

COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

We use the **comparatives** to compare one person or thing with another.

We use the **superlative** to compare one person or thing with more than one person or thing of the same group. We often use **than** after a comparative and **the** before a superlative.

E.g. She is younger **than** me. She is **the** youngest person in the room.

Formation of comparatives and superlatives from adjectives and adverbs:

* With one-syllable adjectives, we add **-(er - r)** to form the comparative and **-(est -st)** to form the superlative.

large – larg**er** than – the larg**est**

late – lat**er** than – the lat**est**

cheap - cheap**er** than – the cheap**est**

NOTE: for one syllable adjectives ending in a **vowel + a consonant**, we double the consonant:

thin – thin**ner** than – the thin**nest**

fat, sad, wet, red, big, hot, fit

* With two-syllable adjectives ending in **-ly, -y**, we replace the **-y** with an **-i** and add **-er / -est**:

lively – liveli**er** than – the liveli**est**;

tidy – tidi**er** than – the tidi**est**;

happy – happi**er** than – the happi**est** (**dirty, friendly, funny, noisy, tidy, silly**)

* With other two-syllable adjectives or adjectives with more than two syllables, comparatives and superlatives are formed with **more/most**: more comfortable – the most comfortable.

* With adverbs that have the same form as their adjectives, we add **-er / -est**: **hard, fast, free,**

late, high, early, low, deep, long, near, straight

hard – hard**er than** – the hard**est**

* Adverbs formed by adding **-ly** to the adjective take **more** in the comparative and **the most** in the superlative form.

Kind: kindly - **more** kindly - **the most** kindly

* Adverbs ending in **-y** drops the **-y** and adds **-ier / iest**

early= earli**er** than – the earli**est**

* two-syllable adverbs and those formed by adding **-ly** to their adjectives take **more/the most**
seldom = more seldom / the most seldom

sadly = more sadly / the most sadly

* Two-syllable or compound adverbs take **more/most**: careful – more careful – the most careful

NOTE: clever, common, cruel, friendly, narrow, gentle, pleasant, polite, shallow, simple, stupid,

quiet can form their comparative and superlative either with **-er/-est** or with **more/most**

stupid = stupider than – the stupidest or more stupid – the most stupid

Irregular forms:

Irregular adjectives

good: **better than – the best**

bad/badly: **worse than – the worst**

far: **farther/further than – the farthest/ the furthest**

old: **older/elder than – the oldest/eldest**

Irregular adverbs

well: **better than – the best**

badly: **worse than – the worst**

little: **less than – the least**

much: **more than – the most**

Irregular determiners

little: **less than – the least**

few: **fewer than – the fewest**

a lot of/ much/ many/ lots: **more than – the most**

NOTE:

* **We can use elder / eldest for people in the same family.**

Freya's elder – eldest sister has bought her own house.

* **further / farther (adv) = longer in distance**

The train station is further / farther away from my house than the bus stop.

* **further (adj) = more**

If you have any further questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

TYPES OF COMPARISONS

* **as + adjective + as** (to show that two people or things are similar in some way)

This coat is **as expensive as** that one.

Kathy's flat is **as big as** mine.

* In negative sentences we use **not as + adjective + as** or **not so + adjective + as**

Quite and nearly can be used to qualify negative sentences

Our new sofa is **not as comfortable as** our old one.

Our new sofa is **not so comfortable as** our old one.

Her new film **isn't nearly as bad as** her last one. (Her new film is much better than her last one)

He **isn't quite so impatient as** his brother. (He is a little more impatient than his brother)

* **less + adjective + than** (expresses the difference two people or things)

* The opposite is **more ... than**

Tom is **less rich than** his friend Tony.

James is **less excited than** Lily about the idea of moving to the countryside.

* **the least + adjective + in/of** (compares one person or thing to two or more people or things in the same group)

* The opposite is **the most ... of/in**

NOTE: We can use **in/of** after superlatives. We often used **in** with places.

Roberto is **the kindest of** all my neighbors.

He lives in **the tallest building in** the city.

She is **the least hard working** person I've ever met.

Sharon is **the least experienced** assistant in the shop.

* **by far + the + superlative form of adjective/adverb** (emphasizes the difference between one person or thing and two or more people or things in the same group).

Last winter was **by far the coldest** we ever had.

This is **by far the strangest** building I've ever seen.

* **the same as**

Her bedroom looks exactly **the same as** her twin sister's.

* **the same + noun + as**

My mom is **the same age as** my dad.

* **twice/three times/half, almost, nearly, just etc. + as + adjective + as** (can be used to qualify the comparisons)

The price of my grandparents' house is **three times** as high as the original price.

George's little sister is **half as tall as** him.

There were **nearly twice as many** people at the party **as** last year.

* **too + adjective/adverb + to-infinitive** (to show that something is more, or at a higher degree than necessary).

They don't like the area because it is **too crowded to live** in.

* **adjective/adverb + enough + to-infinitive** (to show that there is as much of something as is wanted, or at the necessary degree)

Ryan was **kind enough to help** us move house.

* **very + adjective/adverb**

Houses in this area are very expensive.

* **adjective/adverb + enough + to-infinitive** (to show that there is as much of something as is wanted, or at the necessary degree)

Ryan was **kind enough to help** us move house.

MODIFIERS

* **much/not much/a lot/far/a little/a bit/slightly/even/significantly + comparative form of adjective/adverb:** (expresses the degree of difference between two people or things)

Jack is **slightly taller than** Jeremy

We want to move **a bit closer** to the city center.

My new car's **much faster** than my old one.

REPEATED COMPARATIVES AND DOUBLE COMPARATIVES

* **comparative and comparative** (to show that something is **increasing or decreasing**)

It gets **warmer and warmer** every day.

The prices of flats in the city center are growing **higher and higher**.

It's becoming **more and more** difficult to drive in early morning traffic.

The birth rate is getting **lower and lower**.

By the end of the twentieth century, couples were waiting **longer and longer** to marry.

More and more people are getting married later.

Fewer and fewer children are leaving school.

It's becoming **more and more** difficult.

* **the + comparative ... , the + comparative** (double comparatives are used to describe a cause-and-effect process).

The more you study now, **the less** you will have to study at the end of the school year.

The bigger the house, **the more** furniture you'll need for it.

The more education women get, **the later** they marry.

The less children studied, **the more** slowly they learned.

NOTE: When *be* is used in double comparatives, it is sometimes omitted.

The better the quality of health care (is), **the higher** the life expectancy (is).

BE CAREFUL! Don't use continuous verb forms in double comparatives.

The longer couples wait to have children, **the fewer** children they have.

NOT The longer couples ~~are waiting~~ to have children, the fewer children they ~~are having~~.