

Gradable and non-gradable adjectives

Gradable adjectives can be made weaker or stronger by adverbs, whereas non-gradable adjectives describe absolute qualities that cannot usually be graded.

See also:

Adjectives 92

Adverbs of degree 100

93.1 GRADABLE ADJECTIVES

Gradable adjectives can be modified by adverbs to make the adjective's original meaning more or less powerful.

Adverbs change the strength of the adjective.

Things can be more or less "good," so it is a gradable adjective.

This book is **very** good!



This book is **fairly** good.



This book is **not very** good.



FURTHER EXAMPLES



Edmund is **extremely** talented.



Edmund is **reasonably** talented.



Edmund is **not particularly** talented.



This soup is **really** tasty!



This soup is **pretty** tasty.



This soup is **not very** tasty at all.

93.2 NON-GRADABLE ADJECTIVES

Non-gradable adjectives cannot usually be modified. These adjectives tend to fall into three categories: extreme, absolute, and classifying.



Non-gradable adjectives like "fantastic" cannot be modified by adverbs.

Her arguments were **fantastic**!

EXTREME ADJECTIVES

Extreme adjectives are stronger versions of gradable adjectives, such as "awful," "hilarious," "fantastic," or "terrifying."

The idea of "extremely" is the meaning of "awful" already.

Her presentation was **awful**.

ABSOLUTE ADJECTIVES

Absolute adjectives cannot be graded because they describe fixed qualities or states, such as "unique," "perfect," or "impossible."

It is not possible for something to be more or less unique.

She has a **unique** presenting style.

CLASSIFYING ADJECTIVES

Classifying adjectives are used to say that something is of a specific type or class, such as "American," "nuclear," or "medical."

The audience was **American**.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

It's **boiling** in here. Can we open a window?



I am **certain** that he is the right person for the job.



I'm **terrified** of spiders and snakes!



Let's go for a walk. The weather outside is **perfect**.

