

## Word Classes in English Political Studies (Advanced Level)

### \*\*\*\* 3. Qualifiers \*\*\*\*

#### General features of a qualifier:

- gives much information about a noun (e.g. *black Friday, hard work, tough talks, steady growth, volatile market, ...*);
- no gender at all
  - → compare possessive adjectives on your own grammar
- singular and plural forms are always the same
  - → compare demonstrative and possessive adjectives on your own grammar
- when a "modifier", it has **attributive position** – that is, it always comes before the noun (→ the "modified"), but ... **pay attention to word-clusters such as *attorney general*<sup>1</sup> and *secretary-general* exemplifying the so called "anastrophe" or "inversion"**
  - → → → see Unit 2, a.y. 2024/2025 ("Advanced Tips on Qualifiers")
- higher, lower, same degree comparative;
- absolute, relative superlative;
- uses *very, really, highly* as well as other similar adverbs to make an adjective stronger → absolute superlative;

<sup>1</sup> The **Attorney General** (also **AG**) is the head of the US Department of Justice, concerned with legal affairs, and is the chief lawyer of the US government. The Attorney General is appointed by the President of the United States and takes office after confirmation by the US Senate. The Attorney General is subject to summary dismissal by the President and impeachment by Congress. The Attorney General is a member of the Cabinet and is seventh in the US presidential line of succession. **Italian equivalents:** "Procuratore Generale", "Ministro della Giustizia".

Compare **Civil Attorney** and **Criminal Attorney** (**Italian equivalents:** "civilista" and "penalista", respectively), which do not apply the anastrophe.

- **short and long adjectives** must be distinguished in order to build up higher degree comparative and superlative forms;
- short adjectives have a specific paradigm using the endings **-er** and **-est** respectively.

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## Predicative position of a qualifier:

- after the so-called *link verbs* – that is, verbs used to join an adjective or noun complement to a subject – adjectives have a predicative position;
- common examples of *link verbs* are: *to be, to seem, to look, to appear, to become, to taste, to sound, to feel, to get.*
  - She *looks* tired
  - I *feel* happy
  - It *sounds* good

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## Examples of short adjectives' paradigm:

short adj.	higher degree comp.	relative superlative
• cheap	cheaper (than)	<b>the cheapest</b>
• deadly	deadlier (than)*	<b>the deadliest</b>
• early	earlier (than)	<b>the earliest</b>
• healthy	healthier (than)*	<b>the healthiest*</b>
• high /haɪ/	higher (than)	<b>the highest</b>
• tough /tʌf/	tougher (than)	<b>the toughest</b>
• simple	simpler (than)*	<b>the simplest*</b>
• risky	riskier (than)*	<b>the riskiest*</b>

\* You can also use **more deadly (than)** and **the most deadly**; **more healthy (than)** and **the most healthy**; **more simple (than)** and **the most simple**; **more risky (than)** and **the most risky**.

## Examples of long adjectives' paradigm:

long adj.	higher degree comp.	relative superlative
• expensive	more expensive (than)	the most expensive
• difficult	more difficult (than)	the most difficult
• interesting	more interesting (than)	the most interesting
• volatile	more volatile (than)	the most volatile

By the way, the adjectival paradigm of a short qualifier can be described as **synthetic**; while the adjectival paradigm of a long qualifier can be described as **analytic** or **periphrastic**.

Please, pay attention to the following "irregular" adjectival paradigms:

- bad / ill, worse (than), the worst
- good, better (than), the best
- far, farther/further (than), the farthest/furthest
- little, less (than), the least
- late, later/latter (than), the latest/the last

- old, older/elder (than), the oldest/the eldest

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**WARNING:** the higher degree comparative *elder* plus the suffix *-ly*, thus applying the word-building process of **affixation**, gives origin to the collective noun **the elderly** (= old people or animals), such as in:

- "[...] Health experts have warned that vulnerable groups, such as **the elderly**, may lose out because they do not contribute as much to society as younger people [...]"<sup>2</sup>.

The same, but applying the word-building process of **conversion**, happens to some other adjectives such as *famous*, *poor*, *rich* and *young*:

- They provided food and shelter for **the poor**.
- It's a favourite resort for **the rich** and **famous**.
- It's a movie that will appeal to **the young**.

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**Let's talk of "further" and "at least" in details ... please, analyse and translate the following sentences:**

- "[...] Each committee specializes in specific issues and reviews legislation pertaining to those issues. Most House committees are **further** divided into subcommittees. [...]"<sup>3</sup>;
- "[...] It would be of interest to investigate **further** the net impact from **further** expansion of part time employment opportunities on labour force participation, in terms of the average hours worked per person of working age. [...]"<sup>4</sup>;

<sup>2</sup> source: *The Telegraph*, "Fears for **the elderly** under new NHS drugs policy", January 9, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> source: "Committees and Caucuses",  
<http://www.house.gov/capitano/issues/committees.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> source: "Summary and areas for further research",  
[http://www.pc.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/81081/15-chapter13.pdf](http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/81081/15-chapter13.pdf)

- "[...] A recent review of the academic literature on cyberbullying suggests – conservatively – that **at least** a quarter of school-age children are involved as either victim or perpetrator. [...]"<sup>5</sup>;
- "[...] Weeks before presidential elections in Afghanistan, children and foreigners among **at least** eight people killed in an attack on the Serena hotel in Kabul by four teenage gunmen [...]"<sup>6</sup>.

### Therefore, keep in mind that:

- *further* can also act as an independent adjective or adverb, thus meaning "additional" as in *a further 10%, further changes, further discussions, further information, without further delay*, and so on  
→ → → → see Unit 4, a.y. 2024/2025 ("Conversion and Functional Shift")
- together with "more" it forms the solid compound adverb *furthermore* (→ ITA = inoltre), a synonym of *moreover*  
→ → → → see Unit 3, a.y. 2024/2025 ("Compounding")
- *least* also behaves as an independent adverb as in the grammatical collocation *at least* → ITA = almeno  
→ → → → see Unit 4, a.y. 2024/2025 ("Conversion and Functional Shift")

<sup>5</sup> source: *The Economist*, "Secrets and lies", March 22, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> source: *The Telegraph*, "At least eight civilians killed in Kabul hotel attack ", March 21, 2014.