Word-classes in English for Political Studies

ADJECTIVES (QUALIFIERS)

- ✧ gives much information about a noun (e.g., *soft skills*, *white coffee*, *black Friday*, *hard work, tough talks*, *steady growth*);
- ✧ no gender at all;
- ✧ singular and plural forms are always the same;
- ✧ when a modifier, it has attributive position, that is always comes before the noun (modified), but … **pay attention to collocations such as *attorney general*[1] and *secretary-general*[2] (exemplifying the so called "anastrophe" or "inversion")** ➔ **see page 2**;
- ✧ uses the adverbs *very*, *really, highly, extremely* or *truly,* called *intensifiers*, to make an adjective stronger ➔ absolute superlative;

  It is **extremely important** to follow the directions exactly.

  Many people in rural areas are **extremely poor**.

  We have **very little** information at present on the incident.

  This is a **very important** part of our marketing.

  It's **really hard** to find a decent job these days.

  I'm **really sorry**.

  She had **a highly successful** career as a news reporter.

  The US car market is **highly competitive**.

- ✧ higher, lower, same degree comparative;

[1] Procuratore generale – In GB: **Attorney General** è il principale magistrato della Corona, nominato dal Primo Ministro. In USA: **Attorney General** è la più alta carica di funzionario di giustizia a livello federale, a capo del dipartimento di giustizia federale.
[2] Segretario generale.

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- ✧ absolute, relative superlative;
- ✧ short and long adjectives must be distinguished in order to build up higher degree comparative and superlative forms; in fact, short adjectives have a specific paradigm using the endings *-er* and *-est* respectively, whereas long adjectives are preceded by *more* and *the most* respectively[3].

Adjectives – Predicative position

- 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
    - He'*s getting* older

Some examples of anastrophe or inversion

- ✓ governor-general[4]
- ✓ Director general[5]
- ✓ Directorate general[6]
- ✓ an heir apparent[7]
- ✓ heir presumptive[8]

[3] Lower degree comparatives and same degree comparatives are formed regardless of the length of adjectives; they are always built up as follows: less + adj. (+ than)/ not so + adj. (+ as); as + adj. + as; e.g.: *less large (than); not so large (as); as large as; less difficult than; not so difficult (as); as difficult as*.

[4] Governatore generale, viceré che rappresenta la monarchia nelle antiche colonie e nel reame del Commonwealth.

[5] Direttore generale.

[6] Direzione generale, ciascuno dei 26 dicasteri in cui è strutturata la Commissione Europea.

[7] Erede legittimo.

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- ✓ president elect[9]
- ✓ body politic[10]
- ✓ fee simple[11]
- ✓ court martial[12]
- ✓ battle royal[13]
- ✓ air conditioning[14]

Pay attention to the **plural form** of such word-clusters or syntactic collocations, it is advisable to look up the dictionary: e.g. *attorney general*, pl. *attorneys general/attorney generals*; *secretary general*, pl. *secretaries general/secretary generals*.

[8] Erede presunto.
[9] Presidente eletto che non ha ancora assunto le funzioni.
[10] Lo Stato.
[11] Proprietà assoluta.
[12] Corte marziale.
[13] Lotta accanita.
[14] Aria condizionata.

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	Higher degree comparative	Superlative
short adj.		
✓ cheap	cheap**er** (than)	**the** cheap**est**
✓ early	earli**er** (than)	**the** earli**est**
✓ high	high**er** (than)	**the** high**est**
✓ tough	tough**er** (than)	**the** tough**est**
✓ simple	simpl**er** (than)**	**the** simpl**est****
✓ risky	riski**er** (than)***	**the** riski**est*****
✓ common	common**er** (than)****	**the** common**est******

** You can also use **more simple** and **the most simple.**
*** You can also use **more risky** and **the most risky**.
**** You can also use **more common** and **the most common**.

long adj.		
✓ expensive	**more** expensive (than)	**the most** expensive
✓ difficult	**more** difficult (than)	**the most** difficult
✓ profitable	**more** profitable (than)	**the most** profitable

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**
- ✓ **much, more, the most**
- ✓ **near, nearer (than), the nearest/the next**
- ✓ **old, older/elder (than), the oldest/the eldest** ➔ *elder* / *the eldest* gave origin to the collective noun ***the elderly*** (= old people or animals) such as in:

> "[…] Most of these protesting women work in Polish households caring for **the elderly** and sick, often with no formal contract, merely on the basis of verbal agreements with the adult children of those needing care."

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The same happens to:

- ✓ further, that can act as an independent adjective, thus meaning "additional / extra / other", as in *a further 10%*, *further changes*, *further discussions*, *further information*, *without further delay*; or an adverb, thus meaning "additionally / furthermore / moreover";
- ✓ least, that behaves as an independent adverb in the grammatical collocation *at least* (ITA = "almeno");
- ✓ former and latter in the pronominal expression *the former* (ITA = "il/la primo/a") / *the latter* (ITA = "il/la secondo/a"); when occurring alone, the latter stands for the Italian "quest'ultimo/a".

Look at the following examples:

- "[…] Each committee specializes in specific issues and reviews legislation pertaining to those issues. Most House committees are **further** divided into subcommittees. […]";
- "[…] 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. […]";
- "Iran's president visits those injured in the port explosion that killed **at least** 40 people".
- "**At least** 20 people were feared dead after a boat carrying hundreds of migrants to Europe capsized in stormy seas near the Italian island of Lampedusa, according to authorities. […]" (source: *The Guardian*, "At least 20 migrants feared dead after boat capsizes near Lampedusa", November 24, 2019);
- "Reporting is not espionage – but history shows that journalists doing **the former** get accused of **the latter"**.
- "Voltswagen or Volkswagen? Less of **the former**, more of **the latter**".

✓ Combined with "more", further forms the solid compound adverb *furthermore* (ITA = inoltre), a synonym of *moreover.*

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Order of adjectives

- When several adjectives come before a noun, they are usually put in a more or less **fixed order**.
- Adjectives which express **opinions** usually come **before** adjectives that simply **describe**.

OPINION ADJ. + FACT ADJ. + NOUN

- ✓ A comfortable big hotel
- ✓ A smart middle-aged manager
- ✓ Netflix is my favourite monthly-fee American streaming service.

Order of fact adjectives:

SIZE AGE SHAPE COLOUR ORIGIN MATERIAL PURPOSE

- ✓ A fat old white horse
  S A C
- ✓ A large XVIII-century round brown French wooden writing table
  S A SH C O M P
- ✓ A small new black Italian leather shopping bag
  S A C O M P

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