


# Grade and comparison

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## Comparative and superlative grade

비교 (Comparison)  
2개 이상 (Two or more)  
최대 (Maximum)  
최소 (Minimum)



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- Adjectives: plain, comparative, superlative
- A certain determinatives and adverbs


	Adjective	Determinative	Adverb
[1] i. plain	<i>tall</i>	<i>many</i>	<i>soon</i>
ii. comparative	<i>taller</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>sooner</i>
iii. superlative	<i>tallest</i>	<i>most</i>	<i>soonest</i>

□ The superlative and set comparison  
Set comparison: comparison between the members of some set with respect to their position on the scale denoted by the lexeme

[2] i. *Max was the tallest boy in the class.*  
ii. *A prize will be given to whoever scores the most points.*  
iii. *I chose the life policy that will mature the soonest.*

(i): the class with respect to height  
(ii): (implicit) the number of points scored.  
(iii): date of maturing

### Comparative



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- ☐ The comparative and term comparison

- [3] i. *Max is taller than Tom.*  
 ii. *Sue scored more runs than I did.*  
 iii. *This policy will mature sooner than that one.*

- (i): "Max is x tall; Tom is y tall:  $x > y$  (i.e., x exceeds y)

- [4] *The aerial is taller than 1000 feet.*

- Comparison between the primary term and the secondary term

- The secondary term can be left unexpressed if it is recoverable from the context  
 [5] i. *Tim is quite tall, but [Max is taller].*  
 ii. *That's better.* [Imagine this being said after you have opened a window].

## Comparative

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- ☐ Set comparison with comparatives  
 - When the set has just two members:

- [6] Comparative Superlative  
 a. *Kim is the taller of the two.* b. *Kim is the tallest of the three.*

- ☐ Non-inflectional marking of grade

- [7] Adjective Adverb  
 i. Plain *useful* *rashly*  
 ii. Comparative *more useful* *more rashly*  
 iii. Superlative *most useful* *most rashly*

- *-ly* suffix is never compatible with grade inflection (\**clearlier*, \**clearerly*, you should speak *more clearly*)  
 - Monosyllabic words prefer the inflectional type (ex. *fake*, *ill*, *right*, and *wrong*)  
 - Those with the suffixes *-ish*, *-ful*, *-al*, *-ous*, and *-ic* do not accept inflection.

## Comparative

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# More and most

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- ☐ (a) *More* as determinative

- [8] Plain grade Comparative grade  
 i. a. *He didn't make many mistakes.* b. *He made more mistakes than you did.*  
 ii. a. *We don't have much time.* b. *We have more time than we need.*  
 iii. a. *I didn't enjoy it much.* b. *I enjoyed it more than last time.*

- (b): determinative  
 - The plain forms *much* are non-affirmative items. (?*We have much time* or ?*We enjoyed it much*.)

- ☐ (b) *More* as adverb

- [9] i. a. *It's expensive.* b. *It's more expensive than I expected.*  
 ii. a. *She behaved tactfully.* b. *She behaved more tactfully than her son.*

## Versatility

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□ **Most**

- non-superlative sense of the adverb, meaning “extremely” or “very”

- [10] i. a. *He didn't make many mistakes.*      b. *He made the most mistakes.*  
 ii. a. *It's expensive.*                              b. *It's the most expensive of them all.*  
 iii. a. *I found her helpful.*                        b. *I found her most helpful.*

- (ib): determinative: the superlative form of *many*
- (iib): adverb
- (iiib): an adverb, but not a marker of superlative grade

**Versatility**

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## Less and least

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- [11] i. a. *It has little value.*                      b. *It has less value than he claimed.*  
 ii. a. *It's expensive.*                              b. *It's less expensive than I expected.*  
 iii. a. *She behaved tactfully.*                    b. *She behaved less tactfully than her son.*

□ (a) The determinative **less**

- **More** is the comparative form of both *many* and *much*, which occur with plural and non-count singular nouns respectively
- The opposites of *many* and *much* are *few* and *little* with comparative forms *fewer* and *less*

[12] Plural

- i. a. *He'd had more jobs than me.*  
 ii. a. *He's had fewer jobs than me.*

Non-count singular

- b. *He's had more experience than me.*  
 b. *He's had less experience than me.*

## Less and least

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□ (a) The determinative **less** (Cnt'd)

- **Less** (unlike *little*) is often used with plurals

[13] i. *It costs less than twenty dollars.*

- ii. *Less / Fewer than twenty people attended the meeting.*  
 iii. *He's had fewer / %less jobs than me.*

- (i): a sum of money (cf. *fewer than twenty dollars*)
- (ii): *fewer* (more formal)
- (iii): followed immediately by a plural noun; *less* is informal

□ (b) The adverb **less**

[14] Comparison of superiority

- i. a. *Kim is taller than Pat.*  
 ii. a. *Kim is more energetic than Pat.*

Comparison of inferiority

- b. *Kim is less tall than Pat.*  
 b. *Kim is less energetic than Pat.*

## Less and least

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## Comparison of equality

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- [15] i. *Kim is as tall as Pat.*  
 ii. *Kim is as energetic as Pat.*

- (15i): Kim's height is at least equal to Pat's.
- *Kim isn't as tall as Pat* entails that Kim is \_\_\_\_\_ than Pat.
- (15ii): Kim is at least as high on the energetic scale as Pat.
- 1<sup>st</sup> *as*: an adverb of degree
- 2<sup>nd</sup> *as*: a preposition
- In some contexts, primarily negatives, the adverb *as* is replaceable by *so*.

- [16] i. *It wasn't so straightforward as I'd been led to expect.*  
 ii. *The sea was flat as a pancake.*

### Equality

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## Non-scalar comparison

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- A type of comparison where the issue is not a matter of relative degree but simply of identity or similarity (\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ comparison)

- [17] i. Equality *We went by the same route as we usually take.*  
 ii. Inequality *%We went by a different route than we usually take.*

- (ii): cf. *We went by a different route from the one we usually take.*
- Items that license a *than* complement, *other* and *else*

- [18] i. *There must be some other way of doing it than this.*  
 ii. *Anyone else than you would have complained.*

### Non-scalar

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# Comparative clauses

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- The prepositions *than* and *as* often take as complement a distinctive type of subordinate clause called a \_\_\_\_\_:
- [19] i. *She did better in the exam than we'd thought she would.*  
 ii. *The treatment was less painful than it was last time.*  
 iii. *The pool is nearly as wide as it is long.*  
 iv. *They come from the same part of Britain as I come from.*
- Comparative \_\_\_\_\_ are always associated with comparisons of superiority, whereas comparative \_\_\_\_\_ are found in all the types of comparison in [19].
  - Comparative clause applies to the subordinate clause expressing the secondary term in the comparison, not to the matrix clause that expresses the comparison as a whole.
  - (19i): "She did x well in the exam; we'd thought she would do y well;  $x > y$ "; but the "y well" part cannot be syntactically overt.
  - (19ii): "y painful" missing
  - (19iii): "The pool is nearly x wide; it is y long;  $x = y$ " (cf. \**The pool is nearly as wide as it is very long.*) "degree modifier"
  - (19iv): "They come from x part of the country; I come from y part of the country;  $x = y$ " "(a different kind of) preposition stranding"

## Comparative clauses

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□ A further case of *as* in non-scalar comparison of equality

- *as* can also occur in non-scalar comparison without any such preceding item to license it

[20] i. *As we'd expected, he refused to compromise.*  
 ii. *He didn't behave as he usually does.*

- (20i): "We'd expected x; what did in fact happen y (i.e., he refused to compromise);  $x = y$ "
- (20ii): "He didn't behave in x manner; he usually behaves in y manner;  $x = y$ "

□ Comparative clauses as complement to *like*

[21] i. *They don't get on like they used to.* [comparative clause]  
 ii. *It looks like it's going to rain.* [content clause]

- (21ii): cf. *It appears that it's going to rain.*

## Comparative clauses

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