

## English Grammar – Adjectives before Nouns

**Adjectives** describe nouns (things/people) and must always be used before a noun. In Portuguese, adjectives are generally after a noun. For example:

English: I have a **black cat**.  
Portuguese: Tenho um **gato preto**.

More examples:

- The English are polite people.
- I have an intelligent son.
- This is an interesting movie.

The word “very” is used before an adjective:

- The English are very polite people.
- I have a very intelligent son.
- This is a very interesting movie.

All adjectives are before the noun:

- The English are nice polite people.
- I have an intelligent dedicated son.
- That was an interesting old movie.

If we use “very” it is used before the first adjective:

- The English are very nice polite people.
- I have a very intelligent dedicated son.
- That was a very interesting old movie.

**Exercise.** Insert the given adjective(s) in the correct places.

Examples:    *Mandy is a girl. (pretty)*                      *Mandy is a **pretty** girl.*  
                  *I have a car. (fast, red)*                              *I have a **fast red** car.*

- 1) I can do this test. (*easy*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) He is a driver. (*careful*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) We live in a house. (*big, modern*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) My dad is a person. (*kind, generous*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Buddy is a dog. (*pretty, cute*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) We go to a school. (*large, traditional*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) I prefer cell phones. (*very simple, cheap*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Let's go to a restaurant. (*simple, very cheap*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) I have a brother. (*crazy, nice, wonderful*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) I want a vacation. (*radical, fantastic, unforgettable*) \_\_\_\_\_

## More than one adjective

If we use more than one adjective in a sentence, it can be a little confusing. For example:

I have an old wooden interesting broken red Victorian table.

The listener (or reader) only knows that the noun is a table when we get to the end of the sentence. It would be better to say something like:

I have an old Victorian table. It is a red wooden table, and is broken but interesting.

Here are two examples from a news website:

### 1) “US Navy sends a message to adversaries with rare Indian Ocean submarine port visit”

This headline uses 5 adjectives before the word “visit”. However, when the article is opened, the headline is a little different and easier to understand:

**US Navy sends a message to adversaries with a rare submarine port visit in Indian Ocean**

Another way to write the sentence would be:

**US Navy sends a message to adversaries with a rare visit to a submarine port in the Indian Ocean**

The translation of the original headline would be:

**Marinha dos EUA envia uma mensagem aos adversários com rara visita a porto submarino no Oceano Índico**

In the Portuguese version, every noun has at most only 1 adjective.

### 2) “Takeaways from the NY court hearing on Trump’s \$454 million civil fraud judgement appeal”

This headline uses 6 adjectives before the word “appeal”. However, when we read it, we actually say 11 adjectives:

**Takeaways from the NY court hearing on Trump’s four hundred and fifty four million dollar civil fraud judgement appeal**

The translation of the headline would be:

**Conclusões da audiência do tribunal de Nova York sobre o recurso de sentença de fraude civil de US\$ 454 milhões de Trump**

In Portuguese, we use the words ‘de’, ‘do’ and ‘da’ to link adjectives with nouns. In this examples there are seven!