

An Aidiacht Comhrá

Milis



Sealraíocht an Oileáin Úir
Cnuasac Eazarta / Non-Lending

An Aidiacht

An adjective is a part of speech related to a noun. In languages such as English, the adjective is an absolute form, that is, it is indeclinable, independent of the noun to which it is linked and having no plural form, .

In English, the adjective normally precedes the noun. Thus we have **the white house**, **some dangerous chemicals**. Numerals likewise precede the noun to which they refer: **five days in May**, **the fifth estate**.

Adjectives may be used as predicate, that is, following a copulative verb such as 'is', 'look', 'seem', 'become', 'turn' and the like: **the weather is fine**, **the kids seem tired**, **the students became worried**, **my hands turned blue from the cold**.

The adjective in Irish, unlike its English counterpart, is subject to inflection, agreeing with its noun in gender, number and case when used attributively. As well, there are several ways in which the adjective can be declined according to the ending of the word. This booklet will present the basic morphology of the Irish adjective and some exercises to practice the use of these forms.

The Predicate Adjective

The adjective is used as predicate with the different forms of the verbs **is** and **tá**. In these cases, the adjective is absolute in form, that is, it does not agree with the noun in gender, number or case.

Study the following examples:

Tá Brian tuirseach

Brian is tired

Tá an aimsir fuar

The weather is cold

Tá na gardaí feargach

The policemen are angry

Tá na bóithre contúirteach

The roads are dangerous

Is breá an lá é

It's a nice day

Is deas an cailín í

It's [She's] a pretty girl

Is fíor na scéalta iad

They are true stories

Is mór an trua é

It's a great pity

Is saibhir na mná iad

They're rich women

In the above examples, the adjective is used as predicate and consequently is absolute in form and does not agree in gender or number with the noun to which it is linked.

When the copulative verb **is** is used in the past tense or in reported speech, the adjective following the verb is lenited:

Ba bhreá an lá é

It was a nice day

Níor bhreá an lá é

It wasn't a nice day

Dúirt sé gur bhreá an lá é

He said it was an nice day

Dúirt sí nár bhreá an lá é

She said it wasn't a nice day

Cleachtadh

Cuir Gaeilge air seo:

1. The trees are green.
2. They are important novels.
3. It's dangerous work.
4. The bicycles are new.
5. The boxes are full.
6. The answers are correct.
7. It's a false impression.
8. The horse is young and lively.
9. The field is wide.

10. The books are expensive.
11. It's an expensive book.
12. The roads are slippery.
13. The exams are easy.
14. They're easy exams.
15. They are loyal friends.
16. The food is tasty.
17. It's healthy food.
18. The dog is black.
19. It's a black dog.
20. He's Japanese.
21. She's Russian.
22. We are Canadian.
23. They are American.
24. They are ill.
25. The dress is old.
26. It's an old dress.
27. Wood is hard.
28. The trees are green
29. The work is complicated
30. It's complicated work

Re-do the above exercise putting the sentences into the past tense.

Possessive Adjectives and Numbers

There are two kinds of adjectives which routinely precede the noun to which they are linked, the possessive adjectives and numbers, both cardinal and ordinal.

The *possessive adjectives* [an *aidiacht shealbhach*] are **mo, do, a, a, ár, bhur, a**. [my, your, his, her, our, your, their].

Mo, do, a [his] cause *lenition* in the following noun, **a** [her] does not affect a consonant but requires that an **h-** be prefixed to a words beginning with a vowel. The three plural forms cause *eclipsis* in the following consonant. Remember that the eclipsis of a vowel is a prefixed **n-**.

Cleachtadh

Prefix each of the above possessive adjectives to the words which follow making all the necessary changes:

fear céile	bean chéile	madra
máthair	uimhir fóin	fóin
geansaí	mamó	carr
capall	bord	árasán
peann	seoladh	teach
rothar	clann	uncail
hata	deartháir	leabhar
deirfiúir	cóta	casóg

tuismitheoirí	cathaoir	aintín
peata	múinteoir	mac
seomra	áthair	bróga
fiacail	ordóg	cara
bronntanas	bus	cairde
dinnéar	bricfeasta	cónaí
dúiseacht	seasamh	tost
suí	luí	codladh

Cuir Gaeilge air seo:

1. We clean our house every evening.
2. He ate his breakfast early.
3. She's living downtown now.
4. Have you seen our apartment?
5. They lost their keys.
6. I usually keep quiet in class.
7. Where are your (pl) sandwiches?
8. They put their books in their schoolbags.
9. Are his copybooks over there?
10. She lost her watch yesterday.
11. My aunt arrived yesterday evening.
12. These are my sons.
13. My son is an engineer.
14. My daughter is banker.
15. We were asleep when you phoned.
16. Were you awake at midnight?
17. More tea? -- I've had enough, thanks.
18. Did they buy their coats at Walmart?
19. My mother is in the hospital.
20. My wife has the car today.

Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers

Both cardinal (one, two, three etc.) and ordinal (first, second, third etc.) numbers precede the noun.

The numbers 1-6 cause **lenition** of the initial consonant while the numbers 7-10 cause **eclipsis**.

Study these examples:

(cardinal numbers - **na bunuimhreacha**)

aon chat amháin

dhá chat

trí chat

ceithre chat

cúig chat

sé chat

seacht gcát

ocht gcát

naoi gcát

deich gcát

From 11-19, the noun is sandwiched between the two parts of the number and the above rules for lenition and eclipsis continue to apply:

aon chat déag

dhá chat déag

sé chat déag

naoi gcát déag

After **fiche**, the numbers may be taken as a fixed

whole without lenition or eclipsis of the following noun but the sandwiching may still occur, in which case, the rules continue to apply. For example:

cat is fiche	
dhá chat is fiche	fiche a dó cat
ocht gcát is fiche	fiche a hocht cat

To count people, you must use the personal numbers:

duine, beirt, triúr, ceathrar, cúigear, seisear, seachtar, ochtar, naonúr, deichniúr, dáréag

Of these, only **beirt** causes lenition in the following word. Above twelve, the regular numbers are used.

Cleachtadh

Scríobh i bhfocail gan na lúibíní:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 1 (carr) | 11. 7 (buachaill) |
| 2. 11 (iasc) | 12. 5 (fear) |
| 3. 3 (bróg) | 13. 10 (madra) |
| 4. 9 (asal) | 14. 70 (coipleabhar) |
| 5. 10 (leabhar) | 15. 33 (capall) |
| 6. 26 (fuinneog) | 16. 58 (cathaoir) |
| 7. 38 (geata) | 17. 225 (leathanach) |
| 8. 42 (peann) | 18. 89 (dollar) |
| 9. 5 (rang) | 19. 3 (bord) |
| 10. 9 (bothar) | 20. 15 (bád) |

Ordinal Numbers - Na hOrduimhreacha

The ordinal numbers end in -ú, except for 'first' and 'second'.

an chéad chat
an dara [dóu] cat
an tríú cat
an ceathrú cat
an cúigiú cat
an séú cat
an seachtú cat
an t-ochtú cat
an naoú cat
an deichiú cat
an t-aonú cat déag
an dóú [dara] cat déag
an tríú cat déag
an fichiú cat
an tríochadú cat
an daicheadú cat
an caogadú cat
an seascadú cat
an seachtódú cat
an t-ochtódú cat
an nóchadú cat
an céadú cat

Cleachtadh

Cuir Gaeilge air seo:

1. The seventh day of May
2. The fifty first dragon
3. The third house
4. A fourth time
5. The next road
6. The tenth week
7. The twelfth month
8. The fifth year
9. The sixth door
10. The ninth elevator

A small number of other adjectives also precede the noun. You can find a complete list of these adjectives in any standard grammar of Irish, such as the Christian Brothers' Grammar.

Attributive Adjectives

Attributive adjectives follow the noun to which they are linked. If the noun is feminine, the initial consonant of the adjective is lenited. If the word is masculine and singular, there is no change.

an fear dathúil - the handsome man
an ghruaig fhionn - the fair hair

Should there be several attributive adjectives linked to the same noun, no connecting word is required between the adjectives and lenition applies to all.

gruaig fhada, fhionn, chatach
long, fair, curly hair

When there is a list of adjectives following a noun, first place is given to the most defining of the adjectives, that is, the feature which best characterizes the noun.

Consequently, a descriptive adjective would precede a demonstrative:

an teach mór sin -- that big house
an geata bán úd eile -- that other white gate

Plurals of Adjectives

To make an adjective plural, **-a** is added to those ending in a **broad consonant** and **-e** is added to those ending in a **slender consonant**. For example:

bán - bána	dubh - dubha
daor - daora	dearg - dearga
	tabhachtach - tabhachtacha
mín - míne	ciúin - ciúine
	maith - maithe

When the plural ending is added to some adjectives, a syllable is lost (syncope):

láidir - láidre	saibhir - saibhre
íseal - ísle	folamh - folmha
ramhar - ramhra	bodhar - bodhra
milis - milse	dílis - dílse

Adjectives which end in **-úil**, and a few in **-ir** form the plural by adding **-a** with broadening of the final consonant:

suimiúil - suimiúla	cóir - córa
fearúil - fearúla	áitiúil - áitiúla
deacair - deacra	socair - socra

Adjectives which end in a vowel normally do not change in the plural:

uaine fada buí

A few adjectives have irregular plural forms:

álainn - áille	tirim - tiorma
uasal - uaisle	te - teo
breá - breátha	daingean-daingne

Plural adjectives normally **are not aspirated**. The exception consists of those adjectives following *masculine plurals ending in a slender consonant*.

For example:

na scéalta fada	na tithe móra
na cailíní deasa	na fuinneoga móra

However, we have:

an bád mór - na báid mhóra
an fear saibhir - na fir shaibhre
an leabhar gorm - na leabhair ghorma
an ceann dearg - na cinn dhearga

Cleachtadh

Scríobh na focail seo a leanas san uimhir iolra:

an gúna gorm
an duais dheas
an rang tuirsiúil
an spúnóg bheag
an clár suimiúil
an t-árasán geal
an litir fhada
an bhean dhílis
an teach ciúin
an cailín fionn
an siúinéir gránna
an leanbh cúirtéiseach
an doras buí
an seomra folamh
an grúpa breá
an sagart ciallmhar
an t-uan bán
an cara maith
crios beag
capall dubh
scian ghéar
an tsúil ghorm
duine bródúil
ceacht furasta
deasc donn
bróg chompordach
cúrsa suimiúil

an ghloine fholamh
an státseirbhíseach cliste
an áit chompórdach
an bhileog leadránach
an chathaoir shaibhir
an t-Éireannach láidir
an fear leisciúil
an duine bodhar
an múinteoir flaithiúil
an feirmeoir stuama
an rúnaí croiúil
an fhuinneog mhór
an t-óstán ciúin
an mhí thirim
an fhístéip dhaor
an cnoc ard
an bád beag
gruaig dhubh
an fhaiche áitiúil
bó bhán
an crann ard
an seol donn
dalta leisciúil
coipleabhar lán
leaba bhog
céim thábhachtach
urscéal leadránach

The Genitive Case -- An Tuiseal Ginideach

When the noun to which an adjective is linked is in the genitive case, singular or plural, the adjective likewise must be in the genitive case. The forms for the genitive of adjectives ending in a broad consonant vary in the singular between masculine and feminine forms, but in the plural, the forms are the same for both genders for all types of adjective.

Adjectives Ending in a Broad Consonant.

Adjectives form the masculine genitive in the same way as masculine nouns ending in a broad consonant, that is, the final consonant is made slender and the initial consonant is lenited.

carr beag - doras an chairr bhig
bád bídeach - seol an bháid bhídigh
gasúr cainteach - ainm an ghasúir chaintigh

For feminine nouns, the ending -e is added to the adjective and the final consonant is made slender:

cearc bheag - gob na circe bige
faiche mhór - féar na faiche móire

Adjectives ending in **-ach** have form the feminine by changing the **-ach** to **-í**:

bean chainteach - cáil na mná caintí

áit shalach - lár na háite salaí
banríon Ghaelach - bás na banríona Gaelaí

Note: There is no lenition with adjectives in the genitive singular feminine form.

In the plural, the genitive is usually like the common or nominative plural form, in both masculine and feminine adjectives:

carranna beaga - dath na gcarranna beaga
lampaí costasacha - praghas na lampaí costasacha
gadaithe lúfara - gabh na ngadaithe lúfara

When the plural form of the noun ends in a slender consonant or in -a the genitive plural is the same as the nominative singular.

bábóga beaga - gúnaí na mbábóg beag
báid bhídeacha - seolta na mbád bídeach
gasúir chainteacha - scéal na ngasúr cainteach

Cleachtadh

Bain na lúibíní de na focail seo a leanas:

1. carr (an fear mór)
2. iníon (an bhean bhocht)
3. barr (an cnoc glas)
4. Shiúil mé trasna (an pháirc mhór)
5. doras (an teach bídeach)
6. ainm (an buachaill ard)
7. cailín (na súile gorma)
8. ar thaobh (an bóthar mór)
9. rás (na carranna dearga)
10. ubh (an lacha bhán)
11. bronntanas (an cara faiteach)
12. bronntanais (na cairde brónacha)
13. úinéir (an capall dubh)
14. úinéir (na capaill dhubha)
15. ainm (an bád eachtrannach)
16. captaein (na báid eachtrannacha)
17. coipleabhair (an dalta bocht)
18. siopa (an báicéir óg)
19. carr (na tiománaithe aireacha)
20. bás (an rí Gaelach)
21. scéal (an bhanríon Ghaelach)
22. urlár (an chistin shalach)
23. éadach (an tolg gorm)
24. gúna (an bhean uaigneach)
25. tafann (na madraí ocracha)

Adjectives ending in -úil

The pattern for these adjectives in the masculine form is similar to what we have seen. Since the adjective already ends in a slender consonant, no change is required. Lenition occurs as in the previous pattern, in the genitive singular.

an bád stairiúil - aistear an bháid stairiúil
na báid stairiúla - aistir na mbád stairiúil

an garda bródúil - ainm an gharda bhrodúil
na gardaí bródúla - ainmneacha na ngardaí bródúla

With feminine adjectives, the genitive is formed by making the ending broad and adding an -a;

an bhanaltra cheanúil - cara na banaltra ceanúla
na banaltraí ceanúla - cairde na mbanaltraí ceanúla

Adjectives Ending in a Vowel

With adjectives ending in a vowel, the form is indeclinable, that is, it never changes except for lenition as required.

an gúna buí - bóna an ghúna bhuí
na gúnaí buí - bónaí na ngúnaí buí

**an fear rua - gruaig an fhir rua
na fir rua - gruaig na bhfear rua**

Cleachtadh

Bain na lúibíní de na focail seo a leanas:

1. teideal (an urscéal suimiúil)
2. údar (an gearrscéal cáiliúil)
3. aistí (na daltaí leisciúla)
4. leabhar (an múinteoir flaithiúil)
5. rang (an scoil áitiúil)
6. dáta (an chóisir bhiantúil)
7. i rith (an lá dorcha)
8. tar éis (an oíche dhorcha)
9. eachtraí (an saighdiúir misniúil)
10. eachtraí (na saighdiúirí misniúla)
11. gníomh (an mairnéalach cróga)
12. bóna (an léine uaine)
13. sáil (an bhróg dhubh)
14. deireadh (an scannán fada)
15. póca (an cóta nua)
16. gob (an sicín buí)
17. dochtúir (an t-ospidéal poiblí)
18. craiceann (an bóthar crua)
19. craiceann (an t-úll aibí)
20. freagra (an cheist fhurasta)

Some Anomalous Forms

A few adjectives have irregular forms:

Common s	g/ mas. s.*	g/ fem s.	Common pl.
gearr	gearr	giorra	gearra
beacht	beacht	beaichte	beachta
lách	lách	láí	lácha
tapaídh	tapaídh	tapaí	tapaí
te	te	te	teo
breá	breá	breá	breátha
fionn	fionn	finne	fionna
deas	deas	deise	deasa
fliuch	fliuch	fliche	fliucha
mall	mall	maille	malla
trom	trom	troime	troma
buíoch	buíoch	buíthí	buíocha
gnách	gnách	gnáthaí	gnácha

* The masculine singular form is irregular.

The adjective does not agree with the noun if it is immediately preceded by an adverb:

leabhair réasúnta costasach
scéalta measartha greannmhar

There are other peculiarities of adjectives that occur on occasion. For a full treatment of the topic, consult the Christian Brothers' Grammar.

Cleachtadh

Cuir Gaeilge air seo:

1. Put the full cardboard boxes on the floor and the empty boxes on the kitchen table.
2. Mary's new boyfriend is tall and athletic.
3. Do you know the name of the historical novel the geography teacher mentioned?
4. They have a pretty white cottage beside a quiet blue mountain lake.
5. Her husband is fair haired and tall. He has a pleasant way about him.
6. Take off your wet clothes and put on dry ones.
7. I'm looking for a present for my friend. It's her birthday tomorrow. / How about a blouse or a sweater? / That's a good idea. She likes any colour except blue. / What colour is her hair? / She's fair haired. / How about a grey sweater? / Great.
8. Which one is he? -- The short fat man with the red beard and the dark blue suit.
9. Liam is very courteous and pleasant.
10. The day was warm and sunny when we left for the crowded beach.
11. Dublin has many dark red and dark grey houses.
12. Tom is understanding and level-headed, but sometimes he's unpleasant and rude.
13. His teachers found him intelligent and patient.
14. Where is that expensive black couch you bought?
15. Here's the picture of the big black cat.

Nótaí

Not every concept expressed with an adjective in English is likewise expressed with an adjective in Irish. In English, turning a noun or a verb or any part of speech into an adjective is merely a question of inserting the word in the correct place in a sentence. Thus in English, we can say *the morning papers* and *the evening news* on TV. We can speak of *road rage*, of *recycle Friday* and things of the sort without altering the form of the word.

In Irish, a compound noun or a genitive phrase may be required to translate such phrases in English.

For example:

the morning news - **nuacht na maidine**
the evening papers - **nuachtáin an tráthnóna**
apple pie - **pióg úll**
wooden box - **bosca adhmaid**
sail boat - **bád seoil**
fur coat - **cóta fionnaidh**

In other cases, a similar compound word may have been developed following the English model.

For example:

dishwasher - **miasniteoir**
car park - **carrchlós**

The ease with which such compounds can be created in English poses problems for the student of Irish. Finding Irish equivalents for such creations often results in a variety of terms being created. Thus “dishwasher” can be expressed as *miasniteoir*, a compound noun, or *niteoir soithí*, a genitive phrase. With time and use, these will eventually become standardized, but the student must not forget that simple paraphrases are often the way to go. Vegetarian can be expressed quite simply by saying *Ní ithim feoil* without resorting to the neologism: *feoilseántóir*.

The rules governing lenition in the case of compound formations and genitive phrases vary from dialect to dialect and there are no firm answers to doubts which may arise about the ‘correct’ form.

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