## Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe nouns. Essentially, adjectives give specific details about nouns. Anything you can sense about a noun is described with an adjective.

* **sight:** including colors, shapes, sizes (e.g. green, red, brown, square, round, large, small)
* **sound:** including types and volume (rattling, scraping, blowing, loud, soft)
* **smell:** including scents and strengths (putrid, sweet, foul, pungent, strong, faint)
* **taste:** including flavors and strengths (sweet, sour, spicy, bland, strong, weak)
* **touch:** including textures and temperatures (smooth, rough, soft, hard, cool, cold, warm, hot)
* **emotions and subjective reactions:** (happy, excited, ecstatic, sad, lonely, beautiful, ugly)
* **states**: (tired, angered, labored, smart, rich, hungry, lonely, friendly)

Examples:  
Notice how you can either put the adjective **before** the noun OR after the noun and after a form of the verb 'to be' or other verbs like 'to look' or 'to feel':

* The green grass . . . The grass is green.
* The rattling wind . . . The wind is rattling.
* That putrid potato . . . That potato is putrid.
* The spicy hot dog . . . The hot dog is spicy.
* The rough wall . . . The wall is rough.
* The happy idiot . . . That idiot sure looks happy.
* Her labored breathing . . . Her breathing feels labored.

. . . means the words do not form a complete sentence.

## Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify (give more information about) verbs. When they describe verbs, adverbs tell us the quality of how something is done or how it occurs. Find the verb and ask "how" or "when".

Example 1: The girl ran to the store.

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|  | In this sentence, **ran** is a verb you can ask "how" or "when" about. How did the girl run? **Slowly**? **Quickly**? **Haltingly**? Those are all adverbs.  When did the girl run? **Yesterday**? **Today**? Those are also adverbs. |

Example 2: The boy looked at the car.

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|  | In this sentence, **looked** is a verb you can ask "how" or "when" about. How did the boy look? **Longingly**? **Lovingly**? **Nervously**? These are all adverbs. |

Adverbs also modify adjectives and other adverbs. When they do, they tell us "How much?"  
Example 3: She was tired.

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|  | In this case, **tired** is an adjective, so we are asking "How much?" about that adjective. **Very**? **Not**? **Too**? These are all adverbs. |

Generally, adverbs end in -**ly** but not always. Also, not all words that end in -**ly** are adverbs--refer back to adjectives of 'state' above. In addtion, some common **non-ly adverbs** are:

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| * after * almost * always * even |  far   fast   less   more |  never   not   often   seldom |  soon   too   very   well |

Examples:

* She wandered aimlessly.
* The cat slumped listlessly to the floor.
* I would like more coffee, please. Can you make sure it's not too hot? (Where 'hot' is an adjective.)
* He seldom eats meat if it is well done. (Where 'done' is an adjective.)
* I am not very smart, but I know that less is sometimes more. (Where 'smart' is an adjective.)

Remember, you cannot do something good--You do something **well**.

## Similes

Similes are phrases that describe **one** characteristic of something by comparing it to a similar characteristic of something else. Similes use the words **like** or **as** in their comparison. They never use the two words together.

Example 1: The hood of my car is hot.

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|  | If I want to describe how hot the surface of my car is, I can compare it to something else that I know is hot--say, an iron. Therefore, I would say, 'The surface of my car is as hot as an iron' or  'The surface of my car is hot like an iron.'  I couldn9t say, 'The surface of my car is like an iron' because it is unclear what characteristic I am comparing--the shape of the car and iron, the texture of the car and iron, etc. |

Examples:   
The underlined words are the characteristics being compared. The **bolded words** are the thing being compared to:

* His face is as rough as **sandpaper**.
* The color of that emerald is like **grass**.
* That girl eats like a **pig**.

## Metaphors

Metaphors are phrases that describe **several** characteristics of something by comparing it with something else. Metaphors do **not** use 'like' or 'as' and are, therefore, stronger than similes. They are also harder to create. Another way to look at metaphors is as symbols--images that represent something other than themselves. Example 1: The woman is a rock.

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|  | What are the characteristics of a rock? Hard, sometimes immovable, inorganic, solid. |

Examples: That car is a dream. (perfect, beautiful) ; Time marches on. (steadily, constantly, deliberately); This class is hell. (difficult, cursed, impossible to escape, haunting) ; I want to get off this merry-go-round of stress. (never-ending, confusing, giddy, never-progressing)

**Adding Dialogue: Letting the Characters Speak too!**

The storyteller is the narrator of the tale, but for variation and to keep listeners' attention, it is interesting to allow yourself to pretend to be a character in the tale and express the plot in dialogue. For example, instead of saying, "They had a loud argument," the storyteller could create lines for each character to say as if, for a moment, the tale were a play. As in a literary form, phrases such as "he shouted," or "they moaned," help to identify which character is speaking.

Character voices can be as exaggerated or as dramatic as the teller is willing to make them. However, to maintain the informality and audience contact of storytelling vs. dramatic acting, it is important for the teller to regain composure as the narrator when the narrator speaks. Different sounds and textures are interesting to the listener and will help hold the listener's attention. Variation in volume and tempo also help hold attention. Silence, in the form of a pause, can also be effective.

**Improvising with Folktale Skeletons**

Story Skeletons are the bare bones of the tale, or the plot. Additional detail, setting and characterization can be added to flesh out the story. Be generous and the reader or listener will see the tale in their mind's eye. Everyone's imagination is different, so retellings will differ from teller to teller. Students could retell one of the following tales in their own words, improvising language and adding dialogue between characters.

For example: Here is a simple skeleton of an Aesop's fable "The Sun and the Wind." Following it is an example of how just a small amount of dialogue can further elaborate the plot.

**A Skeleton:**

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| **The Sun and The Wind** ... an Aesop's Fable  The wind and the sun argued about which of them was the strongest. They decided to hold a contest. The sun suggested that they see who could take the coat off of a man walking along the road below them. The wind blew hard, but the man, feeling chilly, held his coat tightly around him. The sun then became gently warmer and warmer. The man felt so hot, he took off his coat. Sometimes, they say, you can get your way more easily with gentleness than by force. |

**With Additional Dialogue:**

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| **The Sun and The Wind**... An Aesop's Fable  *The North Wind boasted of great strength. The Sun argued that there was great power in gentleness.*  *"We shall have a contest," said the Sun.*  *Far below, a man traveled a winding road. He was wearing a warm winter coat.*  *"As a test of strength," said the Sun, "let us see which of us can take the coat off that man."*  *"It will be quite simple for me to force him to remove his coat," bragged the Wind.*  *The Wind blew so hard, the birds clung to the trees. The world was filled with dust and leaves. But the harder the wind blew, the tighter the shivering man clung to his coat.*  *Then, the Sun came out from behind a cloud. The sun warmed the air and the frosty ground. The man on the road unbuttoned his coat.*  *The Sun grew slowly brighter and brighter. Soon the man felt so hot, he took off his coat and sat down in a shady spot.*  *"How did you do that?" said the Wind.*  *"It was easy," said the Sun. "I lit the day. Through gentleness I got my way."* |

**Have Students Create Dialogue to Elaborate the Opening Scene:**

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| The North Wind boasted of great strength. The Sun argued that there was great power in gentleness. |

**More Skeletons for Students to Explore:**

**The Tortoise and The Hare** ... an Aesop's Fable

There was once a rabbit who bragged that he could run faster than anyone. Slow and Steady, the turtle, challenged him to a race. Rabbit, thinking he would win, stopped alongside the road to rest and fell asleep. Slow and Steady kept on walking, step by step, and passing the sleeping rabbit, he crossed the finish line first.

**A Flock Of Birds** ... a fable from India

There was once a flock of birds that were peacefully pecking seeds under a tree. A hunter came along and threw a heavy net over them. He said, "Aha! Now I have my dinner!" All at once the birds began to flap their wings...together! Up, up, up they rose, taking the net with them. They came down on a tree and as the net snagged in the tree's branches, the birds flew out from under it to freedom. The hunter looked on in amazement, scratched his head and muttered, "As long as those birds cooperate like that with one another, I'll never be able to capture them! Each one of those birds is so small and yet, together they could lift the net!"

**The Honest Woodcutter** ... an Aesop's Fable

"Woe is me!" a poor woodcutter cried when he dropped his ax into a deep pond. A friendly spirit appeared before him with a silver ax and asked, "Is this yours?" "No," said the woodcutter. The spirit returned with a golden ax and asked, "Is this yours?" "No," the woodcutter said. Then the spirit appeared with his plain wooden ax. "That one is mine!" said the woodcutter happily. "You've been so honest," said the spirit, "take the silver and golden ax too." On the way home the woodcutter met a rich merchant. When the rich merchant heard the woodcutter's tale, he ran to the pond and dropped his own wooden ax in. "Woe is me!" he cried. The spirit appeared with a silver ax. "That one is mine!" the man said quickly. "You KNOW it is not," said the spirit and disappeared. The rich man's wooden ax stayed on the bottom of the pond