

30 GOLDEN RULES OF ADJECTIVES FOR DEFENSE EXAMS

COMPLETE MASTER CODE | PLINTH TO PARAMOUNT, S.P. BAKSHI, MB PUBLICATION & 20-YEAR PYQS

Targeted for NDA, CDS, AFCAT & SSB Examinations | Every Rule, Edge-Case & 3 Practical Examples

Rule 1: Order of Multiple Adjectives (The OSASCOMP Rule)

When multiple adjectives qualify the same noun, they must strictly follow the **OSASCOMP** hierarchical sequence: **Opinion** → **Size** → **Age** → **Shape** → **Color** → **Origin** → **Material** → **Purpose** + **NOUN**.

Opinion → **Size** → **Age** → **Shape** → **Color** → **Origin** → **Material** → **Purpose** + **NOUN**

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** She wore a leather black beautiful Italian jacket to the academy.

✓ **Correct:** She wore a **beautiful** (Opinion) **black** (Color) **Italian** (Origin) **leather** (Material) jacket to the academy.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** I bought an ancient round small wooden table.

✓ **Correct:** I bought a **small** (Size) **ancient** (Age) **round** (Shape) **wooden** (Material) table.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The commander carries a riding long black plastic stick.

✓ **Correct:** The commander carries a **long** (Size) **black** (Color) **plastic** (Material) **riding** (Purpose) stick.

Rule 2: Latin Adjectives Ending in '-ior' (Fixed Preposition 'To')

Latin comparative adjectives ending in **-ior** do not take '*than*' or degree modifiers like '*more*' / '*most*'. They are strictly followed by the preposition **to**.

Superior, Inferior, Senior, Junior, Prior, Anterior, Posterior, Preferable.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Captain Vikram is more senior than Captain Rohan in the regiment.

✓ **Correct:** Captain Vikram is **senior to** Captain Rohan in the regiment.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** This equipment is superior than the old model imported last year.

✓ **Correct:** This equipment is **superior to** the old model imported last year.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** Prior than joining the academy, he completed his graduation.

✓ **Correct:** **Prior to** joining the academy, he completed his graduation.

Rule 3: Absolute / Non-Gradable Adjectives

Certain adjectives represent the ultimate state of a quality. They **cannot be modified** by comparative/superlative words like *more*, *most*, *very*, *extremely*, or *highly*.

Unique, Perfect, Complete, Universal, Supreme, Absolute, Ideal, Chief, Entire, Final, Eternal, Impossible, Circular, Square, Dead, Unanimous.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** This is the most unique strategy for cracking the NDA written examination.

✓ **Correct:** This is a **unique** strategy for cracking the NDA written examination.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** The drill instructor gave a very complete demonstration of parade steps.

✓ **Correct:** The drill instructor gave a **complete** demonstration of parade steps.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The supreme commander made a more final decision regarding border patrol.

✓ **Correct:** The supreme commander made a **final** decision regarding border patrol.

Rule 4: Avoidance of Double Comparatives and Double Superlatives

Using two comparative markers (e.g., *more* + *-er*) or two superlative markers (e.g., *most* + *-est*) in the same modifying clause creates grammatical redundancy.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** He is more taller than his elder brother who joined the IAF.

✓ **Correct:** He is **taller than** his elder brother who joined the IAF.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Major Sharma is the most bravest officer in the battalion.

✓ **Correct:** Major Sharma is the **bravest** officer in the battalion.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The new engine is relatively more cheaper than the previous version.

✓ **Correct:** The new engine is **cheaper** (or *relatively cheap*) than the previous version.

Rule 5: Comparative Degree Followed by 'Of the Two'

When choosing between **exactly two persons or things**, place the definite article **the** before the comparative adjective, followed by **of the two**.

Subject + Verb + THE + Comparative Degree + OF THE TWO + Plural Noun

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Arjun is better of the two cadets selected for the SSB interview.

✓ **Correct:** Arjun is **the better of the two** cadets selected for the SSB interview.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Of the two tactical plans presented, the first was best.

✓ **Correct:** Of the two tactical plans presented, the first was **the better**.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** She is the wiser of the two sister.

✓ **Correct:** She is **the wiser of the two sisters**. (Note: Noun must be plural)

Rule 6: Parallel Proportional Increase or Decrease

When two actions or conditions increase or decrease in direct proportion to each other, use **the + comparative degree** in both clauses.

THE + Comparative Degree ..., THE + Comparative Degree ...

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Higher you ascend the mountain, colder air becomes.

✓ **Correct:** **The higher** you ascend the mountain, **the colder** the air becomes.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** More you practice physical fitness, better your stamina gets.

✓ **Correct:** **The more** you practice physical fitness, **the better** your stamina gets.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** Faster we complete the obstacle course, early we return to barracks.

✓ **Correct:** **The faster** we complete the obstacle course, **the earlier** we return to barracks.

Rule 7: Comparison Exclusion with 'Any other' vs. 'All other'

When comparing one item to others in the **same class or group** using a comparative degree, exclude the subject using **any other** (+ singular noun) or **all other** (+ plural noun).

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Iron is more useful than any metal in defense manufacturing.

✓ **Correct:** Iron is more useful than **any other metal** in defense manufacturing.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Akash is sharper than all students in his CDS coaching batch.

✓ **Correct:** Akash is sharper than **all other students** in his CDS coaching batch.

Example 3 (Out-of-group Exception):

✓ **Correct:** The INS Vikrant is larger than **any merchant ship** in India. *(No 'other' needed because INS Vikrant is a warship, not a merchant ship)*

Rule 8: Comparing Two Qualities of the SAME Person/Thing

When comparing two different qualities of the **same individual or object**, do not use the *-er* suffix. Use **more + positive degree + than + positive degree**.

Subject + Verb + MORE + Positive Degree + THAN + Positive Degree

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** The young cadet is braver than wise in tactical situations.

✓ **Correct:** The young cadet is **more brave than wise** in tactical situations.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Captain Neha is smarter than hardworking.

✓ **Correct:** Captain Neha is **more smart than hardworking**.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** This military vehicle is faster than reliable.

✓ **Correct:** This military vehicle is **more fast than reliable**.

Rule 9: Quantitative vs. Numeral Adjectives (Little vs. Few Series)

Use **Little** / **A Little** / **The Little** for Uncountable Nouns (Quantity). Use **Few** / **A Few** / **The Few** for Countable Nouns (Number).

Uncountable (Quantity)	Countable (Number)	Meaning / Tone
Little	Few	Negligible / Almost None (Negative)
A Little	A Few	Some / Small amount (Positive)
The Little	The Few	Not much/many, but all of it

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** He has little friends in the academy, so he feels lonely.

✓ **Correct:** He has **few friends** in the academy, so he feels lonely.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Give me few water to quench my thirst after the obstacle march.

✓ **Correct:** Give me **a little water** to quench my thirst after the obstacle march.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The few water left in the canteen was consumed by the squad leader.

✓ **Correct:** **The little water** left in the canteen was consumed by the squad leader.

Rule 10: Family vs. Age Comparisons (Elder/Eldest vs. Older/Oldest)

Elder / **Eldest**: Used strictly for blood relatives/family members. Followed by **to** (never *than*). Cannot be used when an exact age difference is stated.

Older / **Oldest**: Used for persons outside the family, animals, or non-living things. Followed by **than**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Rohan is elder than his classmate in NDA training.

✓ **Correct:** Rohan is **older than** his classmate in NDA training.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** My elder brother is older than me by three years.

✓ **Correct:** My elder brother is **older than me** by three years. (*Age difference specified*)

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** He is elder than his brother.

✓ **Correct:** He is **elder to** his brother. / He is **older than** his brother.

Rule 11: Position vs. Time (Later/Latest vs. Latter/Last)

Later / Latest: Denotes time (*Later* = subsequent time; *Latest* = most recent news/version).

Latter / Last: Denotes position/order (*Latter* = second of two items; *Last* = final item in a series of three or more).

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Between General Cariappa and General Manekshaw, the last was born later.

✓ **Correct:** Between General Cariappa and General Manekshaw, the **latter** was born later.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** What is the last update regarding AFCAT admit cards?

✓ **Correct:** What is the **latest** update regarding AFCAT admit cards?

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** I reached the parade ground latter than the commanding officer.

✓ **Correct:** I reached the parade ground **later** than the commanding officer.

Rule 12: Distance vs. Addition (Farther vs. Further)

Farther: Physical, measurable distance.

Further: Additional, extra, or non-physical continuation.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** We discussed no farther plans during the tactical briefing.

✓ **Correct:** We discussed no **further** plans during the tactical briefing.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Ladakh is further from Delhi than Himachal Pradesh.

✓ **Correct:** Ladakh is **farther** from Delhi than Himachal Pradesh.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** Until farther orders, troops will remain stationed at the outpost.

✓ **Correct:** Until **further** orders, troops will remain stationed at the outpost.

Rule 13: Proximity vs. Sequence (Nearest vs. Next)

Nearest: Refers to the shortest physical distance.

Next: Refers to position, sequence, or order in a line.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Which is the next military hospital from this border post?

✓ **Correct:** Which is the **nearest** military hospital from this border post?

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** The candidate sitting nearest to me was selected for the SSB interview.

✓ **Correct:** The candidate sitting **next to me** was selected for the SSB interview.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** Take the next left turn to reach the nearest cantonment gate.

✓ **Correct:** Take the **next** left turn to reach the **nearest** cantonment gate.

Rule 14: Uncountable vs. Countable Modifiers (Less vs. Fewer)

Use **Less** (and *Least*) for Uncountable Nouns.

Use **Fewer** (and *Fewest*) for Countable Nouns.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** No less than fifty cadets passed the physical endurance test.

✓ **Correct:** No **fewer than** fifty cadets passed the physical endurance test.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** There was fewer water in the reservoir due to dry weather.

✓ **Correct:** There was **less water** in the reservoir due to dry weather.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** He made less mistakes in the English paper this time.

✓ **Correct:** He made **fewer mistakes** in the English paper this time.

Rule 15: Conjunction Degree Consistency Rule

When two adjectives qualifying the same noun are joined by a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *or*), both adjectives **must remain in the exact same degree of comparison**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Captain Vikram is the bravest and intelligent officer in the battalion.

✓ **Correct:** Captain Vikram is the **bravest and most intelligent** officer in the battalion.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** She is wiser and beautiful than her classmate.

✓ **Correct:** She is **wiser and more beautiful** than her classmate.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The route was long and steeper than expected.

✓ **Correct:** The route was **longer and steeper** than expected.

Rule 16: Dual Degree Combination Structure ('As ... as' + 'Than')

When combining equal and unequal comparison degrees in a single sentence, complete both phrases completely: **as + positive degree + as AND comparative degree + than**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** He is as smart if not smarter than his squad leader.

✓ **Correct:** He is **as smart as**, if not smarter than, his squad leader.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Akash is as fast or faster than any cadet in the NDA marathon.

✓ **Correct:** Akash is **as fast as** or faster than any cadet in the NDA marathon.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** This rifle is as effective if not more effective than that one.

✓ **Correct:** This rifle is **as effective as**, if not more effective than, that one.

Rule 17: Hyphenated Compound Adjectives

When a compound adjective consists of a number and a noun joined by a hyphen, the noun inside the compound adjective **must strictly remain singular**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** The soldiers crossed a ten-feet deep trench during training.

✓ **Correct:** The soldiers crossed a **ten-foot** deep trench during training.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** He handed me a five-rupees note at the canteen counter.

✓ **Correct:** He handed me a **five-rupee** note at the canteen counter.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** They completed a three-months military strategy course.

✓ **Correct:** They completed a **three-month** military strategy course.

Rule 18: Adjectives Used as Plural Nouns with Article 'The'

When the definite article **the** is placed before certain positive adjectives (e.g., *the rich*, *the poor*, *the brave*, *the injured*, *the blind*), it represents the entire class of people and takes a **plural verb** without adding '-s'.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** The braves is always honored by the nation.

✓ **Correct:** **The brave are** always honored by the nation.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** The poors suffer during winter in high-altitude posts.

✓ **Correct:** **The poor suffer** during winter in high-altitude posts.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The injured was shifted to the army hospital immediately.

✓ **Correct:** **The injured were** shifted to the army hospital immediately. (*Referring to multiple injured persons*)

Rule 19: 'As ... As' (Affirmative/Negative) vs. 'So ... As' (Negative Only)

In equal comparisons, place a **positive degree adjective** between *as ... as* or *so ... as*.

- **As ... As:** Used in both positive and negative sentences.
- **So ... As:** Used **strictly in negative sentences**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** He is so brave as his instructor in tactical drills.

✓ **Correct:** He is **as brave as** his instructor in tactical drills.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** She is not as smarter as her senior peer.

✓ **Correct:** She is **not as smart as** her senior peer. / She is **not so smart as** her senior peer.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** This year's CDS cutoff is so high as last year's.

✓ **Correct:** This year's CDS cutoff is **as high as** last year's.

Rule 20: Verbal Adjectives (Present vs. Past Participle)

Present Participle (-ing): Represents an active, cause-producing quality (*an exhausting drill, a boring lecture*).

Past Participle (-ed / -en): Represents a passive result or state experienced by the subject (*an exhausted soldier, a bored cadet*).

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** The exhausted 10 km route march made the soldiers boring.

✓ **Correct:** The **exhausting** 10 km route march made the soldiers **bored**.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** I was very interesting to hear the chief's address.

✓ **Correct:** I was very **interested** to hear the chief's address.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The commanding officer gave a deeply moved speech.

✓ **Correct:** The commanding officer gave a deeply **moving** speech.

Rule 21: Rules Governing 'Prefer' and 'Preferable'

1. **Preferable** takes **to** (never *than* or *more*).
2. **Prefer [Noun] to [Noun]**.
3. **Prefer [Infinitival action] rather than [Bare Infinitival action]**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Cold weather is more preferable than humid weather in military camps.

✓ **Correct:** Cold weather is **preferable to** humid weather in military camps.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** I prefer military service than civil employment.

✓ **Correct:** I prefer military service **to** civil employment.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** He prefers to march on foot than riding a vehicle.

✓ **Correct:** He prefers to march on foot **rather than ride** a vehicle.

Rule 22: Pronoun Case Consistency in Adjectival Comparisons

When comparing subjects using *than* or *as*, compare **Subject Nominative Case with Nominative Case**. When comparing objects, compare **Objective Case with Objective Case**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Captain Sharma is more experienced than him in mountain warfare.

✓ **Correct:** Captain Sharma is more experienced than **he** [is] in mountain warfare.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** She runs as fast as me in physical trials.

✓ **Correct:** She runs as fast as **I** [run] in physical trials.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** The instructor respects you more than I.

✓ **Correct:** The instructor respects you more than **me**. (*Object comparison: respects you more than he respects me*)

Rule 23: Stative Verbs / Verbs of Sensation Modified by Adjectives

Verbs of perception or state (*look, smell, taste, sound, feel, appear, seem, remain, become*) are modified by **Adjectives**, not Adverbs, when describing the state of the subject.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** The food served in the mess tasted deliciously.

✓ **Correct:** The food served in the mess tasted **delicious**.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** The cadet felt badly after failing the medical examination.

✓ **Correct:** The cadet felt **bad** after failing the medical examination.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** His tactical advice sounded sensibly to the battalion commander.

✓ **Correct:** His tactical advice sounded **sensible** to the battalion commander.

Rule 24: Order of Numeral Adjectives (Ordinal + Cardinal + Multiplicative)

When ordinal numbers (*first, second, third...*), cardinal numbers (*one, two, three...*), and multiplicative numbers (*single, double...*) appear together, place them in the order: **Ordinal → Cardinal → Multiplicative (OCM)**.

ORDINAL + CARDINAL + MULTIPLICATIVE + NOUN

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Read the two first chapters of the CDS strategy book.

✓ **Correct:** Read **the first two chapters** of the CDS strategy book.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** The five first candidates were called for the SSB interview.

✓ **Correct:** **The first five candidates** were called for the SSB interview.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** We inspected the double two first security gates.

✓ **Correct:** We inspected **the first two double** security gates.

Rule 25: Demonstrative Adjective Agreement ('Kind of' / 'Type of')

Demonstrative adjectives **This** / **That** modify singular nouns (*kind, type, sort*). **These** / **Those** modify plural nouns (*kinds, types, sorts*).

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** These kind of questions frequently appear in the AFCAT exam.

✓ **Correct:** **This kind of question** / **These kinds of questions** frequently appear in the AFCAT exam.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Those type of boots are mandatory for high-altitude marching.

✓ **Correct:** **That type of boot is** / **Those types of boots are** mandatory for high-altitude marching.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** I do not like these sort of attitude during parade.

✓ **Correct:** I do not like **this sort of attitude** during parade.

Rule 26: Quantifiers ('Many a/an' vs. 'Many' vs. 'A great many')

- **Many a / an + Singular Noun + Singular Verb**
- **Many / A great many + Plural Noun + Plural Verb**

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Many a cadets have failed in the SSB officer intelligence rating test.

✓ **Correct:** **Many a cadet has failed** in the SSB officer intelligence rating test.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** A great many soldier was awarded gallantry medals.

✓ **Correct:** **A great many soldiers were awarded** gallantry medals.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** Many an officer were present at the wreath-laying ceremony.

✓ **Correct:** **Many an officer was present** at the wreath-laying ceremony.

Rule 27: Distributive Adjective Agreement (Each, Every, Either, Neither)

Distributive adjectives **Each**, **Every**, **Either**, **Neither** modify **Singular Countable Nouns** and take a **Singular Verb**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** Every cadets were given a fresh uniform set.

✓ **Correct:** Every cadet was given a fresh uniform set.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Either road lead to the cantonment main gate.

✓ **Correct:** Either road leads to the cantonment main gate.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** Neither applicant have cleared the height standards.

✓ **Correct:** Neither applicant has cleared the height standards.

Rule 28: Superfluous Modifier Redundancies

Avoid pairing adjectives with adverbs or words that repeat the same comparative meaning (e.g., *relatively better*, *equally as good*, *more preferable*).

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** The weather today is relatively better for flying practice.

✓ **Correct:** The weather today is **relatively good** for flying practice. / The weather today is **better** for flying practice.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Rohan is equally as smart as Akash in solving reasoning papers.

✓ **Correct:** Rohan is **as smart as** Akash in solving reasoning papers.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** This year's NDA question paper was comparatively easier.

✓ **Correct:** This year's NDA question paper was **comparatively easy**. / This year's NDA question paper was **easier**.

Rule 29: Position of Articles/Possessives with 'All' and 'Both'

When **All** or **Both** are used as adjectives with a noun, place the article (*the*), possessive pronoun (*my*, *his*, *their*), or demonstrative (*these*, *those*) **AFTER All / Both**.

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** The all cadets assembled at the parade ground.

✓ **Correct:** All the cadets assembled at the parade ground.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** My both brothers are serving in the Indian Navy.

✓ **Correct:** Both my brothers are serving in the Indian Navy.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** His all books were stored in the library vault.

✓ **Correct:** All his books were stored in the library vault.

Rule 30: 'Certain' vs. 'A Certain' Agreement Pattern

- A Certain + Singular Countable Noun
- Certain + Plural Countable Noun

Example 1:

✗ **Incorrect:** I met a certain officers near the battalion office.

✓ **Correct:** I met **a certain officer** near the battalion office. / I met **certain officers** near the battalion office.

Example 2:

✗ **Incorrect:** Certain candidate was missing during the biometric check.

✓ **Correct:** **A certain candidate was** missing during the biometric check. / **Certain candidates were** missing during the biometric check.

Example 3:

✗ **Incorrect:** A certain rules must be followed in military mess halls.

✓ **Correct:** **Certain rules** must be followed in military mess halls.