

*Painting with Parts of Speech*  
*Adjectives Out of Order*



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Adapted from Harry Noden's *Image Grammar* (1999), Don and Jenny Killgallon's *Grammar for Middle School* (2006), and Constance Weaver's *The Grammar Plan Book* (2007)



**Compare** and **contrast** the sentences below.

The swan glided across the water.

The beautiful, graceful swan glided across the water.

The swan, beautiful and graceful, glided across the water.



To “**paint**” with **adjectives out of order**, simply move adjectives from before a noun, placing them after the noun they modify instead.

**Adjectives out of order:** adjectives  
AFTER the noun they describe

**Examples:**

The puppy, playful and energetic,  
chased the butterfly.

The little girl, happy to see her grandfather,  
leaped into his arms and hugged him.

Copy the  
definition and  
examples in  
your Writer's  
Notebook (WN)



**Sentence with no adjectives:**

The bull bucked beneath the cowboy.

**Sentence with adjectives:**

The mean and massive bull bucked beneath the cowboy.

**Sentence with adjectives out of order:**

The bull, mean and massive, bucked beneath the cowboy.



**Adjectives out of order can *interrupt* a sentence:**

Lisa, short and slender, smiled at William.

**Adjectives out of order can *end* a sentence:**

Lisa smiled at William, built and bronze.



**Adjectives out of order are always set off by punctuation, usually commas:**

The sun, bright and golden, warmed her skin.



## **Examples of adjectives out of order from literature:**

He ceased, but at once Boromir stood up, tall and proud, before them.

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*



## **Examples of adjectives out of order from literature:**

Mosquitoes completely filled the air above us, hovering there, skinny, black, and silent.

—Edward Bloor, *Tangerine*





**Examples of adjectives out of order from literature:**

I held a long, sharp blade, ancient and silver,  
crusted in dried, blackened blood.

—Stephenie Meyer, *Eclipse*



**Examples of adjectives out of order from literature:**

She shook her head, foggy from sleep and disbelief.

—Scott Westerfeld, *Uglies*



## **Examples of adjectives out of order from literature:**

Hermione let out a great sigh and Harry, amazed, saw that she was smiling, the very last thing he felt like doing.

—J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*



**Identify** adjectives out of order from literature:

It was something he had never tasted before,  
very sweet and foamy and creamy, and it  
warmed him right down to his toes.

—C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*



**Identify** adjectives out of order from literature:

He grabbed the end of the rope and swung out toward the other bank with a kind of wild exhilaration and landed gently on his feet, taller and stronger and wiser in that mysterious land.

—Katherine Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*



**Identify** adjectives out of order from literature:

He had seen a birthday party, with one child singled out and celebrated on his day, so that now he understood the joy of being an individual, special and unique and proud.

—Lois Lowry, *The Giver*



**Arrange adjectives out of order from literature:**

Create a sentence with the sentence strips. Write the sentence, punctuating correctly, and underline and label the adjectives out of order.

and he was suddenly the Jacob I missed the most

grinned *my* grin

Jacob

sunny and warm



## **Arrange** adjectives out of order from literature:

Create a sentence with the sentence strips. Write the sentence, punctuating correctly, and underline and label the adjectives out of order.

Jacob grinned *my* grin, and he was suddenly  
the Jacob I missed the most, sunny and warm.  
—Stephenie Meyer, *Eclipse*





## **Imitate** adjectives out of order from literature:

Write a sentence about a different subject, imitating the structure of the model sentence. Underline and label the adjectives out of order.

It was a small church, real old and spooky and spiderwebby.

—S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*



## **Combine with adjectives out of order:**

Combine the sentences below to make one sentence with adjectives out of order. Underline and label the adjectives out of order.

I call Rue's name in a hushed whisper and the eyes appear at once.

+

The eyes are wide and alert.

=



## Combine with adjectives out of order:

Combine the sentences below to make one sentence with adjectives out of order. Underline and label the adjectives out of order.

I call Rue's name in a hushed whisper and the eyes appear at once.

+

The eyes are wide and alert.

=

I call Rue's name in a hushed whisper and the eyes appear, wide and alert, at once.

—Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*



## **Combine** with adjectives out of order:

Combine the sentences below to make one sentence with adjectives out of order. Underline and label the adjectives out of order.

There was a brisk wind coming off the waves.

+

The wind was cool and briny.

=



## Combine with adjectives out of order:

Combine the sentences below to make one sentence with adjectives out of order. Underline and label the adjectives out of order.

There was a brisk wind coming off the waves.

+

The wind was cool and briny.

=

There was a brisk wind coming off the waves,  
cool and briny.

—Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight*



**Expand with adjectives out of order:**

Write the sentence below, filling in the blanks with adjectives out of order. Underline and label each adjective out of order.

She was buying a soft pretzel — \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ — at Auntie Anne's.

—Jerry Spinelli, *Stargirl*



**Expand with adjectives out of order:**

Write the sentence below, filling in the blanks with adjectives out of order. Underline and label each adjective out of order.

She was buying a soft pretzel — \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ — at Auntie Anne's.

—Jerry Spinelli, *Stargirl*

She was buying a soft pretzel — regular, salted  
— at Auntie Anne's.

—Jerry Spinelli, *Stargirl*

## Painting with Parts of Speech: Adjectives Out of Order

In your  
WN



### **Expand** with adjectives out of order:

Write the sentence below, filling in the blanks with adjectives out of order. Underline and label each adjective out of order.

Ragged clouds were hurrying overhead, \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_.

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*





**Expand with adjectives out of order:**

Write the sentence below, filling in the blanks with adjectives out of order. Underline and label each adjective out of order.

Ragged clouds were hurrying overhead, \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_.

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Ragged clouds were hurrying overhead, dark  
and low.

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

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### **Compose with adjectives out of order:**

In response to the following picture prompts, write your own sentences with adjectives out of order. Underline and label each adjective out of order.











**Revise** for adjectives out of order:

In a piece of your own writing, find two places where you can add details and sentence variety with adjectives out of order. Mark your revisions on your most recent draft.