



Compound Adjectives

Área Lectura y Escritura

Resultados de aprendizaje

Conocer qué es un adjetivo compuesto.

Utilizar adjetivos compuestos.

Contenidos

1. General vocabulary words

Debo saber

- Simple present
- Present continuous
- Simple past
- Past continuous

Compound Adjectives

A compound adjective is an adjective which is made up of two parts and is usually written with a hyphen, e.g. **well – dressed**, **never – ending** and **shocking – pink**. Its meaning is usually clear from the words it combines. The second part of the compound adjective is frequently a present or past participle.

A large number of compound adjectives describe personal appearance. Here is a rather **far – fetched** description of a person starting from the head down.

Tom was a curly – haired, sun – tanned, blue – eyed, rosy – checked, thin lipped, broad – shouldered, left – handed, slim – hipped, long – legged, - flat – footed young man, wearing an open – necked shirt, brand – new tight fitting jeans and open – toed sandals.

Another set of compound adjectives describes a person's character. Here is a rather **light – hearted** description of a girl. The meanings are explained in brackets.

Melissa was **absent – minded** [forgetful], **easy – going** [relaxed], **good – tempered** [cheerful], **warm – hearted** [kind] and **quick – witted** [intelligent] if perhaps a little **big – headed** [proud of herself], **two – faced** [hypocritical], **self – centred** [egotistical] and **stuck up** [snobbish (colloquial)] at times.



Another special group of compound adjectives are those where the second part is a preposition. Some of these adjectives are listed below with a typical noun.

An **all – out** strike [total] a **burnt – out** car [nothing left in it after a fire]
A **broken – down** bus [it won't work] a **built – up** area [lots of building in it]
A **hard – up** student [poor] **cast – off** clothes [no longer wanted by the owner]
Worn – out shoes [can't be worn anymore; of people – exhausted]
A **drive – in** movie [you watch from your car] **well – off** bankers [wealthy]
A **run – down** area [in poor condition]

Here are some useful compound adjectives.

Air – conditioned	bullet – proof	cut – price	drip – dry
Duty – free	hand – made	interest – free	last – minute
Long – distance	Long – standing	off – peak	part – time
Record – breaking	remote – controlled	second – class	so – called
Sugar – free	time – consuming	top – secret	world – famous

You can vary the compound adjectives listed by changing one part of the adjective. For example, **curly – haired**, **long – haired**, **red – haired** and **straight – haired**; **first – hand** (knowledge), **first – class** (ticket) and **first – born** (child).



Exercises

1. Fill each of the blanks to form a new compound adjective. Use a dictionary if necessary.

a. _____

_____ - eyed

b. _____

_____ - proof

c. _____

_____ - minded

d. _____

_____ - necked

e. _____

_____ - made

f. _____

_____ - free

g. _____

_____ - headed



h. _____

_____ - hearted

2. Answer the question by using a compound adjective which is opposite in meaning to the adjective in the question. Note that the answer may or may not have the same second element as the adjective in the question.

Example: is he working full – time? *No, part – time.*

- a. Isn't she rather short – sighted?
- b. Is your brother well – off?
- c. Would you say the boy's well – behaved?
- d. Are her shoes high – heeled?
- e. Is this vase mass – produced?
- f. Do they live in south – east England?

3. Add a preposition from the list below to complete appropriate compound adjectives.

Back up out off on of

- a. She's been doing the same low – paid job for so long that she's really fed - _____ with it now.
- b. The two cars were involved in a head - _____ collision.
- c. He has a very casual, laid - _____ approach to life in general.
- d. It'll never happen again. It's definitely a one - _____ situation.-
- e. He's a smash hit here but he's unheard - _____ in my country.
- f. She bought a cut - _____ paper pattern and made her own dress.



Key

1. Fill each of the blanks to form a new compound adjective. Use a dictionary if necessary.
 - a. Brown / bright – eyed / wide
 - b. Fool / dust – proof / fire
 - c. Broad / narrow – minded / single
 - d. Polo / low – necked / high
 - e. British / ready – made / home
 - f. Tax / problem – free / care
 - g. Hot / pig – headed / bald
 - h. Kind / soft – hearted / hard

2. Answer the question by using a compound adjective which is opposite in meaning to the adjective in the question. Note that the answer may or may not have the same second element as the adjective in the question.
 - a. No, she's long – sighted.
 - b. No, he's hard – up (or badly – off).
 - c. No, he's badly – behaved.
 - d. No, they're flat – heeled / low – heeled.
 - e. No, it's hand – made.
 - f. No, in the north – west.

3. Add a preposition from the list below to complete appropriate compound adjectives.
 - a. Up
 - b. On
 - c. Back
 - d. Off
 - e. Of
 - f. Out