

4. MODIFICATION

This unit reviews **modification**, a function which is much more important than is commonly realised. It is easy enough to say that something is "good" or "bad", "hot" or "cold". But the problem when learning a language is to go beyond the expression of simplistic ideas so that nuances and subtle differences can be expressed with ease.

Modification is expressed typically by adjectives to modify the meaning of nouns and by adverbs to modify the meaning of other adverbs, adjectives, verbs or phrases.

Self evaluation – entry test

■ Supply suitable modifiers.

Example:

Epidemics in the third world are **ma** due to malnutrition. (above all)

→ Epidemics in the third world are **mainly** due to malnutrition.

1. **Al** 15,000 people have been killed in traffic accidents over the last 10 years. (*nearly, slightly fewer than*)
2. There has been a **st** increase in viruses which are resistant to antibiotics. (*constant*)
3. The Roman calendar was **ba** a lunar calendar and contained only 355 days. (*essentially, fundamentally*)
4. It has been said that in science, the major problem is not finding answers, but asking the **re** questions. (*appropriate, pertinent*)
5. Since World War II, there has been a **wi** Americanisation of Japanese society. (*extensive, throughout the country*)
6. The dimensions of dwarf stars are **ro** comparable to those of the Sun. (*approximately*)
7. Light is emitted and absorbed in **mi** units or corpuscles called photons or quanta. (*exceedingly small, tiny*)
8. Enzymes have an **ou** ability to biodegrade natural products. (*exceptional*)
9. Statistics must always be used with care; their interpretation is often not **re** (*sure, dependable*)
10. **St** hillsides are inevitably under threat of erosion. (*with a big gradient, inclination*)

Functions & Grammar

KEY POINTS – MODIFICATION

1. Adjectives

■ Importance

important • significant • crucial • meaningful • relevant

- *What Bachelard wrote in 1934 is still **relevant** to contemporary scientific problems.*

■ Dimension

enormous • tremendous •
huge • widespread



small-scale •
tiny • minute

- *Blood plasma contains **minute** quantities of creatinine.*

■ Hierarchy

major • main • chief •
leading • primary •
foremost • outstanding



• secondary • minor • common
• average • typical • standard

- *Little by little the patient's condition **worsened**.*

■ Intensity

dramatic • striking • acute • steep • sharp

- *There has been a **sharp** decline in the quality of river water.*

■ Aptitude and utility

• appropriate • suitable
• useful • reliable • efficient

- *If electromagnetic radiation of **suitable** wavelength falls upon the metal, electrons are ejected.*

2. Adverbs

■ Essence

essentially • fundamentally • basically • on the whole

➤ **Basically**, there is little difference between the two processes.

■ Manner

carefully • steadily • thoroughly • accurately • properly

➤ The 1st law of thermodynamics was not **properly** formulated until the middle of the 19th century.

■ Negation

hardly (any) • scarcely (any) • barely (any)

➤ After processing, **hardly any** of the nutrients remain.

■ Degree

a little •
a bit • slightly

relatively •
quite G. Notes 5 •
rather • fairly

very • extremely •
exceedingly

➤ The results were **slightly** better than last year.