

EC 3 Comparatives & Superlatives

Form – How are they formed?

Comparatives are formed by adding *-er* to most adjectives that have one syllable (small/smaller) and adjectives that end in *-y* (pretty/prettier). If an adjective has two or more syllables, usually "more" or "less" comes before it (*more* comfortable, *more* peaceful).

Superlatives are formed by adding *-est* to most adjectives that have one syllable (small/smallest) and adjectives that end in *-y* (pretty/prettiest). If an adjective has two or more syllables, usually "most" or "least" comes before it (*most* comfortable, *most* peaceful).

There are also some adjectives that use *irregular* forms for comparatives and superlatives. Irregular means they don't follow the predictable pattern.

adjective	comparative	superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least
much	more	most
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest

Other common forms:

as + adjective + as	<i>He is as intelligent/nice/tall as her.</i> (They are the same.)
the same (as)	I have the same shirt as you./ Our shirts are the same .
similar to	He looks similar to his father.
different from	He looks nothing like his brother. They are different from each other.

Comparative Adjective Grammar Patterns

More	Less	Same
<p>Russia is colder than Mexico.</p> <p>For most adjectives that are only one or two syllables in length, add –er + than.</p>	<p>Mexico is not as cold as Russia.</p> <p>Mexico is less cold than Russia.</p>	<p>Russian history is just as fascinating as Mexican history.</p>
<p>Earth is bigger than Mars.</p> <p>For some adjectives, double the final consonant and add –er + than.</p>	<p>Mars is not as big as Earth.</p> <p>Mars is less big than Earth.</p>	<p>According to some people, Mars is just as beautiful as Earth.</p>
<p>The girl is hungrier than the boy.</p> <p>For adjectives ending in y, change the y to an i and add –er + than.</p>	<p>The boy is not as hungry as the girl.</p> <p>The boy is less hungry than the girl.</p>	<p>The boy is just as hungry as the girl.</p>
<p>The sirloin tip roast is more expensive than the chicken breast.</p> <p>For most adjectives that are more than two syllables in length, add more before and keep the base form of the adjective + than.</p>	<p>The chicken breast is not as expensive as the sirloin tip roast.</p> <p>The chicken breast is less expensive than the sirloin tip roast.</p>	<p>The chicken breast is just as delicious as the sirloin tip roast.</p>

Superlative Adjective Grammar Patterns

Most	Others Compared to the Most	The Most Compared to Others	Least
<p>Antarctica is the coldest place.</p> <p>For most adjectives that are only one or two syllables in length, add the + – est.</p>	<p>Other places are not as cold as Antarctica.</p>	<p>Antarctica is the coldest of all places.</p> <p>Antarctica is the coldest of any place.</p>	<p>Antarctica is the least populated place.</p>
<p>Jupiter is the biggest planet.</p> <p>For some adjectives, double the final consonant and add the + –est.</p>	<p>Other planets are not as big as Jupiter.</p>	<p>Jupiter is the biggest of all places.</p> <p>Jupiter is the biggest of any place.</p>	<p>Mars has the least colorful landscape.</p>
<p>Algebra is the easiest subject.</p> <p>For adjectives ending in y, change the y to an i and add the + –est.</p>	<p>Other subjects are not as easy as Algebra.</p>	<p>Algebra is the easiest of all places.</p> <p>Algebra is the easiest of any place.</p>	<p>Algebra is the least difficult subject.</p>
<p>Top Sirloin is the most expensive meat.</p> <p>For most adjectives that are more than two syllables in length, add the + most before and keep the base form of the adjective.</p>	<p>Other meats are not as expensive as Top Sirloin.</p>	<p>Top Sirloin is the most expensive of all meats.</p> <p>Top Sirloin is the most expensive of any meat.</p>	<p>Chicken breast is the least expensive.</p>

Meaning- what do they mean?

Comparatives compare TWO people, places, or things. Use the word "than". (He is taller **than** her.) (This book is more interesting than that book.)

Superlatives compare a group of THREE or more people, places, or things. Superlatives often have the word "the" before them. (She was the best student in the whole class.)

Use – when/why are they used?

We can use comparative and superlative forms in simple sentences in much the same way as we use the standard adjective forms.

- John is tall. → Peter is taller. → Fred is the tallest.
- It is a long flight from Auckland to Sydney. →

It is a longer flight from Auckland to Honolulu. →

The longest flight of the three is from Auckland to Los Angeles

When asking for a comparison of two, it is common to ask the question and list the two alternatives. The list usually comes at the end of the question, but it can sometimes come at the front.

Examples:

Question: Who is smarter, John or Peter?

Answer: John is smarter.

Question: Out of mathematics and economics, which is harder?

Answer: Mathematics is harder.

Question: Which is farther from Honolulu, Los Angeles or San Francisco?

Answer: Los Angeles is a little further.

Question: Is it better to go to a store or to shop on-line?

Answer: I prefer going to a store.

When asking for a comparison among three or more alternatives, it is common to ask the question and state the range of choice. Again, the statement of the range of alternatives usually comes at the end of the question, but it can come at the front.

Examples:

Question: Who is the oldest of your children?

Answer: Tina is (the oldest).

Question: Who is the greatest basketball player of all time?

Answer: Michael Jordan is.

Question: Out of all the EU countries, which has the lowest birth rate?

Answer: Germany does.

Question: Which of your children lives farthest away from you?

Answer: My oldest son lives the furthest away, in London.

We can use comparatives and superlatives with adverbs as well.

Example:

John speaks very softly.

Mary speaks more softly (than John).

Frances speak the most softly (of all three of them).

He thought sadly about the wreckage of his car.

He thought more sadly about the wreckage of his home.

But he thought most sadly about the wreckage of his marriage

Sometimes you speak more kindly to strangers than to your friends.

For more information on comparative and superlative forms and practice exercises, go to <https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/adjectives-adverbs>