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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Vocabulary

### Adjective order



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary with me Finn...

**Catherine**

And me Catherine. And today's show is all about adjective order.

**Finn**

Adjectives – yes, those useful words we use to describe things. We'll look at what adjective order is – and how to use it.

**Catherine**

There'll be a nice, easy quiz...

**Finn**

And we'll leave you with a small, but meaningful tip for learning vocabulary.

**Catherine**

So: let's start off with Nikki and Joe who are talking in a furniture shop.

**Finn**

Here's a question to think about while you listen: what did Nikki's grandparents have?

**Catherine**

What did Nikki's grandparents have? Let's find out.

**INSERT**

**Nikki**

*Joe! Come and sit on this sofa!*

**Joe**

*It's really uncomfortable.*

**Nikki**

*I know... but I've always wanted a big, old, leather sofa. My grandparents had one when I was little.*

**Joe**

*That's not a good reason to buy a horrible sofa! The one with the stripy blue cotton cushions looks a lot nicer.*

**Nikki**

*Maybe... Ooh what's this... Look, a beautiful green and blue Turkish kilim!*

**Joe**

*Kilim? Oh, a little carpet. Sofas first, Nikki.*

**Finn**

So, that's Joe and Nikki. And we asked you: what did Nikki's grandparents have?

**Catherine**

And the answer is: they had *a big, old, leather sofa*.

**Finn**

That's right. And the phrase *a big, old, leather sofa* is our first example of **adjective order**.

**Catherine**

Now, when we use two or more adjectives together to describe a noun, the order we put them in is important. For example, we don't usually say *an old, leather, big sofa*.

**Finn**

So for our sofa example, first it's size - so *big*, then age - *old*, and then material - *leather*. *A big, old, leather sofa*.

**Catherine**

So that's size, age, and material type. And each new adjective in the list needs to go in the right place.

**Finn**

For example, colour goes between age and material type. So we can say: *a big, old, red, leather sofa*.

**Catherine**

Now some people find it difficult to remember the adjective order...

**Finn**

But there's a good tip which is: the adjective with the meaning most closely related to the noun goes nearest to it.

**Catherine**

And in our example, the material type – *leather* – is most closely connected to the noun. *Big, old* and *red* are more general. So: *big, old, red, leather sofa*. Another one please, Finn?

**Finn**

*Blue stripy cotton cushions.*

**Catherine**

That's colour – *blue*, quality - *stripy*, and material type - *cotton*. *Blue stripy cotton cushions.*

**Finn**

And Nikki got very excited about a *beautiful green and blue Turkish kilim*.

**Catherine**

Did she? I can understand that.

**Finn**

Yes. So it's a beautiful green and blue Turkish kilim. There we had opinion: beautiful, and then colours: green and blue, we had two colours joined by 'and', and then country: Turkish.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Finn**

And we're talking about adjective order. And you might have noticed that we used some adjectives at the beginning of the programme.

**Catherine**

We had *nice, easy quiz* – with two opinion adjectives. *Easy* has a closer connection to the noun *quiz* than *nice*. So we put *easy* next to the noun. *A nice, easy quiz.*

**Finn**

*A nice, easy quiz.* And another one: *a small but meaningful tip.*

**Catherine**

We can put 'but' between adjectives when they seem a bit unusual next to each other. Like *small, but meaningful.*

**Finn**

*Strange, but true*, eh, Catherine?

**Catherine**

Indeed. Nothing strange about vocabulary. So let's hear today's examples again. First, size, age, colour, and material.

**Finn**

*Big, old, red, leather sofa.*

**Catherine**

And *leather* has the strongest connection to the noun. Next, colour, quality, and material.

**Finn**

*Blue stripy cotton cushions.*

**Catherine**

And opinion, colour, and country.

**Finn**

*Beautiful green and blue Turkish kilim.*

**Catherine**

Right. And now it's quiz time. Put these adjectives in the right order. Number 1. *I love my ... old, smelly, big dog.*

**Finn**

Right: *I love my big, old, smelly dog.*

**Catherine**

Good. Number 2. *This is a ... Moroccan, simple, but delicious recipe.*

**Finn**

*This is a simple, but delicious, Moroccan recipe.*

**Catherine**

Very good. And that brings us almost to the end of the programme.

**Finn**

But before we go, here's that tip we promised you, and it's a game this time. Now, this is a game to play with a friend to practise describing things. Think of a noun but don't tell your friend what it is. Then give adjective clues to help them guess the noun.

**Catherine**

Good game. Do you want to play?

**Finn**

Let's give it a go.

## Catherine

Brilliant. There's more about this at [www.bbclearningenglish.com](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

## Both

Goodbye!

## Vocabulary points to take away

1 opinion	2 size	3 age	4 colour	5 quality	6 origin	7 material type	Noun
	<i>big</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>red</i>			<i>leather</i>	<i>sofa</i>
			<i>blue</i>	<i>stripy</i>		<i>cotton</i>	<i>cushions</i>
<i>beautiful</i>			<i>green and blue</i>		<i>Turkish</i>		<i>kilim</i>
	<i>big</i>	<i>old</i>		<i>smelly</i>			<i>dog</i>
<i>lovely</i>			<i>pink and white</i>			<i>silk</i>	<i>curtains</i>
				<i>simple but delicious</i>	<i>Moroccan</i>		<i>recipe</i>
<i>nice easy</i>							<i>quiz</i>
	<i>small but meaningful</i>						<i>tip</i>
<i>strange but true</i>							<i>fact</i>
<i>helpful</i>					<i>English</i>		<i>tip</i>