

Writing Better Sentences: Noun Modifiers

A modifier is a word (or a group of words) that talks about another word. Modifiers give more information.

Adjectives

Adjectives are modifiers. They describe people, places and things. For example:

- There is a red book on the big table.

In this sentence, there are two modifiers: RED and BIG.

Noun Modifiers

A noun can talk about another noun. Here is an example:

- This is a history book.

BOOK is the main noun. It is the important thing in the sentence. The noun HISTORY tells us something about the book.

Understanding noun modifiers helps students write better sentences. The sentences use fewer words to say the same idea. Look at this example:

- It's a spoon made from metal.
- It's a **metal** spoon.

The second sentence is better. It tells us about the spoon, but uses fewer words.

About Noun Modifiers

Here are a couple of notes about noun modifiers.

Plural forms of noun modifiers are usually (but not always) changed to the single form. Notice in this example, the word TOMATO is the modifier; SOUP is the main noun.

- It's really hard to buy soup made from **tomatoes** in this country.
- It's really hard to buy **tomato** soup in this country.

When the noun modifier has a number, we usually write it with a hyphen.

- I have a contract at the bank for **seven months**.
- I have a **seven-month** contract at the bank.

Practice Questions

Rewrite the sentences by putting the correct noun modifier in front of the main noun.

1. It's a knife for eating steak.
2. I walked across a bridge made from rope.
3. My mother just bought a beautiful wooden table for the kitchen.
4. I stayed home all weekend reading books from the library.
5. I will attend a tourism workshop that lasts 2 days next weekend.
6. After graduating from university, I want to work for a manufacturer of toys.
7. As she walked through the beautiful Buddhist temple, she saw many walls made from stone.
8. I'm allergic to dairy products, so I drink milk made from soy.
9. A bomb inside a car exploded outside a street market in Turkey.
10. This is a stadium for playing soccer.
11. One of the main challenges facing electric cars is the life of the battery.
12. Almost every house in Korea has a cooker for rice.

Answers

1. It's a knife for eating steak.
It's a steak knife.
2. I walked across a bridge made from rope.
I walked across a rope bridge.
3. My mother just bought a beautiful wooden table for the kitchen.
My mother just bought a beautiful wooden kitchen table.
4. I stayed home all weekend reading books from the library.
I stayed home all weekend reading library books.
5. I will attend a tourism workshop that lasts 2 days next weekend.
I will attend a two-day tourism workshop next weekend.
6. After graduating from university, I want to work for a manufacturer of toys.
After graduating from university, I want to work for a toy manufacturer.
7. As she walked through the beautiful Buddhist temple, she saw many walls made from stone.
As she walked through the beautiful Buddhist temple, she saw many stone walls.
8. I'm allergic to dairy products, so I drink milk made from soy.
I'm allergic to dairy products, so I drink soy milk.
9. A bomb inside a car exploded outside a street market in Turkey.
A car bomb exploded outside a street market in Turkey.
10. This is a stadium for playing soccer.
This is a soccer stadium.
11. One of the main challenges facing electric cars is the life of the battery.
One of the main challenges facing electric cars is battery life.
12. Almost every house in Korea has a cooker for rice.
Almost every house in Korea has a rice cooker.