

## Handout 3

### Grammar for Writing Comparative Adjectives<sup>1</sup>

Writers often use comparative adjectives to show how two subjects are different. Follow these rules when using comparative adjectives.

Spelling	
Add -er to one-syllable adjectives, such as <i>high, fast, long</i> .	A college graduate's income is usually <b>higher</b> than the income of someone who did not get a college degree.
Change the -y to -ier for two-syllable adjectives ending in -y, such as <i>busy, easy, heavy</i> .	Students who work and go to school are <b>busier</b> than students who do not work.
Use more with most adjectives that have more than one syllable, such as <i>convenient, expensive, important</i> .	Shopping online is <b>more convenient</b> than shopping in a store.
How to use less	
Use <i>less</i> to talk about the opposite of more.	Gen X is <b>less dependent</b> on their family and friends than Gen Y.
<i>Less</i> is not usually used with one-syllable adjectives, except <i>clear, safe, and sure</i> .	After college, Gen Y is <b>less sure than</b> Gen X was about getting married and having a family.
Use not as + adjective + as instead of less with one-syllable adjectives.	My student loan debt <b>is not as high as</b> my husband's because I worked part-time while I went to college.
Irregular comparatives	
good > better bad > worse	In my brother's opinion, spending money is <b>better</b> than saving it. In my opinion, spending money is <b>worse</b> than saving it.
How to use than	
Use a subject pronoun + verb after <i>than</i> if you do not want to repeat the noun	My brother is a spender. I am better <b>than he</b> is at saving money.
Omit the verb after <i>than</i> when both verbs are the same (or use an auxiliary verb).	I save money <b>better than my brother saves money</b> . I save money <b>better than my brother (does)</b> .
Omit <i>than</i> + the second part of the comparison when the meaning is clear.	Gen X has to do a lot of research before making a purchase. For this reason, when making a big purchase, Gen X <b>is often slower (than Gen Y)</b> .
Use a comparative adjective without <i>than</i> before a noun when the comparison is clear.	Some fast-food restaurants are offering more creative products in order to reach Millennials. (Their products are <b>more creative than</b> other)

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Bauer, J., Boyle M.S., Stapleton, S. (2016). Final Draft 2. Student's book. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

### Avoiding common mistakes

#### 1. Do not use a comparative when you are not comparing two subjects.

It is ~~more~~ important to keep track of your credit score.

#### 2. Use *than*, not *that*, after a comparative.

It is easy to spend more ~~that~~ *than* you can afford.

#### 3. Do not use *-er* and *more* with the same adjective.

Their new house is ~~more~~ *bigger* than their old house.

### Exercise 1

*Work with a partner. Complete the sentences. Use the correct comparative forms of the adjectives in parentheses:*

1. When comparing fast-food choices, Gen Y is ..... (healthy) Gen X.
2. Buying a car online can be ..... (fast) buying a car from a dealership because you do not have to visit different places to get information.
3. Online options from car dealerships are ..... (common) in the past, since so many customers want to buy cars online.
4. Some people argue that smartphones are ..... (good) tablets. For example, smartphones are much ..... (small) tablets are.
5. Some experts argue that part-time students are ..... (successful) full-time students at managing their time because part-time students are often too busy to waste time.

### Exercise 2

*Find and correct five more mistakes in the paragraph below.*

The most important difference between using a credit card and using cash is that cash is ~~more~~ harder to spend than credit cards. For that reason, many financial advisors argue that using cash is more better than using credit cards. Experts have found that shoppers make more purchases when they use credit cards. There is a psychological reason for this. It is more easy to swipe a credit card to buy something. This action does not make people feel like they are spending money. On the other hand, studies show that people who use cash spend less. Cash feels more real that credit cards, so people treat it differently. Most people try to keep cash. They find cash more difficult to use that credit. People who are trying to save money may find that using cash is helpful than using credit cards.