



How Adjectives Change to Match Different Words

KS3

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Ages 11-14



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What Are Adjectives and Why Do They Change?

In **English**, adjectives are easy. We say "a red car" and "a red house" and the word "red" never changes. But in many **foreign languages** like **French**, **Spanish**, and **German**, adjectives are trickier. They change their endings depending on the **noun** they describe. This is called **agreement**.

Why? Because in these languages, nouns have **gender** and **number**. Every noun is either masculine or feminine (and sometimes neuter), and it's either singular or plural. Adjectives have to "agree" with the noun—they change to match it.

Think of it like a **matching game**. If you pick a red ball, you say "red ball." If you pick a red dress, you might say something different because the dress is a different "type." In foreign languages, adjectives change to match the type of noun.

How Does Gender Affect Adjectives?

In **Spanish**, the word for "tall" is "alto" when describing a masculine noun (like "a tall boy"), but it becomes "alta" when describing a feminine noun (like "a tall girl"). The noun's gender tells the adjective what ending to wear.

The same happens in **French**. "Grand" (big) stays "grand" for masculine nouns but becomes "grande" for feminine ones. **German** is even more complex, with three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter.

Think of it like **dress codes**. Just as different parties have different dress codes, different nouns "dress" adjectives differently. A masculine noun requires one outfit, a feminine noun requires another.

How Does Number Affect Adjectives?

Number means singular (one thing) or plural (many things). When a noun becomes plural, the adjective changes too. In **Spanish**, "un coche rojo" (a red car) becomes "coches rojos" (red cars). The adjective "rojo" becomes "rojos."

In **French**, plurals often add an "s": "une maison blanche" (one white house) becomes "des maisons blanches" (white houses).

Putting It All Together

To use adjectives correctly in **foreign languages**, you need to identify three things: the noun's **gender**, its **number**, and where the adjective goes in the sentence. Once you know these, you can pick the right adjective form.

The good news? This becomes automatic with practice. Soon you'll match adjectives to nouns without thinking, just like you match clothes to weather without checking a rule book!