Section 15  adjectives and adverbs

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Finding more examples  If you want to base an activity on the illustration, you could ask students to look at advertisements in magazines, on TV or on the internet. What are the commonest adjectives? What about adverbs? Ask the students to bring in a list.

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language notes

In some languages, adjectives have different singular and plural forms:
*She was wearing red shoes.

Students’ languages may also put adjectives immediately after nouns rather than before:
*She made a suggestion very interesting.

When two or more adjectives are used together (e.g. a big old black suitcase), the order in which they come follows quite complex patterns. At this level, it is enough to teach that colour adjectives tend to follow others. And is not generally used between adjectives before the noun, and it is generally used between adjectives after the noun (to simplify a little):
*I like big and fast cars. *My life is difficult, complicated, sad.

possible further activities

Observation: pairs of adjectives  How many things can students see in the classroom, or through the window, that can be described with two adjectives, including one showing the colour? (‘a big white table’ ‘two small black handbags’ ‘a long blue bus’)

Guessing  Describe some of the things in the room with pairs of adjectives (‘It’s big and green. What is it?’). Students guess what you are thinking of. Then they do the same in turn, perhaps in groups.

Mime: look + adjective  Extend Exercise 4 with some more adjectives that can follow ‘look’. Then get students (perhaps in pairs or groups) to mime some of them. The others decide what the adjective is, and say ‘You look cold / hot / tired / bored / interested / excited / intelligent / stupid / worried …’.

Vocabulary expansion: personality  Build up (with students’ suggestions) a list of words than can be used for talking about personality (e.g. shy, self-confident, lazy, energetic, sociable, calm, bad-tempered). Then get students to complete one or more sentences beginning:
I’m very …
I’m quite …
I’m not very …
You may need to explain quite ( = ‘moderately’, ‘rather’ in British English).

Vocabulary expansion: places  Build up (with students’ suggestions) a list of words for places where people live. Students write the same kinds of sentence as for the personality vocabulary extension activity, beginning ‘My room / house / flat / town …’.

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form or use.  ➔ Section 15 continues
Some languages don’t have distinct forms for adverbs of manner and the corresponding adjectives:

*She sings very good.* *I feel terribly.*

A few very common adverbs of manner are used without -ly in informal contexts:

She walks real slow. Don’t talk so loud.

It’s worth mentioning this, as students may be confused when they meet examples.

possible further activities

Acting out adverbs Make a set of cards with verbs on, and a separate set with adverbs. Give each student one of each (either preselected or chosen at random). Students have to act the two-word expression; the class guess what is being acted.

‘You’re walking slowly.’ ‘You’re singing badly.’ ‘You’re talking quietly.’

If a student feels he/she can’t act the expression in question, offer another choice.

In many languages, adverbs can separate the verb from the object. This is very unusual in English except in more complex sentences (see the examples of typical mistakes above Exercise 1).

possible further activities

Building sentences Write some or all of the following sentences (or others) on cards. Cut each into three as shown and distribute them. Students have to walk round saying (not showing) their sentence components to find the people they need to build a possible sentence. When they’ve done it, groups of three read out their sentences, making sure they get the order right. (There are quite a lot of possible answers, not all of them sensible.)

we cook | soup | beautifully
we sing | folksongs | in the bath
we speak | Japanese | very well
we write | poetry | at night
we play | football | at weekends
we read | the newspaper | every morning
we play | the piano | in the evening
we make | coffee | very badly
we watch | TV | for three hours a day
we eat | sandwiches | in the mountains

The exact position of these adverbs is complex. The rules given here are reasonably reliable simplifications, but will still take students some time to get used to. Typical mistakes:

*You always are late.*
*I go often to concerts.*
*I often have been to Paris.*

➔ Section 15 continues
possible further activities

Personalisation  Mention some activities. Students write sentences saying how often they do them, beginning ‘I always / often / sometimes / never …’. Like this:
‘eat red cabbage’ – ‘I often eat red cabbage.’
Possible activities:
read women’s magazines  write long letters  dream in English
sing in the shower  eat fruit  drive fast  talk to strangers
fall in love  read novels  watch TV  play basketball

Survey  Each student writes a question beginning ‘How often do you …?’ Then students go round asking their questions and noting the answers. Finally they report.
‘One person falls in love twice a week.’
‘Mario often eats red cabbage.’
‘Three students never play tennis.’

language notes

Some students will find it natural to express interest or excitement by saying *‘I am interesting in / exciting about ….’ They may take a little time to learn to use interesting / interested and similar pairs correctly:
*‘I am boring in the lesson.’

possible further activities

Mime  Students mime one of the words from Exercises 1 and 2. The class have to guess which word they are demonstrating.

possible further activities

Internet  Tell students to look for examples of “happy smile”, “friendly smile”, “smiled happily” and “smiled friendly” on the internet. How many do they find of each? What do the results tell them?