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THE SPECIFICS OF THE ENGLISH DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVES ENDING IN -IC AND -ICAL

An **adjective** is a word belonging to one of the major form classes in any of numerous languages and typically serving as a modifier of a noun to denote a quality of the thing named, to indicate its quantity or extent, or to specify a thing as distinct from something else e.g. "*red light*", "*audacious child*" etc.

Adjectives describe or modify (i.e. limit or restrict the meaning of) nouns and pronouns.

They may name qualities of all kinds: "*gigantic*", "*blue*", "*angry*", "*tremendous*", "*unique*", "*frequent*", etc.

A **descriptive** adjective is any word used to describe a noun. The most basic definition of an adjective is that it's a word that modifies or describes a noun. But descriptive adjectives go beyond that; they provide more information about the noun in question, making it easier to visualize or understand what it is. For example, if one says that something was "terrific," that would be a descriptive adjective. The word "*terrific*" provides more detailed information about the size of the object or person,

making it easier to visualize. "*Terrific*" is an adjective that means excellent or very good. It is derived from the Latin word "terror," meaning fear, and "facius," meaning to do or make. The word has been used in various contexts such as literature, art, and music, where it describes a transcendent and awe-inspiring experience. It is often associated with feelings of wonder and amazement, and is often used to describe something that is exceptional or outstanding.

Descriptive adjectives are particularly useful in creative writing, as they allow you to provide more vivid descriptions of characters, settings, and events. They can also be used in everyday conversation to make your speech more interesting.

Some descriptive adjectives can be identified by their endings. Typical adjective endings include:

- *-able/-ible* *achievable, capable, illegible, remarkable,*
- *-al* *biographical, functional, internal, logical,*
- *-ful* *beautiful, careful, grateful, harmful,*
- *-ic* *cubic, manic, rustic, terrific,*
- *-ive* *attractive, dismissive, inventive, persuasive,*
- *-less* *breathless, careless, groundless, restless,*
- *-ous* *courageous, dangerous, disastrous, fabulous.*

A great variety of descriptive adjectives end in '-ic' or '-ical' which sometimes causes difficulties understanding the meaning in the right way. Adjectives ending in '-ic' or '-ical' are two common forms of adjectives that are often used to add a sense of formality or politeness to the word. However, improper use of these adjectives can lead to confusion and a lack of clarity in the message being conveyed. Examples of adjectives ending in '-ic' include: *athletic, energetic, prophetic, scientific* etc. Examples of adjectives ending in '-ical' include: *magical, diabolical, cynical, musical*

An extension of the adjective ending '-ical' is the adjective ending in '-logical'. These adjectives tend to be used with scientific and medical related terms, e.g. *psychological, cardiological, chronological, ideological*.

There are a few cases in which both adjective endings are used with slight changes in meaning, as in *economic / economical*, where *economic* means "relating to economics and finance", whereas *economical* means "money saving, frugal"; in *historic / historical*, where "historic" means "famous and important" compared to "historical" which means "dealing with history".

Another example is the adjective "electric(al)". The IEEE Standard Dictionary of Electrical and Electronics Terms defines "*electric*" as "containing, producing, arising from, actuated by or carrying electricity (electric blanket; electric light). By contrast, "*electrical*" means "relating to, pertaining to, or associated with electricity but not having its properties" (electrical engineer).

The difference between adjectives ending in -ic or -ical is that adjectives ending in -ic are typically used to describe a characteristic or quality, while adjectives ending in -ical are often used to describe something related to a particular field of study or discipline. For example, "*alphabetical*" and "*alphabetic*" are both adjectives that refer to the order or arrangement of letters in the alphabet. "*Alphabetical*" typically refers to arranging items in the order of the letters in the alphabet (e.g. a list of names in alphabetical order), while "*alphabetic*" can also refer to the use or characteristics of an alphabet system (e.g. alphabetic writing systems). The two terms are often used interchangeably, but "alphabetical" is more commonly used in the context of organizing items in a specific order.

Thus, there is no specific rule how to distinguish adjective written with endings -ic or -ical, as sometimes they are used with a slight difference in meaning. However, translators and interpreters must take great care when referring the exact meaning of phrases that contain such paronymic adjectives.