

Gradable and extreme adjectives anecdotes game with active listening practice

Take turns being the person telling a personal story, with the other person being the person who is listening and reacting. Both of you should try to use many of the words in the table below (including the adverbs in the left-hand column) while you speak or listen and react, ticking off individual words with different coloured pens as you do so. Your partner can cross off your tick if the same word has already been used or if they think that the word has been used in the wrong way. The person with the most ticks at the end of the game is the winner.

Useful phrases for reacting to people's anecdotes

"Didn't you feel...?"/ "That must have been..."/ "You must have felt..."

"That sounds..."/ "I guess it was..."/ "I'm sure it was..."/ "I suppose you felt..."

"I had a similar experience. It was..."

"Really? I would have been..."/ "Actually, I remember it being..."

Useful adverbs and adjectives for telling and reacting to anecdotes

	amazing/ excellent/ fabulous/ good/ superb/ terrific/ wonderful
	amusing/ funny/ hilarious
	awful/ bad/ dreadful/ terrible
	big/ enormous/ gigantic/ huge/ large/ massive
	boring/ mind-numbing
	confusing/ mind-boggling
(a little)	crammed/ crowded/ jam-packed/ packed
absolutely	crazy/ eccentric
completely	crucial/ essential/ important/ vital
extremely	delicious/ mouth-watering/ tasty
fairly	delightful/ lovely/ nice
incredibly	difficult/ impossible/ tricky
not very	dirty/ filthy
really	disgusting/ revolting/ yucky
(slightly)	ear-splitting/ loud/ noisy
totally	exciting/ thrilling
utterly	exhausting/ tiring
very	exorbitant/ expensive/ pricey
	fascinating/ interesting
	frantic/ worried
	frightening/ scary/ terrifying
	gorgeous/ pretty/ stunning
	horrible/ nasty
	hungry/ starving
	idiotic/ stupid
	little/ small/ tiny
	memorable/ unforgettable
	parched/ thirsty
	soaked/ wet

Extreme adjectives grammar presentation

All the lines of adjectives above can be divided into two kinds. One kind can be graded from a low level to a high level and so are called “gradable adjectives”. The other kind mean “very + gradable adjective” and so only have extreme meanings and can only be used with adverbs that make them more extreme. Without looking above for now, put pairs of adjectives next to each other in the two boxes of the table below. Many adjective pairs not above are also possible.

+		+
extreme adjective (= ungradable)	= very +	gradable adjective

Partial answers

The gradable adjectives are in the right place below. Try to put the correct extreme adjective next to each.

adverbs before extreme adjectives		adverbs before gradable adjectives
+		+
extreme adjective (= ungradable)	= very +	gradable adjective
	= very +	amusing/ funny
	= very +	bad
	= very +	big/ large
	= very +	boring
	= very +	confusing
	= very +	crowded
	= very +	difficult/ tricky
	= very +	dirty
	= very +	eccentric
	= very +	exciting
	= very +	expensive/ pricey
	= very +	frightening/ scary
	= very +	good
	= very +	hungry
	= very +	important
	= very +	interesting
	= very +	little/ small
	= very +	loud/ noisy
	= very +	memorable
	= very +	nasty
	= very +	nice
	= very +	pretty
	= very +	stupid
	= very +	tasty
	= very +	thirsty
	= very +	tiring
	= very +	wet
	= very +	worried
	= very +	yucky

Check your answers with the first page, then put suitable adverbs into the top two boxes above. Rank the ones in the right-hand column from the strongest top to the least bottom. One adverb goes in both columns. The answers are on the next page.

Adverbs which go with gradable and extreme adjectives

Ones in brackets () only go with negative adjectives.

adverbs before extreme adjectives		adverbs before gradable adjectives
absolutely completely really totally utterly		incredibly extremely really very fairly not very (a little)/ (slightly)