

Using afraid

Afraid and fear

Be afraid is the normal expression for talking about fear.

He is afraid of the dark.

Don't be afraid. (NOT Don't fear.) (NOT Don't afraid.)

Are you afraid of spiders?

There is nothing to be afraid of.

She is afraid that you might get angry.

Difference between afraid of and afraid to

Compare

I was afraid of hurting his sentiments. (Because I had no intention to do so.)

I was afraid to offend him. (Because he might hit me.)

I'm afraid

I'm afraid is a polite way of giving information that will not be welcome.

I'm afraid your wife has fallen ill. (= I am sorry to tell you that your wife has fallen ill.)

I can't help you, I'm afraid.

I'm afraid so and I'm afraid not are common in short answers.

'It is going to rain.' 'I'm afraid so.'

'Could you help me?' 'I'm afraid not.'

Not used before a noun

Afraid cannot be used to modify a noun in the attributive position. Instead, we use other expressions with similar meanings.

Jane is afraid. (BUT NOT Jane is an afraid woman.)

Jane is a frightened woman.

We can use very much to modify afraid.

I am very much afraid, I can't meet you.