

## Activity Type

Vocabulary Exercises:  
forming words, matching  
gap-fill,

Speaking Activity:  
describing things from  
prompts (pair work)

## Focus

Compound adjectives

## Aim

To learn how to form and  
use compound adjectives.

## Preparation

Make one copy of the  
two-page worksheet for  
each student.

## Level

Intermediate (B1)

## Time

30 minutes

## Introduction

This compound adjectives worksheet helps you to teach your students how to form and use compound adjectives.

## Procedure

Give each student a copy of the two-page worksheet.

Read through the introduction and review the different ways to form compound adjectives together as a class.

The students then describe the nouns in the first exercise using compound adjectives. Go through the first one as an example, i.e. a ten-minute walk.

### Exercise A - Answer key

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. a ten-minute walk       | 11. a mouth-watering dessert        |
| 2. a twelve-story building | 12. a strong-willed woman           |
| 3. a five-year-old boy     | 13. slow-moving traffic             |
| 4. a thirty-page report    | 14. a good-looking man              |
| 5. high-spirited students  | 15. long-lasting medicine           |
| 6. well-behaved children   | 16. an open-minded person           |
| 7. a green-eyed monster    | 17. a brightly-lit room             |
| 8. a short-haired man      | 18. a thought-provoking documentary |
| 9. a kind-hearted lady     | 19. a world-famous museum           |
| 10. a time-saving app      | 20. fat-free cookies                |

The students then move on to match words together to form 12 compound adjectives.

### Exercise B - Answer key

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 h. part-time        | 7 i. five-star        |
| 2 j. well-known       | 8 a. far-reaching     |
| 3 k. middle-aged      | 9 g. forward-thinking |
| 4 f. English-speaking | 10 b. ice-cold        |
| 5 l. narrow-minded    | 11 e. last-minute     |
| 6 d. old-fashioned    | 12 c. home-made       |

Next, the students use the compound adjectives to complete sentences.

### Exercise C - Answer key

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ice-cold         | 7. home-made         |
| 2. old-fashioned    | 8. part-time         |
| 3. far-reaching     | 9. last-minute       |
| 4. forward-thinking | 10. well-known       |
| 5. middle-aged      | 11. English-speaking |
| 6. narrow-minded    | 12. five-star        |

Afterward, the students work with a partner and practice describing themselves and others using compound adjectives. Finally, review the students' descriptions together as a class and give feedback.

A compound adjective is an adjective that contains two or more words. Generally, we put a hyphen between the words when we want them to act as a single adjective before a noun.

| Compound Adjectives            | Examples:  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Number + Noun                  | A break that takes ten minutes is a <b>ten-minute</b> break.           |
| Adjective + Noun               | A bike ride over a long distance is a <b>long-distance</b> bike ride.  |
| Adjective + Present Participle | A person who works hard is a <b>hard-working</b> person.               |
| Noun + Present Participle      | An athlete who breaks records is a <b>record-breaking</b> athlete.     |
| Noun + Adjective               | A room that is free from smoke is a <b>smoke-free</b> room.            |
| Noun + Past Participle         | An engine cooled by water is a <b>water-cooled</b> engine.             |
| Adjective + Past Participle    | A man with a bad temper is a <b>bad-tempered</b> man.                  |
| Adverb + Past Participle       | A city that has a dense population is a <b>densely-populated</b> city. |

**A. Describe the nouns using compound adjectives.**

1. a walk that takes ten minutes ..... *a ten-minute walk* .....
2. a building that has twelve stories .....
3. a boy who is five years old .....
4. a report that is thirty pages long .....
5. students in high spirits .....
6. children who behave well .....
7. a monster with green eyes .....
8. a man who has short hair .....
9. a lady with a kind heart .....
10. an app that saves time .....
11. a dessert that makes your mouth water .....
12. a woman who has a strong will .....
13. traffic that moves slowly .....
14. a man who looks good .....
15. medicine that lasts a long time .....
16. a person who has an open mind .....
17. a room that has bright lights .....
18. a documentary that provokes thinking .....
19. a museum that is famous throughout the world .....
20. cookies that are free from fat .....

**B. Match the words together to form 12 compound adjectives.**



1. part .....
2. well .....
3. middle .....
4. English .....
5. narrow .....
6. old .....
7. five .....
8. far .....
9. forward .....
10. ice .....
11. last .....
12. home .....

- a. reaching
- b. cold
- c. made
- d. fashioned
- e. minute
- f. speaking
- g. thinking
- h. time
- i. star
- j. known
- k. aged
- l. minded



**C. Use the compound adjectives in Exercise B to complete the sentences.**

1. There's nothing better than drinking an ..... beer on a hot summer day.
2. There are some traditional farmers left who still make cheese the ..... way.
3. Tourism has had ..... effects on Thailand's economy.
4. Some ..... politicians are proposing reforms to the educational system.
5. A ..... person is between 45 and 65 years old.
6. I don't like ..... people who are intolerant of new ideas.
7. .... jam is usually better than the kinds you buy in the shops.
8. Many students get a ..... job if they are not eligible for a loan.
9. A ..... goal by England put them through to the World Cup Final.
10. It's a ..... fact that smoking can cause lung cancer.
11. Lessons with ..... instructors can be booked in the language school.
12. Sydney has many ..... hotels and luxurious resorts.

**D. Now, work with a partner. Talk about the following things:**

1. Describe yourself using compound adjectives. Does your partner agree with you?
2. Use compound adjectives to describe someone in the class. Can your partner guess who it is?
3. Discuss which compound adjectives you would use to describe a good and bad friend.