

English Grammar: Compound Adjectives

When we use more than one word to describe something or someone, and they are used before the noun, then they must be hyphenated, and together they are called a 'compound adjective'. Here are some examples:

- He is a **physical-education** teacher.
- I have a **4-wheel-drive** car.
- I want to visit an **English-speaking** country.
- He is a **well-known** author.
- The pharmacy has an **old-fashioned** interior.
- It's an **all-you-can-eat** restaurant.

In English, adjectives can never be plural, so we must remove 's' from any words that make a compound adjective. For example:

Description after the noun

I have never found a clover **with 4 leaves**.

I have a son **who is 12 years** old.

He slept on a bed **which was 90 cms** wide.

We live in a building **of 20 floors**.

The building is **4,000 square meters**.

Using a compound adjective

I have never found a **4-leaf** clover.

I have a **12-year-old** son.

He slept on a **90-cm-wide** bed.

We live in a **20-floor** building.

We have a **4,000-square-meter** building.

Exercise. Rewrite the following sentences using compound adjectives.

1. My wife has boots **which have high heels**.

2. Last week, I bought a car **which has three wheels**.

3. I want a bottle of Fanta **of two liters**.

4. It's only a boat ride **of ten minutes**.

5. I found a snake **with two heads**.

6. In September, we intend to go on a cruise **for 10 days**.

Here is an extreme example taken from the film "The Irishman" (2019). The sentence includes a 16-word adjective!

