Exploring Adjectives

Hello and welcome back, in this lesson we will take a closer look at adjectives and learn how to use determining or descriptive adjectives.

What is an adjective?

Let's recap what makes a word and adjective.

An adjective is a word that defines, qualifies or modifies the meaning of a **noun**. It expresses a quality or attribute of the word it qualifies. There are two main categories of adjectives.

Determining adjectives:

Also called **limiting** adjectives, determining adjectives are words that are generally classed in the family of **determiners**, and are dealt with elsewhere:

There are a limited number of these words.

They are notably **possessive adjectives** (such as *my, their*),

1ST SINGULAR	MY
2ND SINGULAR	YOUR
3RD SINGULAR (MALE)	HIS
3RD SINGULAR (FEMALE)	HER
3RD SINGULAR (THING)	ITS
1ST PLURAL	OUR
2ND PLURAL	YOUR
3RD PLURAL	THEIR

Numerals and **quantifiers** (such as *one, two, three, every, many*),

Quantifiers

count	non-count
some	some
enough	enough
a lot of	a lot of
a few	**a little**
several	**a great deal of**
many	**much**
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not + any	**not +** any
enough	enough
a lot of	a lot of
many	**much**

Demonstrative adjectives (such as *this* or *that*),
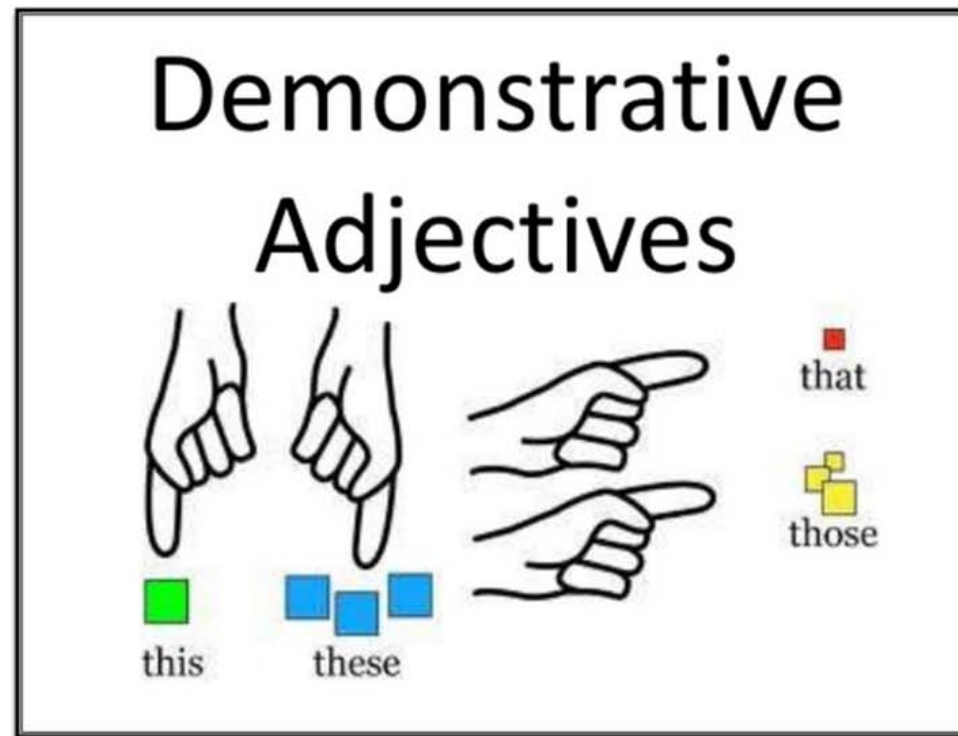
Interrogative adjectives (such as *which*)

Descriptive adjectives:

Descriptive adjectives (such as *big, English, wonderful*) describe the permanent or perceived qualities of a noun; their number is unlimited.

There are two categories of descriptive adjectives:

Qualifying adjectives, such as *big, nice, complicated* which express the passing or perceived qualities of a noun.

Differences:

Qualifying adjectives are "**gradable**", i.e. it is possible to graduate their intensity, by the addition of an **adverb** of degree, such as *very, quite, enough*; most qualifying adjectives can also be put into comparative or superlative forms (*big, bigger, biggest*).

tall   taller   tallest

Classifying adjectives cannot be graded: a person is either *married* or not, or *dead* or not; he or she cannot be "*very married*", nor "*more dead*" than another person, at least not under normal usage of the words.
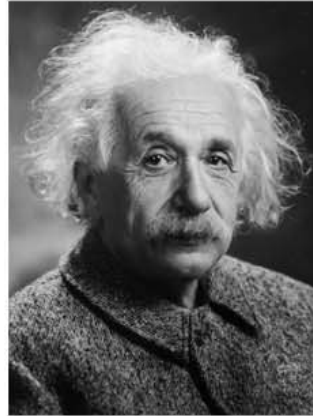
Exceptions to the rule:

Many adjectives can be used either as qualifying adjectives, or as classifying adjectives, depending on the context. Take the example of the adjective *old*.

Examples:

1.   My car is very **old** (qualifying, with a noun)

2.	He is **intelligent (**qualifying, with a pronoun)

3.	The **old** computer was much quieter than the **new** model (classifying)

In the first example above, *old* is a perceived quality, and therefore gradable,

in the second *old* has an absolute value, with the meaning of former or previous.

Classifying adjectives (including **absolute adjectives**)
such as *married, second, hydraulic, unique, dead* which
express permanent qualities or absolutes.

Classifying adjectives are adjectives
used to classify a noun as certain type.

Classifying adjectives place people
and things into classes or groups.
They are non-gradable.

We're going to fill a <u>wooden</u> box.

It was a <u>military</u> vehicle.

He plays a <u>musical</u> instrument.