

The Adjective

The purpose of an adjective is to inform us of the attributes of a noun. It may do this in an adjective phrase or in a copulative phrase. In the adjective phrase, the adjective is modifying the noun. In a copulative phrase, it is stating an equivalence between the noun and the adjective.

<i>Copulative</i>	<i>Adjective Phrase</i>
A son is wise	A wise son
The beast is bad	The bad beast
Swords are big	Big swords
The families are old	The Old families

Note that the form of the adjective remains the same regardless of the noun's number, of whether or not the noun is definite, or whether the adjective is describing or modifying the noun.

This is not the case in Hebrew.

Hebrew requires that an adjective agree in gender, number, and definiteness with the noun it modifies. An adjective in Hebrew also always *follows* the noun it modifies in an adjective phrase:

A wise son	בֶּן חָכָם
The bad beast	הַבְּהֵמָה הָרָעָה
Big swords	חַרְבִּים גְּדוֹלִים
The old families	הַמְּשֻׁפָּחוֹת זְקֵנוֹת

If a definite noun is followed by an indefinite adjective in Hebrew, then it is a copulative:

The beast is bad.	הַבְּהֵמָה רָעָה
The families are old.	הַמְּשֻׁפָּחוֹת זְקֵנוֹת

Basically these are similar in concept to the "Sentences without Verbs" we learned previously, which are also a type of copulative clause.

An indefinite noun followed by an indefinite adjective may be either an adjective phrase or a copulative clause. This must be inferred from context.