i>nightly</i>	<i>rumbly</i>	<i>southerly</i>	<i>ungainly</i>	<i>wobbly</i>
<i>bubbly</i>	<i>ghastly</i>	<i>leisurely</i>	<i>neighbourly</i>	<i>saintly</i>	<i>sparkly</i>	<i>ungentlemanly</i>	<i>womanly</i>
<i>burly</i>	<i>ghostly</i>	<i>likely</i>	<i>northerly</i>	<i>scaly</i>	<i>spindly</i>	<i>ungodly</i>	<i>woolly</i>
<i>chilly</i>	<i>giggly</i>	<i>lively</i>	<i>oily</i>	<i>scholarly</i>	<i>sprightly</i>	<i>unholy</i>	<i>worldly</i>
<i>comely</i>	<i>girly</i>	<i>lonely</i>	<i>only</i>	<i>seemly</i>	<i>squally</i>	<i>unkindly</i>	<i>wriggly</i>
<i>costly</i>	<i>godly</i>	<i>lovely</i>	<i>orderly</i>	<i>shapely</i>	<i>squiggly</i>	<i>unlikely</i>	<i>wrinkly</i>
<i>cowardly</i>	<i>goodly</i>	<i>lowly</i>	<i>otherworldly</i>	<i>shaly</i>	<i>stately</i>	<i>unlovely</i>	<i>writerly</i>
<i>crackly</i>	<i>gravelly</i>	<i>maidenly</i>	<i>painterly</i>	<i>shelly</i>	<i>steely</i>	<i>unmannerly</i>	<i>yearly</i>
<i>crawly</i>	<i>grisly</i>	<i>manly</i>	<i>pally</i>	<i>sisterly</i>	<i>straggly</i>	<i>unmanly</i>	
<i>crinkly</i>	<i>grizzly</i>	<i>mannerly</i>	<i>pearly</i>	<i>slovenly</i>	<i>stubby</i>	<i>unruly</i>	
<i>crumbly</i>	<i>heavenly</i>	<i>masterly</i>	<i>pebbly</i>	<i>smelly</i>	<i>surly</i>	<i>unseemly</i>	
<i>cuddly</i>	<i>hilly</i>	<i>matronly</i>	<i>pimply</i>	<i>southerly</i>	<i>thistly</i>	<i>unsightly</i>	
<i>courtly</i>	<i>holy</i>	<i>measly</i>	<i>portly</i>	<i>shingly</i>	<i>tickly</i>	<i>untimely</i>	
<i>curly</i>	<i>homely</i>	<i>melancholy</i>	<i>prickly</i>	<i>sickly</i>	<i>timely</i>	<i>unworldly</i>	
<i>daily</i>	<i>hourly</i>	<i>miserly</i>	<i>priestly</i>	<i>silly</i>	<i>treacly</i>	<i>weekly</i>	
Used predicatively when dynamic ²							
<i>agreeable</i>	<i>careful</i>	<i>embarrassed</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>jealous</i>	<i>obnoxious</i>	<i>silly</i>	<i>witty</i>
<i>angry</i>	<i>clever</i>	<i>faithful</i>	<i>grateful</i>	<i>kind</i>	<i>patient</i>	<i>suspicious</i>	<i>worried</i>
<i>awkward</i>	<i>clumsy</i>	<i>fierce</i>	<i>grumpy</i>	<i>lazy</i>	<i>proud</i>	<i>thoughtless</i>	<i>zealous</i>
<i>bewildered</i>	<i>cruel</i>	<i>foolish</i>	<i>happy</i>	<i>mysterious</i>	<i>repulsive</i>	<i>uptight</i>	
<i>brave</i>	<i>disruptive</i>	<i>friendly</i>	<i>helpful</i>	<i>nice</i>	<i>rude</i>	<i>vacuous</i>	
<i>calm</i>	<i>eager</i>	<i>gentle</i>	<i>impatient</i>	<i>obedient</i>	<i>shy</i>	<i>vain</i>	
Only predicative (unless pre-modified): the a-series ³							
<i>ablaze</i>	<i>aflame</i>	<i>agitter</i>	<i>akin</i>	<i>alone</i>	<i>aquiver</i>	<i>astir</i>	<i>aware</i>
<i>abreast</i>	<i>afloat</i>	<i>aglow</i>	<i>alight</i>	<i>amiss</i>	<i>askance</i>	<i>atilt</i>	<i>awash</i>
<i>abroad</i>	<i>afoot</i>	<i>agog</i>	<i>alike</i>	<i>amok</i>	<i>aslant</i>	<i>averse</i>	<i>awry</i>
<i>adrift</i>	<i>afraid</i>	<i>aground</i>	<i>alive</i>	<i>apart</i>	<i>asleep</i>	<i>awake</i>	⁴ (+ rife)
<i>afire</i>	<i>agape</i>	<i>ajar</i>					
Only attributive							
Emphasisers	Amplifiers	⁵ Limiters	Noun-derived classifiers	Archaic participles	Close to adverbs ⁶	Limited by time / place	Others
<i>certain</i>	<i>complete</i>	<i>actual</i>	<i>biological</i>	<i>cloven</i>	<i>downstairs</i>	<i>current</i>	<i>abiding</i>
<i>clear</i>	<i>entire</i>	<i>chief</i>	<i>civil</i>	<i>drunken</i>	<i>downtown</i>	<i>former</i>	<i>aforesaid</i>
<i>definite</i>	<i>outright</i>	<i>main</i>	<i>chemical</i>	<i>graven</i>	<i>in-car</i>	<i>future</i>	
<i>mere</i>	<i>perfect</i>	<i>only</i>	<i>countryside</i>	<i>shrunk</i>	<i>inhouse</i>	<i>present</i>	
<i>patent</i>	<i>pure</i>	<i>precise</i>	<i>criminal</i>	<i>stricken</i>	<i>indoor</i>	<i>previous</i>	
<i>plain</i>	<i>sheer</i>	<i>rightful</i>	<i>legal</i>	<i>sunken</i>	<i>onboard</i>	<i>eastern</i>	
<i>real</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>same</i>	<i>nuclear</i>	<i>woven</i>	<i>outdoor</i>	<i>northern</i>	
<i>true</i>	<i>utter</i>	<i>sole</i>	<i>paper</i>		<i>outside</i>	<i>southern</i>	
					<i>upstairs</i>	<i>western</i>	
					<i>uptown</i>	<i>then</i>	
						<i>urban</i>	

¹ The adverb formation with the *-ly* inflexion is often avoided for stylistic reasons.

² Most of these can be used statively in both positions.

³ Some of this series, such as *apart* are adverbial in some analyses.

⁴ This is not an *a*-series adjective but behaves like one.

⁵ Downtoners such as *slight* or *trivial* may be used in both positions.

⁶ When these are used predicatively, they are adverbial, sometimes with an additional 's' as in *out/indoors*.

Adjective complementation

Many adjectives, especially those derived from prepositional verbs, are routinely complemented by prepositional phrases. The following is, and cannot be, exhaustive.

<i>He's good at baseball</i> <i>He is capable of anything</i> <i>I'm used to getting up early</i> <i>He's liable to a prison sentence / for the costs</i> <i>He's eligible for election</i> <i>I'm due for a holiday</i> <i>I'm eager for the challenge</i> <i>He's guilty of theft</i> <i>That's inferior / superior to the old one</i> <i>The film is popular with children</i> <i>It isn't suitable for children</i>	<i>The web site is accessible to members only</i> <i>She was deaf to his requests</i> <i>Shut is synonymous with closed</i> <i>We are anxious about the costs</i> <i>I'm familiar with the argument</i> <i>She is dependent on his good will</i> <i>That comment is not consistent with our policies</i> <i>This is free from additives</i> <i>He did it heedless of the consequences</i> <i>She came in oblivious of the danger</i> <i>They are responsible for the damage</i>
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In addition, the formulations of *be* + participle adjective + prepositional phrase form learnable chunks of language. Other, pseudo-copular, verbs such as *seem*, *appear*, *become* etc. also follow this pattern.

<i>They appeared amazed at the weather</i> <i>They were vexed at their bad luck</i> <i>I became acquainted with the class</i> <i>I'm delighted with the place</i> <i>I'm opposed to hunting</i> <i>I'm prepared for anything</i>	<i>I'm not interested in grammar</i> <i>I'm surprised at his indifference</i> <i>It is comprised of three sections</i> <i>She seemed delighted with her new job</i> <i>The referee was prejudiced against the team</i> <i>He is not suited to this work</i>
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Some adjectives **require** complementation by a prepositional phrase. For example:

Allowed		Not allowed	
<i>They are averse to risks</i>	<i>They are prone to errors</i>	<i>They are averse</i>	<i>They are prone</i>
<i>That is synonymous with clean</i>	<i>It is subject to approval</i>	<i>That is synonymous</i>	<i>The contract is subject</i>
<i>This is devoid of sense</i>	<i>That is tantamount to idiocy</i>	<i>This is devoid</i>	<i>That is tantamount</i>
<i>She is reliant on the money</i>	<i>It is dependent on his approval</i>	<i>She is reliant</i>	<i>It is dependent</i>
<i>She is fond of animals</i>	<i>It is bereft of logic</i>	<i>She is fond</i>	<i>It is bereft</i>

Almost all these adjectives may **only** be used predicatively.

The adjectives *content*, *indebted* and *answerable* are usually used with a prepositional phrase but may stand alone. Other adjectives, such as *indistinguishable*, *different*, *identical* and so on may stand alone and can be used attributively but the prepositional phrase is usually understood.

Occasionally, the complement may be ellipped and it then appears that the adjective is being used without a complement but the complement is understood and does not need, in these cases, to be repeated.

Nine prepositions frequently occur in phrases complementing adjectives.

about

He was angry about the damage

I was happy about the quality

She is worried about the result

Other adjectives often followed by *about* include: *annoyed, glad, knowledgeable, mad, pleased.*

at

She is good at French

He's clever at twisting the argument

She's hopeless at sport

Other adjectives often followed by *at* include: *alarmed, amused, awful, dreadful, surprised, terrible.*

for

They were sorry for the trouble

The town is known for its crime

She is responsible for the project

Other adjectives often followed by *for* include: *bad, embarrassed, hopeful, optimistic, renowned.*

from

That is different from what we ordered

She is indistinguishable from her sister

They are tired from their walk

Other adjectives, usually verbal participles often followed by *from* include: *defended, exhausted, kept, protected, secured, sheltered.*

in

They were successful in their examinations

She is interested in astronomy

You are mistaken in your assumption

Other adjectives often followed by *in* include: *experienced, justified, persistent, unsuccessful.*

of

I am afraid of snakes

We are fond of France

He is tired of the book

Other adjectives often followed by *of* include: *aware, certain, conscious, glad, scared, terrified.*

on

It is dependent on his agreement

I am keen on fishing

We are reliant on the money

Other adjective often followed by *on* include: *based, intent, set, severe.*

The preposition *upon* is more formal in many circumstances and not possible for some adjectives so we allow, e.g.:

It is dependent upon the weather

She is reliant upon her parents

but not

**I am keen upon chess*

Using *on* is always secure.

to

She is answerable to the manager

I'm inclined to the cheaper hotel

He is liable to a fine

Other adjectives often followed by *to* include: *averse, opposed, subject.*

with

This is not compatible with the policy

I am familiar with the problem

Other adjectives often followed by *with* include: *angry, annoyed, bored, busy, comfortable, content, delighted, furious, identical, impatient, obsessed, pleased, satisfied, sick, uneasy, unhappy.*

Rules of thumb:

- *about* and *on* frequently refer to subject matter (*a talk about* and *a talk on* a subject).
- *of* / *out of* and *with* frequently refer to ingredients or materials (*cooked with, made of, made from, constructed from, manufactured with* etc.)
- *at* is frequently found in connection with ability (*good at, bad at* etc.)
- *from* often implies protection (*secure from, sheltered from, shield from, screen from* etc.)
- *with* frequently collocates with emotions (*angry with, unhappy with, delighted with, impatient with* etc.) and can often be replaced with *by* when the adjective is participial (*angered by, delighted by, annoyed by* etc.)