



Peter Pan

Adjectives from James M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*: In *Peter Pan*, which he wrote in 1904, James M. Barrie used adjectives such as *rakish*, *tedious*, *delectable*, *unwonted*, *deft*, *placid*, *amiable*, *elegant*, *tremulous*, *debonair*, *genial*, *cadaverous*, *profound*, *amorous*, *indomitable*, *plaintive*, *fastidious*, *exquisite*, *succulent*, *incisive*, *impassive*, *sanguinary*, *vivid*, *dodgy*, *sublime*, *subtle*, *malignant*, *phlegmatic*, *aloof*, *somber*, *nether*, *adept*, *inscrutable*, *bacchanalian*, and *strident* to convey the dreamlike, imaginative images of Never Never Land. Which of these adjectives do you not know? Which ones best describe Peter?

Adjectives from James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*: Look at these adjectives from Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon*. Hilton used interesting adjectives that modified his nouns gracefully. What is your favorite adjective in this sentence?

There was something rather **Elizabethan** about him — **his casual** versatility, **his good** looks, that **effervescent** combination of **mental** with **physical** activities.

A Classic Adjective: *Serene*. The adjective *serene* has been an important modifier in English and American literature, giving a twist to hundreds of nouns. Coming from a Greek word meaning dry, *serene* refers to things that are calm, peaceful, and clear, such as a blue sky. Milton referred to serene angels in *Paradise Lost*, Daniel Defoe described serene weather in *Robinson Crusoe*, and in *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley's monster observed that "A serene sky and verdant fields filled me with ecstasy." In *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison wrote that "he seemed too serene and too far away." In Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, he described the moon as "serene and detached in a cloudless sky." In his classic novel *Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain described how we "heard the stony-hearted liar reel off his serene statement."

**We "heard the stony-hearted liar
reel off his serene statement."**



From Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*:

He had a long chin and big, rather prominent teeth.

Parts of Speech	pron.	v.	adj.	adj.	n.	conj.	adj.	adv.	adj.	n.
Parts of Sentence	subj.	AVP			D.O.					D.O.
Phrases	no phrases									
Clauses	-----one independent clause----- a simple declarative sentence									

Huxley's sentence has a cold objectivity that is brought by the adjectives. Notice how innocuous the sentence is if we leave out the modifiers: He had a chin and teeth! Adjectives can transform a sentence.

The sentence is interesting because it has a compound direct object; we will study direct objects in the chapter on parts of sentence. Notice that there is no comma before the conjunction *and*; this is a compound direct object, and normal compounds do not use commas to separate their connected items.

Notice that *had* is an action verb; it does not link. If you *have* a tooth, that does not mean that you *are* a tooth.

