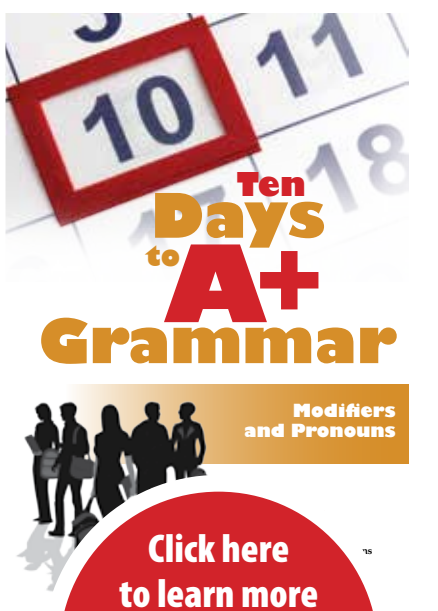




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Grammar™

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Ten Days to A+ Grammar

Modifiers and Pronouns



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



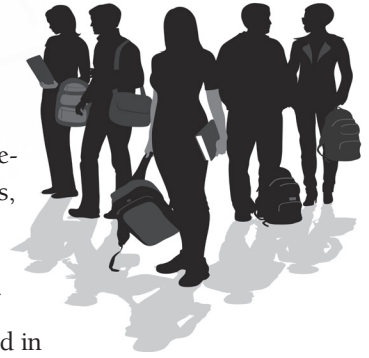
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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: MODIFIERS AND PRONOUNS is designed to help students use various descriptors and pronouns correctly. After a review of some basics about adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns, students learn how to avoid common errors when using them. The daily lessons are practical, with the focus on actually *using* the modifiers and pronouns properly.

The definitions are important, and there are a few exercises that require an understanding of their functions, but using these parts of speech properly as modifiers is the element that is stressed in the lessons. Subsequent instruction will help students learn specifics about the use of modifiers—choosing the correct form of adjectives for comparison, avoiding over-used modifiers, misplaced modifiers, and dangling modifiers, including those in which the word the modifier is meant to modify is left out entirely.

The concentration is on first helping students get a general sense of modifiers and the roles they can play. Students also learn how well-chosen modifiers can add color and life to their writing.

The first lesson on pronouns helps students understand the function of pronouns and then guides them in learning the difference between subjective and objective case. Lessons and activities then give students tips and tools for knowing which case is appropriate in common constructions.

The pronoun section also addresses a number of common mistakes in pronoun usage, such as unnecessary pronouns in double subjects and unacceptable forms of pronouns.

Of course, a complete understanding of correct pronoun usage is impossible without a thorough knowledge of parts of speech and an ability to analyze and correctly identify how every word in a sentence is being used. Because that is beyond the scope of *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Modifiers and Pronouns*, the lessons give students practical information that will guide them in the right direction for most sentences. It does not attempt to cover every possibility in the complicated world of pronoun case, nor does it try to help students distinguish between kinds of pronouns, such as demonstrative and interrogative. (Pronoun/antecedent agreement is covered in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement*.) The emphasis here is upon using pronouns correctly.

You will find that some “Day” might have more activities or quizzes than you will be able to cover; in this case, you might use them as homework assignments, as review, or as a quick reminder if a subsequent lesson takes less time than anticipated. For example, there are 50 questions in the review activity on Day #9. You should pick which ones you want the class to try to answer, as it’s unlikely that you will be able to deal with each one.

The packet contents at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students understand the role adjectives and adverbs play—both as single words and as clauses and phrases.
3. Giving students practical tips for using effective modifiers and guiding them in practice using modifiers in different ways.
4. Helping students learn the difference between the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and understanding when to use each.
5. Helping students recognize and correct sentences with dangling or misplaced modifiers.
6. Helping students understand the role pronouns play in our language and introducing subjective and objective case pronouns.
7. Having students learn when to use subjective case and when to use objective case pronouns.
8. Helping students learn to avoid some common errors in pronoun usage.
9. Reviewing and reinforcing the correct uses of modifiers and pronouns.
10. Final test on modifiers and pronouns.

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess student ability to use modifiers and pronouns correctly
- To give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days
- To help students understand the importance of using correct grammar

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest “Modifiers and Pronouns.”
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, present a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will be learning some basics about modifiers and pronouns. They will learn that modifiers can be single words (adjectives or adverbs) or groups of words (adjective and adverb phrases and clauses), and they will learn how to use both to improve their writing and avoid common pitfalls, such as dangling or misplaced modifiers. They will also learn how to choose correct pronoun case and avoid some common mistakes in choosing pronouns. On the tenth day, they will take a follow-up test to see how much they have improved.
3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

If time allows, have students try to spot the errors in “Job Application Goofs.”

DAY # 1: Lesson

Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?

Students often wonder why they have to bother to learn grammar.

Examples:

“It’s so picky,” they say.

“It doesn’t make sense.”

“Who cares?”

“I’m never going to need this stuff.”

The truth is, you already know a lot about grammar—a *lot*. You put together words according to an amazingly complex system of rules, and you do it without even thinking about it. It doesn’t matter what language you speak. All speakers understand a lot of grammar.

For example, if you speak English, you know that this is not a proper English sentence:

Delicious the smelled soup.

Without necessarily *knowing* that you know, you understand that the word “the” indicates that a noun is coming up. You know that in a short sentence like this, the verb is likely to follow the subject, not precede it. You know that, in order to be grammatical, the sentence needs to be rearranged like this:

The soup smelled delicious.

You also understand that the sentence would be wrong if it were:

The delicious soup smelled.

You probably also know that this sentence is incorrect:

The soup created by the chef on the stove was simmering.

You know that “on the stove” is in the wrong place, making it sound like the chef is on top of a hot stove. You also can probably fix the sentence in a flash:

The soup created by the chef was simmering on the stove. - OR - The soup simmering on the stove was created by the chef.

So if you know so much about grammar, why do you have to learn even more?

DAY #2: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To help students learn that modifiers can be single words—adjectives and adverbs
- To help students see that modifiers can be groups of words—adjective and adverb phrases and clauses
- To help students understand the purpose of modifiers

Activities:

1. **Lesson.** Present the lesson “What Are Modifiers?” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

The lesson describes adverbs as modifying verbs, without mentioning that they can also modify adjectives and adverbs. Students gain a better understanding of an adverb if they first concentrate on its use with a verb. Later on, the lesson explains that adverbs can also be used in other ways.

2. **Practice.** Work with the class as a whole to do “Exercise A.” Discuss any problems, and then have students go on to “Exercise B,” continuing with the class as a whole or having students work individually. (If students don’t seem to need Exercise B, have them go directly to “Exercise C.”)

Assign “Exercise C” as homework.

DAY #2: Lesson**What are Modifiers?**

Looking at Adjectives. Imagine that you have a shirt.

Shirt

We don't know much about that shirt. You might be imagining a T-shirt, while someone else is imagining a ruffled shirt for a tuxedo. *Shirt* doesn't tell us enough. However, we can *modify* the meaning of the word "shirt" with describing words:

a new shirt

a red shirt

a shirt with rhinestones all over the front

a shirt with sausage gravy spilled on the collar

a shirt that is so old and tattered that it looks like a rag

a shirt that sat unworn in Jeremy's closet for months because he hated it

- We can modify it with single words—*new* or *red*.
- We can modify it with phrases—*with rhinestones all over the front* or *with sausage gravy spilled on the collar*.
- We can modify it with clauses—*that is so old and tattered that it looks like a rag* or *that sat unworn in Jeremy's closet for months because he hated it*.

Words that describe or modify a noun or pronoun are **adjectives, adjective phrases, or adjective clauses**.

What are some other adjectives, adjective phrases, or adjective clauses that could describe the shirt?

(pretty, ugly, wrinkled, tattered, with missing buttons, which his mom bought him, etc.)

Looking at adverbs. Now let's look at a verb. Imagine that someone is smiling. You might think of a smile that indicates happiness, while someone else thinks of a smile of relief. We can *modify* the meaning of "smiling" with describing words:

smiling shyly

smiling cruelly

smiling with delight

smiling with happiness and relief

smiling after he saw the judges' scores

smiling because she knew the worst part was over

DAY #3: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To give students practice using modifiers
- To give students tips for using effective modifiers

Activities:

1. **Lesson.** Present the lesson “Adjectives and Adverbs Add Color and Life.” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.
2. **Practice.** Have students get in pairs or small groups to complete “Using Modifiers.” First, go over the items in the “Hints and Reminders” box. Then, let students work together to write sentences according the activity instructions.

DAY #3: Lesson**Adjectives and Adverbs Add Color and Life**

What if we didn't have adjectives and adverbs? Life would go on, of course, but communication would certainly be dull.

Imagine advertisers trying to describe their products. A sandwich shop could no longer boast about “a *tantalizing* aroma” or “*freshly baked* bread.” It would be able to mention only an “aroma” and “bread.” A shampoo that promises “*healthy, shiny* hair” would be able to promise only “hair.” An orange juice company could not talk about “the *healthy* glow” that comes from drinking its “*delicious* juice.” It could talk only of “the glow” that comes from “juice.” And a gym that promises *amazing* results if you work out *daily* in its *weight-lifting* classes could promise only “results if you work out in its classes.”

And think of everyday communication. Imagine that you wanted to complain about the “*rubbery, fried* chicken” and the “*soggy mashed* potatoes” the cook plopped *carelessly* on your tray. You would have to say “The cook plopped chicken and potatoes on my tray.” No one would be able to understand why you were annoyed.

Tips for stronger writing. Adjectives and adverbs add color and life to our language. However, there are a few of them that are used so often that they don't have much meaning. “Good” and “nice” are two overused adjectives. If you say something is “good,” it's hard to know what you mean. If a teacher is “good,” does that mean she is funny? Demands a lot? Explains things clearly? Lets you get away with murder? Makes everyone behave? Or...?

If you have a “nice” time at a dance, does that mean you were happy to sit in the corner drinking punch? That you danced with everyone there? That you were such an expert dancer that everyone cleared the floor just to watch you? Or...?

“Nice” and “good” don't really explain what someone wants to say. It's usually better to replace them with words that are more descriptive.

Another overused modifier is “very.” It's often better to use one stronger word instead of “very” and a weaker word. For example, instead of saying that a girl is “very pretty,” you might say she is “gorgeous.” Instead of saying a class is “very interesting,” you could say it is “fascinating.” Instead of saying the weather is “very cold,” you might say it is “freezing.”

DAY #4: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To help students understand how to form the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives
- To help students understand when to use the comparative and when to use the superlative form of adjectives in comparisons

Activities:

1. **Lesson.** Present the lesson “Adjectives That Compare.” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it. Go over “Exercise A” as a group. Continue with the *less* and *least* information and go over “Exercise B” as a group.
2. **Practice.** Have students work individually to complete “Practice Comparing.” Point out that there are two parts: Part I, “Why My Report Is Not Finished,” and Part II, “Writing Your Own Sentences that Compare.”

DAY #4: Lesson**Adjectives that Compare**

Suppose you want to compare one movie with another. You might say that one is *funnier*, *sillier*, *scariest*, or *dumber* than the other one is. Notice that all these words end in *-er*.

You might also say the movie is *more frightening*, *more intelligent*, or *more idiotic* than the other one. All these adjectives have *more* in front of them.

But now imagine that you are comparing three or four movies. You would have to change your language slightly to say the third one is the *funniest*, the *silliest*, the *scariest*, or the *dumbest* of them all. Of course, you have noticed all the words end in “est.”

It’s also possible to describe one movie out of the three or four as the *most frightening*, *most intelligent*, or *most idiotic* of them all. In this case, all the adjectives have *most* in front of them.

Look again at the examples above. Then come up with a rule in your own words for comparing two things, and a rule for comparing more than two things. We’ll come back to the rule you write in a minute.

Possible answer should be similar to: *When you compare two things, use a modifier that ends in “er” or comes after the word “more.” When you compare three or more things, use a modifier that ends in “est” or follows the word “most.”*

Three forms of adjectives used for comparison. Modifiers used for comparison have three forms. “Comparative” means that you are comparing TWO things, and “superlative” means that you are comparing more than two.

Here are some examples:

	Comparative	Superlative
wise	wiser	wisest
cool	cooler	coolest
safe	safer	safest
sweet	sweeter	sweetest
lazy	lazier	laziest
mature	more mature	most mature
optimistic	more optimistic	most optimistic
incredible	more incredible	most incredible
intelligent	more intelligent	most intelligent
ambitious	more ambitious	most ambitious