

Gradable and Non-gradable Adjectives

Practice Worksheet with Answer Key

Name: _____

Date: _____

Level: B2-C1

Quick reminder

Gradable adjectives work with modifiers such as very, quite, rather, a bit and extremely. Non-gradable adjectives are stronger or more absolute, so they usually work with absolutely, completely, totally and utterly.

Exercise 1 — Sort the adjectives

Write G for gradable and NG for non-gradable.

1. old ____
2. furious ____
3. freezing ____
4. interesting ____
5. spotless ____
6. tired ____
7. huge ____
8. difficult ____
9. delighted ____
10. dirty ____
11. exhausted ____
12. perfect ____
13. angry ____
14. tiny ____
15. wet ____
16. terrified ____

Exercise 2 — Choose the best modifier

Underline or circle the best option.

1. The children were (very / absolutely) thrilled by the surprise.
2. It was (slightly / absolutely) impossible to open the door.
3. We felt (very / totally) tired after the journey.
4. The water was (a bit / completely) cold, so we decided not to swim.
5. Her flat was (very / absolutely) spotless.
6. I was (really / absolutely) interested in what he was saying.
7. The instructions were (fairly / utterly) confusing.
8. By the time we got home, we were (very / completely) soaked.

Exercise 3 — Replace the adjective

Rewrite each sentence using a stronger non-gradable adjective from the box.

fascinating • freezing • hilarious • furious • exhausted • spotless • terrified

1. The documentary was very interesting. _____
2. It was very cold in the classroom. _____
3. Everybody was very tired after the match. _____
4. Her grandfather was very angry when he saw the damage. _____
5. The room was very clean when the guests arrived. _____
6. I was very scared when the lights suddenly went out. _____

Exercise 4 — Correct the mistakes

Each sentence contains one mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. The exam was absolutely difficult.

2. We were very exhausted after hiking for six hours.

3. Her answer was completely good.

4. It is a bit impossible to finish this by tonight.

5. The hotel room was very spotless.

6. I was absolutely happy with my result.

Exercise 5 — Complete the sentences

Complete each sentence with a suitable adjective or modifier. More than one answer may be possible.

1. The view from the mountain was absolutely _____.
2. I felt rather _____ before the speaking exam, but I calmed down later.
3. By the end of the day, we were completely _____.
4. The soup is a bit _____. Could you warm it up?
5. Their house is old, but the garden is absolutely _____.
6. The film was so funny that the whole cinema was _____.
7. My little niece was _____ delighted to see the puppy.
8. The road was _____ narrow, so the bus moved very slowly.

Exercise 6 — Underline the better option

Choose the sentence that sounds more natural in standard English.

1. a) It was very freezing outside. b) It was absolutely freezing outside.
2. a) She was very pleased with the gift. b) She was absolutely pleased with the gift.
3. a) The room was completely silent. b) The room was very silent.
4. a) We felt quite tired after work. b) We felt totally tired after work.
5. a) It was a bit enormous for such a small room. b) It was absolutely enormous for such a small room.
6. a) The instructions were fairly clear. b) The instructions were utterly clear.

Exercise 7 — Exam-style writing upgrade

Rewrite the paragraph below. Replace the weak combinations with stronger, more natural alternatives.

Last weekend, we visited a very old castle on the coast. The weather was very cold, and by the time we arrived, we were very tired. Inside, we saw a very interesting exhibition about local history. The guide was very good, and the rooms were very clean. Although I was very scared at first because the place looked dark and mysterious, I ended up loving it.

Answer Key

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Exercise 1

1. G
2. NG
3. NG
4. G
5. NG
6. G
7. NG
8. G
9. NG
10. G
11. NG
12. NG
13. G
14. NG
15. G
16. NG

Exercise 2

1. absolutely
2. absolutely
3. very
4. a bit
5. absolutely
6. really
7. fairly
8. completely

Exercise 3

1. The documentary was absolutely fascinating.
2. It was absolutely freezing in the classroom.
3. Everybody was absolutely exhausted after the match.
4. Her grandfather was absolutely furious when he saw the damage.
5. The room was absolutely spotless when the guests arrived.
6. I was absolutely terrified when the lights suddenly went out.

Exercise 4

1. The exam was very difficult.
2. We were completely / absolutely exhausted after hiking for six hours.
3. Her answer was very good / excellent.
4. It is completely / absolutely impossible to finish this by tonight.
5. The hotel room was absolutely spotless.
6. I was very happy / really happy with my result.

Exercise 5

1. stunning / beautiful / breathtaking
2. nervous / anxious / worried
3. exhausted / worn out
4. cold
5. beautiful / spotless / lovely (depending on interpretation)
6. laughing / in hysterics / in stitches
7. absolutely / completely / really
8. extremely / rather / incredibly

Exercise 6

1. b
2. a
3. a
4. a
5. b
6. a

Exercise 7 — Sample upgraded paragraph

Last weekend, we visited an ancient castle on the coast. The weather was absolutely freezing, and by the time we arrived, we were completely exhausted. Inside, we saw a fascinating exhibition about local history. The guide was excellent, and the rooms were absolutely spotless. Although I was rather scared at first because the place looked dark and mysterious, I ended up loving it.

Teaching note

Exercise 5 and Exercise 7 allow a range of sensible answers. Accept alternatives if the modifier–adjective combination is natural and the meaning is appropriate.