Adjectives and Adverbs

*The words that describe: adjectives describe people and things (a **quiet** village); adverbs describe actions, adjectives and whole sentences (she walked **quietly**). Learned in groups, they stick. ⚠ = false friend.*

A1–B2 · with Spanish

Adjectives

Feelings

how people feel

happy	*feliz*	**sad**	*triste*
angry	*enfadado*	**afraid**	*asustado*
tired	*cansado*	**bored**	*aburrido*
excited	*ilusionado*	**worried**	*preocupado*
surprised	*sorprendido*	**proud**	*orgulloso*
embarrassed ⚠	*avergonzado*	**calm**	*tranquilo*
lonely	*solo*	**nervous**	*nervioso*

⚠ *embarrassed = avergonzado; embarazada = pregnant*

Character

what people are like

kind	*amable*	**friendly**	*simpático*
shy	*tímido*	**lazy**	*perezoso*
hard-working	*trabajador*	**brave**	*valiente*
honest	*honrado*	**polite**	*educado*
rude	*maleducado*	**clever**	*listo*
funny	*gracioso*	**sensible** ⚠	*sensato*
generous	*generoso*	**selfish**	*egoísta*

⚠ *sensible = sensato; sensible (español) = sensitive*

Appearance

how people look

tall	*alto*	**short**	*bajo*
slim	*delgado*	**strong**	*fuerte*
young	*joven*	**old / elderly**	*mayor*
beautiful	*hermoso*	**handsome**	*guapo*
pretty	*guapa, bonita*	**ugly**	*feo*
curly	*rizado*	**straight**	*liso*
fair	*rubio, claro*	**dark**	*moreno*

"elderly" is more polite than "old" for people

Size and shape

how big, what form

big / large ⚠	*grande*	**small**	*pequeño*
huge	*enorme*	**tiny**	*diminuto*
long	*largo*	**short**	*corto*
wide	*ancho*	**narrow**	*estrecho*
thick	*grueso*	**thin**	*fino, delgado*
round	*redondo*	**square**	*cuadrado*
flat	*plano, llano*	**deep**	*profundo*

⚠ *large = grande; largo = long*

Weather

what it is like outside

sunny	*soleado*	**cloudy**	*nublado*
rainy	*lluvioso*	**windy**	*ventoso*
foggy	*con niebla*	**snowy**	*nevado*
hot	*caluroso*	**warm**	*templado*
cool	*fresco*	**cold**	*frío*
wet	*mojado*	**dry**	*seco*
stormy	*tormentoso*	**mild**	*suave*

We say "It's windy", not "It makes wind"

Food and taste

how things taste

sweet	*dulce*	**salty**	*salado*
sour	*ácido, agrio*	**bitter**	*amargo*
spicy / hot	*picante*	**delicious**	*delicioso*
tasty	*sabroso*	**fresh**	*fresco*
ripe	*maduro*	**raw**	*crudo*
crunchy	*crujiente*	**juicy**	*jugoso*
tender	*tierno*	**stale**	*duro, rancio*

"hot" can mean picante or caliente

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Adjectives (continued)

Things and places

what something is like

new	*nuevo*	**old / ancient**	*viejo, antiguo*
clean	*limpio*	**dirty**	*sucio*
quiet	*tranquilo*	**noisy**	*ruidoso*
cheap	*barato*	**expensive**	*caro*
easy	*fácil*	**difficult**	*difícil*
full	*lleno*	**empty**	*vacío*
safe	*seguro*	**dangerous**	*peligroso*

Learn adjectives in pairs of opposites

Opinion

what we think of it

good	*bueno*	**bad**	*malo*
great	*genial*	**wonderful**	*maravilloso*
terrible	*terrible*	**awful**	*horrible*
interesting	*interesante*	**boring**	*aburrido*
important	*importante*	**useful**	*útil*
strange	*raro, extraño*	**amazing**	*increíble*
nice	*agradable*	**lovely**	*precioso*

Opinion adjectives come first in a list

Colours and patterns

what colour, what pattern

red	*rojo*	**blue**	*azul*
green	*verde*	**yellow**	*amarillo*
brown	*marrón*	**grey**	*gris*
light (blue)	*(azul) claro*	**dark (green)**	*(verde) oscuro*
bright	*vivo, brillante*	**pale**	*pálido*
striped	*a rayas*	**spotted**	*de lunares*
checked	*de cuadros*	**plain**	*liso*

light and dark come before the colour: light blue

Materials

what it is made of

wooden	*de madera*	**woollen**	*de lana*
cotton	*de algodón*	**leather**	*de cuero*
metal	*de metal*	**plastic**	*de plástico*
glass	*de cristal*	**stone**	*de piedra*
paper	*de papel*	**silk**	*de seda*
golden	*dorado*	**silver**	*plateado*
clay	*de barro*	**iron**	*de hierro*

A noun often works as an adjective: a stone wall

The order of adjectives

opinion	size	age	shape	colour	origin	material	purpose
beautiful	*small*	*old*	*round*	*black*	*Spanish*	*wooden*	*sewing*

*a **beautiful small old round black** box · a **lovely little Spanish** village.* In practice, use no more than two or three together.

-ed or -ing?

-ed = how a person feels: *I was **bored**.*

-ing = what causes the feeling: *The film was **boring**.*

Also: interested / interesting, tired / tiring, surprised / surprising.

Comparing

short: cold → cold**er** → the cold**est**

long: useful → **more** useful → the **most** useful

good → **better** → **best**; bad → **worse** → **worst**

equal: *as cold **as***; not equal: *not as cold as*

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Adverbs

Manner — *how?*

quickly	*rápidamente*	**slowly**	*despacio*
carefully	*con cuidado*	**quietly**	*en voz baja*
loudly	*en voz alta*	**well**	*bien*
badly	*mal*	**hard**	*mucho, duro*
fast	*rápido*	**easily**	*fácilmente*
happily	*felizmente*	**together**	*juntos*

Frequency — *how often?*

always	*siempre*	**usually**	*normalmente*
often	*a menudo*	**sometimes**	*a veces*
occasionally	*de vez en cuando*	**rarely**	*casi nunca*
never	*nunca*	**ever**	*alguna vez*
daily	*a diario*	**once a week**	*una vez a la semana*
twice	*dos veces*	**again**	*otra vez*

Degree — *how much?*

very	*muy*	**quite**	*bastante*
really	*muy, de verdad*	**too**	*demasiado*
enough	*suficiente*	**extremely**	*sumamente*
almost	*casi*	**nearly**	*casi*
hardly	*apenas*	**completely**	*completamente*
a bit	*un poco*	**so**	*tan*

Time — *when?*

now	*ahora*	**today**	*hoy*
yesterday	*ayer*	**tomorrow**	*mañana*
soon	*pronto*	**already**	*ya*
yet	*todavía, ya*	**still**	*todavía*
just	*acabar de*	**later**	*más tarde*
recently	*recientemente*	**then**	*entonces, luego*

Place — *where?*

here	*aquí*	**there**	*allí*
everywhere	*en todas partes*	**somewhere**	*en algún sitio*
nowhere	*en ningún sitio*	**inside**	*dentro*
outside	*fuera*	**upstairs**	*arriba*
downstairs	*abajo*	**nearby**	*cerca*
abroad	*en el extranjero*	**away**	*fuera, lejos*

Certainty and comment — *how sure? what do I think?*

probably	*probablemente*	**perhaps / maybe**	*quizás*
certainly	*sin duda*	**definitely**	*seguro*
luckily	*por suerte*	**unfortunately**	*por desgracia*
actually ⚠	*en realidad*	**eventually** ⚠	*al final*
surely	*seguramente*	**obviously**	*obviamente*
honestly	*sinceramente*	**hopefully**	*ojalá, con suerte*

Making adverbs

adjective + **-ly**: slow → slow**ly**
-y → **-ily**: happy → happ**ily**
-le → **-ly**: gentle → gent**ly**
Irregular: good → **well**; fast, hard, late stay the same.
⚠ *hardly* = apenas; *lately* = recently. *Friendly* and *lovely* are adjectives.

Where do adverbs go?

Frequency: before the main verb, after *be*: *She **often** walks. She is **often** late.*
Manner, place, time: usually at the end, in that order: *He worked **hard at home yesterday**.*
Never between a verb and its object: *I like tea **very much**, not I like very much tea.*

False friends and more

⚠ *actually* = en realidad (actualmente = **currently**)
⚠ *eventually* = al final (eventualmente = **possibly**)
Sophia explains them in **A Beautiful Small Old Round Black Box** and **Carefully, Rarely, Almost Never** (Philo & Sophia, Lessons 9–10).

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