Adjectives

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Identify adjectives.
- Identify the nouns that adjectives modify.
- Explain how adjectives make writing more interesting to read.

Preparation

Materials Needed
- Chart paper and markers
- Adjectives (BLM 9)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text (without underlining) and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

1. Focus

Explain Adjectives

Say: An adjective can describe what a person, place, animal, or thing looks like, how it acts, how it feels, how it sounds, or how it smells. We use adjectives in sentences to describe, or modify, nouns. For example, let’s think about the sentence, “The loud, flashy clock woke me up.” The adjectives loud and flashy describe what the clock looks like. Adjectives can also tell how many people, places, animals, or things there are. For example, let’s think about the sentence, “It took fifty years for the tree to grow that tall.” The adjective fifty tells how many years the tree has grown. Today we’re going to see how writers of informational reports use adjectives to make the information in their reports clear and precise.

Model Identifying Adjectives and Modified Nouns

Display the modeling text (without underlining) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the text aloud to students.

During summer, caribou live solitary lives. But during the fall migration, up to 100,000 caribou will travel south together. Caribou must swim through cold, strong rivers. They must be careful not to fall on the ice and break a leg.

Say: To identify adjectives, I look for words that describe people, places, animals, or things. In the first sentence, I see that the word solitary tells what caribou lives are like in summer. The adjective solitary modifies the noun lives. Then in the next sentence, I see that the adjective fall describes the word migration; the adjective tells when the migration happens. Sometimes the word fall is used as a noun to name something, but in this example, it is used as an adjective to describe the migration. The adjectives cold and strong are used to describe the rivers. Often, a comma will separate two adjectives that describe the same noun. Adjectives are important in informational reports because they give me specific details. Adjectives often make writing more interesting and descriptive.
2. Rehearse

Practice Identifying Adjectives and Modified Nouns

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Caribou face dangers to make sure their babies are born in a safe place. So do the red crabs of Christmas Island. Every November, fifty million crabs migrate to lay their eggs. They crawl for ten days.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to read the practice text and locate the adjectives that are used to describe nouns. Ask them to write down the adjectives and the nouns they modify.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Adjectives and Modified Nouns

Invite students to share the adjectives they found in the practice sentences and the nouns those adjectives modify. Discuss their responses by asking the following questions:
• What adjectives did you find?
• What noun did each adjective describe?
• How do the adjectives help you understand the things the author describes?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that adjectives are words that writers use to describe things. Adjectives are important words to use when we write informational reports because they make our writing clearer and much more interesting to read. We use adjectives to describe how a noun looks, what it’s like, or how many there are of something.

If you would like to give students additional practice recognizing and using adjectives, ask them to complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud the sentences they wrote for BLM 9. Provide corrective feedback as necessary.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Beginning ELs will need additional support and practice in order to understand how adjectives are used to describe nouns. Point to objects in the classroom and model using adjectives to describe them; for example, a heavy book, a red pen, a round clock, etc. Ask students to point to objects in the room and describe them in any way they can, using words or gestures.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the practice text activity.

All Levels
If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: adjective/el adjetivo.