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Test Your Vocabulary Skills

Match Base and Strong Adjectives 1

Print out the cards, then cut them up and mix them up. Match each base adjective with its strong counterpart.
For more information and activities, see p.5.

angry	furious	old	ancient
big	enormous	poor	destitute
cold	freezing	quiet	silent
difficult	impossible	rude	obnoxious
fat	obese	scary	terrifying
funny	hilarious	small	tiny
happy	ecstatic	surprising	astonishing
hungry	starving	ugly	hideous
loud	deafening	valuable	priceless
neat	immaculate	wet	soaked

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Test Your Vocabulary Skills

Match Base and Strong Adjectives 2

Print out the cards, then cut them up and mix them up. Match each base adjective with its strong counterpart.
For more information and activities, see p.5.

bad	awful	nice	lovely
boring	tedious	pleased	overjoyed
clean	spotless	pretty	stunning
crowded	packed	rich	loaded
dirty	filthy	sad	tragic
full	stuffed	silly	ridiculous
good	wonderful	stupid	idiotic
hot	boiling	tasty	delicious
interesting	fascinating	unpleasant	disgusting
memorable	unforgettable	upset	devastated

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Test Your Vocabulary Skills

Match Base and Strong Adjectives – Intensifiers

These cards are for use with the base and strong adjective cards (pp.1-2). Print them out, then cut them up and mix them together with the adjective cards. Make a number of correct phrases and a number of incorrect phrases. Say why they are incorrect. For more information and activities, see p.5.

Intensifiers only used with base adjectives:

amazingly	extremely	exceptionally	incredibly
pretty	very		
fairly			
quite	rather		
a bit	a little	somewhat	

stronger

weaker

only with negative adjectives

Intensifiers only used with strong adjectives:

absolutely	completely	totally	utterly
unusually			
particularly			

4 synonyms

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Match Base and Strong Adjectives – Intensifiers

These cards are for use with the base and strong adjective cards (pp.1-2). Print them out, then cut them up and mix them together with the adjective cards. Make a number of correct phrases and a number of incorrect phrases. Say why they are incorrect. For more information and activities, see p.5.

Intensifiers used with base and strong adjectives:

really	quite	so

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Match Base and Strong Adjectives – Information Pages

There is a small group of adjectives in English which we call **strong adjectives** (or **extreme adjectives**). They have the sense of a **normal** (or **base**) **adjective** + **very very**.

There are four levels of strength – from base to very strong, for example:

	adjective (+ intensifier)	*strength:*	
1.	good	✓	
2.	very good	✓✓	
3.	fantastic	✓✓✓	= very very good
4.	absolutely fantastic	✓✓✓✓	= very very very good

Of course, we can't say very very + adjective in English, so we use a strong adjective to convey this meaning.

Neither can we say very very very + adjective, so we use an **intensifier** with a strong adjective to convery this meaning.

Intensifiers are adverbs that go before adjectives to make them stronger. They fall into three categories:

intensifiers only used with base adjectives:	*stronger*	amazingly / extremely / exceptionally / incredibly
		pretty / very
		fairly
		quite / rather
		a bit
		a little } *only with negative adjectives, e.g.* a bit late
	weaker	somewhat
intensifiers only used with strong adjectives:		absolutely / completely / totally / utterly
		unusually
		particularly
intensifiers used with base and strong adjectives:		really
		quite
		so

Instructions:

A note on levels: for lower level SS (students) you could use fewer pairs of adjectives, e.g. five or ten (instead of 40!), and focus on only three of the most common intensifiers, e.g. **very** for base adjectives, **absolutely** for strong adjectives, and **really** for both. Lower level SS will generally do fewer activities, e.g. make fewer phrases, write fewer sentences, and so on.

1. SS put the strong adjective cards on the table and make sure that they know them all. Any new words should be checked, defined, and written down in notebooks.

2. SS match strong adjectives with base adjectives. Discuss how strong adjectives are higher level vocabulary words and will get SS better marks if used in their written or spoken English. For example, “We had a fantastic holiday” is better than “We had a good holiday”. The word “good” is a beginner-level word and many strong adjective

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Match Base and Strong Adjectives – Information Pages

synoynyms exist and should be used instead. Native speakers prefer to use strong adjectives rather than base, so SS will sound more like native speakers if they learn and use strong adjectives with intensifiers correctly.

3. SS add intensifier cards to base and strong adjectives to make phrases. They could make ten (or more, or fewer) correct phrases and ten incorrect phrases, e.g.

correct phrases:	*incorrect phrases:*
very happy	absolutely happy
absolutely ecstatic	very ecstatic

The point of making incorrect sentences on purpose is for SS to prove that they know the correct patterns, and to notice how they "just sound wrong", e.g. "a very fantastic holiday" will sound wrong to most SS above elementary level.

4. SS write a number of sentences using their phrases. Higher level SS could try to write sentences with two or more of the phrases in them. Or SS could include the phrases in a dialogue between two or more characters. As a twist, SS could write a dialogue where one character uses only base adjectives (a non-expressive kind of person) and the other uses only strong adjectives (a very expressive kind of person). SS could try to write a variety of texts using strong adjectives, e.g. a poem, a news report, a review, etc., and consider what happens when the strong adjectives are replaced by base adjectives, i.e. they don't sound or look half as good!

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