

Week 3: Adjectives

Day 1

Read the poem below and then spend some time reflecting on it.

A Sea Song

By Allan Cunningham

A wet sheet and a flowing sea
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While, like the eagle free,
Away the good ship flies and leaves
Old England on the lee.

“O for a soft and gentle wind!”
I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high;
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free,
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There’s tempest in yon horned moon,
And lightning in yon cloud
But hark the music, mariners!
The wind is piping loud;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashes free,
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

Write your first impressions of the poem. What did you like? What didn’t you like? What is the poem about? What questions came to your mind as you read it? What is the best thing about it?

Begin memorizing the poem.

Grammar Study

Adjectives, sometimes called modifiers, help *describe* or *limit* nouns and pronouns.

Adjectives That Describe: indicate some quality of the noun

pretty, blue, terrifying

Adjectives That Limit: indicate number or specify a particular noun

many, few, three, tenth, a, an, the

Exercises

A. Here is a list of adjectives. Use each one orally in a sentence.

| | | | |
|---------|-------------|--------|----------|
| wearry | playful | quiet | mild |
| ripe | sunny | dirty | brittle |
| curious | hospitable | fiery | juicy |
| shrewd | industrious | saucy | drowsy |
| wealthy | frail | smooth | faithful |

B. Make a list of adjectives you could use to describe each of the following nouns:

1. an apple
2. a horse
3. a daisy
4. a dragon
5. the forest
6. your church

C. Write three sentences using some of the adjectives from Part A or B.



Day 2

Reread the poem “A Sea Song.” Now read it out loud, trying to capture the rhythm of the poem as you read it. Even if you haven’t yet memorized the entire poem, recite as much as you can from memory.

On your paper, write your answers to the following questions about the poem.

- a. How does the singer most enjoy his time at sea? How can you tell?
- b. Find your favorite lines in the poem. Pick **one** line that you like best and write it on your paper. Now explain why you like that particular line. Be specific.
- c. What in the poem helps to make it seem like a “song?”
- d. Word study:
 1. How can a mast be “gallant”? First be sure you know what “gallant” means.
 2. In nautical vocabulary, “lee” means the side of the ship that is sheltered from the wind. Given that definition, what is the meaning of the line “Old England on the lee.”
- e. Describe the person who might sing this song.

Grammar Study

Enhancing writing with effective use of adjectives

A painter uses tints and shades to add nuance to a painting to make it more true to life.
A writer paints with modifiers.

Compare the following two sentences. Which one gives you a better mental picture of the writer’s view?

1. The riverbanks teemed with creatures in the evening light.
2. The mossy riverbanks teemed with smooth and slinking creatures in the shadowy light.

Exercises

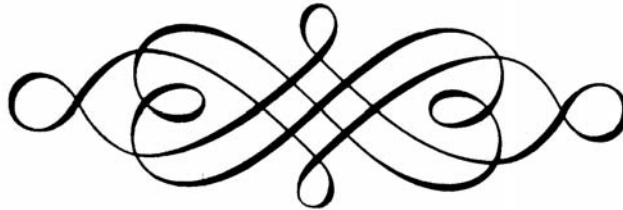
A. Rewrite the sentences below, adding more descriptive adjectives. You may change other words in the sentence as well.

1. The dog smiled as it wagged its tail.
2. The trees swayed and bent in the wind.
3. Waves dashed the boat on the shore.

B. Analyze the use of adjectives in the following passage. As you copy the passage onto your paper make changes based on your analysis. If you think a better adjective could be used, replace the current adjective and write a substitute instead. Add any adjectives that you think would enhance the passage.

A faint light fell from the open door. Gingerly, the children tiptoed toward the opening. Leaning over into the light, they peered into the room. Their eyes widened in delight. The tree, lit with colored lights, was decorated with balls and bows. Around the tree lay packages of all sizes wrapped in bright colors. At the back of the tree, near the hearth, though, stood the most beautiful sight of all: a sled.

(Continue writing this story if you like.)



Day 3

Reread the poem “A Sea Song.” Read it out loud and then see how much of it you can recite from memory.

Grammar Study

Practice with Adjectives

Exercises

A. Find all the adjectives in the poem and write them on your paper

B. Rewrite the second verse of “A Sea Song,” replacing all the adjectives with different words. Make your choices fit together to bring a new meaning to the verse. Write the poem out on your paper.

“O for a _____ and _____ wind!”

I heard a _____ one cry;

But give to me the _____ breeze

And _____ waves heaving high;

And _____ waves heaving high, my lads,

The _____ ship _____ and _____, -

The world of waters is our home,

And _____ men are we.

How has your choice of adjectives changed the meaning of the verse?

C. Read the following passage from *Two Years Before the Mast* by Richard Henry Dana, Jr.

The fish tackle was got up, fish davit rigged out, and after two or three hours of hard and cold work, both the anchors were ready for instant use . . . Our spirits returned with having something to do and when the tackle was manned to bouse the anchor home, notwithstanding the desolation of the scene, we struck “Cheerily ho!” in full chorus. This pleased the mate, who rubbed his hands together and cried out: “That’s right my boys – never say die! That sounds like the old crew! And the captain came up on hearing the song, and said to the passenger, within hearing of the man at the wheel: “That sounds like a lively crew. They’ll have their song so long as there’re enough left for a chorus.”

Think about this passage and the virtue of singing a song, particularly while working. **Answer** the following questions about this passage. **Write** your answers on your paper.

1. Consider the use of adjectives in the passage above. Which is more descriptive: “A Sea Song,” or the passage from *Two Years Before the Mast*? Give your reasons.
2. In the prose passage above, why do the sailors sing?
3. Why do you think the sailor who wrote “A Sea Song” sings?
4. Why is singing helpful when there is a job to be done?



Writing

Writing your own poem.

Prewriting

The sailor who wrote “A Sea Song” burst out with verse when thinking of his life on the sea. And the men on board the *Pilgrim* in the story *Two Years Before the Mast* broke out in song as their work refreshed them. Now it is your turn to burst out with song! You are going to write a poem or a song. Today you will pick a topic and make some word lists.

Your poem/song will be called “A _____ Song.” Choose a topic that you know well. For example, maybe you would write “A Pet Song” or “An Irish Dancing Song.” On your paper make a chart like the one below. Fill in the chart with nouns, adjectives that describe them, and action words about your topic.

| Noun | Adjectives That Describe It | Action Word |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Save this chart for Day 4. You will write your poem on Day 4.

Day 4

Recite the poem “A Sea Song” from memory. If you don’t know it yet, practice it today, so that you may recite it later.

Grammar Study

Exercises

A. Reread the definition of adjectives from Day 1. Find all the adjectives in the following passage and write them on your paper.

From *Two Years Before the Mast*

There lay, floating in the ocean several miles off, an immense, irregular mass, its tops and points covered with snow, and its center of a deep indigo color. This was an iceberg, and one of the largest size, as one of our men said who had been in the Northern Ocean. As far as the eye could reach, the sea in every direction was of a deep-blue color, the waves running high and fresh and sparkling in the light, and in the midst, lay this immense mountain island, its cavities and valleys thrown into deep shade, and its point and pinnacles glittering in the sun.

B. Make the following sentences more expressive by adding adjectives. Rewrite each sentence on your paper.

- A. The band director slowly lifted his baton and the crowd quieted.
- B. The waves crashed upon the rocks, sending spray high in the air.

C. Read the following poem and underline the adjectives. (Hint: There are only three.)

*The Harper draws his golden string
And over-head, like birds awing –
That soar and flutter as they sing –
The music floats
In liquid notes
And all is still.*

“An Etching” by Sister Imelda

What do you think Sister Imelda is saying about music?

Writing

Write your poem “A _____ Song.” Follow the instructions below

- Look over the list of words you made yesterday about your topic. Add to the list if you have thought of anything else.
- Reread “A Sea Song.” You will be using the pattern of the first verse for your poem. *Notice that lines 4 and 5 repeat.* You will write 8 lines of poetry, the equivalent of one verse of “A Sea Song.” (You may write more of course if you are inspired.)
- Begin your poem in the same way that “A Sea Song” does.

A _____ and a _____
adjective noun adjective noun

A _____ that _____
noun action word modifier

And _____ the _____ and _____
action word adjective adjective noun

And _____ the _____
action word adjective noun

And _____ the _____, my _____.
action word adjective noun noun

While, like the _____
noun adjective

_____ the _____ and _____
action word modifier adjective noun action word action word

_____ on the _____.
adjective noun noun

If you have more to say about your topic, if you are bursting with song, write more verses to your poem. Copy it neatly over onto a sheet of good paper. Remember that all your work gives glory to God.

*Sing to him, sing praise to him, tell all of his wonderful works!
Glory in his holy name, let the hearts of those who
seek THE LORD rejoice!*

Psalm 105:2-3