

GRAMMAR

Advanced uses of adjectives

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_3022G

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can modify comparatives and superlatives.
- I can use adjectives to intensify nouns.



Warm-up

Write **one comparative** and **one superlative** sentence about yourself into the chat.
Ask **your classmates** a follow-up question to find out more about what they've written.



My **most valuable** possession is...

My last job was **less rewarding** than my current one, because...

- interesting
- rewarding
- scary
- spacious
- noisy
- comfortable
- valuable
- wealthy

Modifying comparatives: a big difference

We use **comparative adjectives** when we compare one thing to another.

If we want to show that there is a **big difference** between two things, we can use **intensifiers** such as *a lot*, *much* and *far*.

a lot	much	far
Food is a lot more expensive in Switzerland than in Poland.	The Himalayas are much higher than the Alps.	This restaurant is far better than the other one.
There are a lot more people in China than in Croatia.	It is much more comfortable to take the train over long distances than the bus.	New York is far bigger than Sofia.

Modifying comparatives: a small difference

To show that there is only a **small difference** between two things, we can use **mitigators** such as *slightly*, *a little* and *a bit*.

Note the use of *only*, which further emphasises the degree of difference.

slightly	a little	a bit
Her hair is slightly longer than mine.	You are only a little younger than me.	The matinee is a bit cheaper than the evening show.
That car is only slightly more expensive than this one.	This winter has been a little warmer than last year.	This sofa is a bit more expensive, but a lot more comfortable.



Modifying superlatives

Read the example sentences and **complete** the blue box.

Yorkshire is **by far** the most beautiful county in England.

That was the best option **by far**.

She's **easily** the most talented actor in the industry today.

- We can use **by far** and **easily** in order to **intensify a superlative**.
- Note that **by far** can go after the verb or at the end of the sentence.



True or false?

Correct the false statements using an appropriate modifier from the previous slides.

		true	false
1	New Zealand is slightly bigger than Australia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Andorra is far smaller than Montenegro.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Malta is a much bigger island than Great Britain.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The English language is a bit more useful than Thai when travelling in Europe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	English is far easier to learn than any other language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





Match the sentences parts

Match the sentence parts. **Decide** whether these statements are **facts** or **opinions**.

1 Russia is by far...

2 British-made chocolate is much...

3 It is a lot...

4 It's a bit...

5 This is easily...

a faster to fly transatlantic than to go by ship.

b ...the biggest country in the world, at over 17 million km².

c ...harder to learn a language if you don't live in the country where it is spoken.

d ...the best family car on the market now, in terms of value for money.

e tastier than American.



Rewrite your sentences

Rewrite your sentences from the warm-up activity, using an appropriate modifier.



*My mother's wedding ring is **by far the most valuable** possession I own.*

*My last job was **a lot less rewarding** than my current one, because I didn't have direct contact with our customers.*

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| • a lot | • slightly |
| • much | • a bit |
| • far | • by far |
| • a little | • easily |



Journeys

It is much more comfortable to take the train over long distances than the bus.

Do you agree?

What's the longest journey you have taken **by land**?

What mode of transport did you use?





Discuss

Answer the questions below. Use the modifier ***by far*** or ***easily*** in at least one of your sentences.

What's the best way to get around your city?

What's one of the easiest meals to cook when you're busy?

What's one of the most difficult instruments to master?

When is the most pleasant time to visit your country?



Option: complete this activity **in breakout rooms**.

Using adjectives as intensifiers

Read the example sentences and explanation below.

Losing three major clients in a year was **a real blow** for the company.

There was **total silence** after she dropped the antique vase.

It was **an absolute nightmare** of a trip!

- The following adjectives are often used to **intensify nouns**:
- *real, absolute, complete, total, utter*
- Note that certain adjective-noun combinations are most often used to describe a **negative** situation.





The project was a **complete and utter failure** from start to finish.

As in the examples on the previous slide, this phrase is often used to express extreme dismay, shock or disappointment.



Complete the sentences

- 1 It is difficult to find a real _____, one that will stand by you when times are tough.
- 2 He's a complete _____ when it comes to saving money. He can't manage his personal finances at all.
- 3 They're an absolute _____ to deal with. I was trying to get through to customer support for over an hour!
- 4 Well, that meeting was a complete _____ of time.
- 5 We sat in total _____ for most of the dinner. It was so awkward. We have practically nothing in common.
- 6 I thought the last part of the film was absolute _____. It just didn't make any sense!
- 7 I got such a fright. The room was in total _____ and I didn't realise there was somebody there!
- 8 His appointment to the board was a real _____.

silence
waste
friend
nightmare
darkness
nonsense
surprise
idiot



Talk about a time when...

Build adjective-noun combinations using the cards below.

Pick a classmate. They have to describe a situation using one of your chosen combinations.

total

silence

utter

chaos

waste

failure

surprise

friend

complete

absolute

real

idiot

nonsense

nightmare

blow



End of the lesson

Idiom

(It's) head and shoulders above

Meaning: use this to describe something which is far better than something else

Example: She's head and shoulders above the other candidates.



Additional practice



Vocabulary review

Ask a classmate a question using vocabulary from the lesson.



a lot

a little

much

by far

far

rather

slightly

absolute



Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences so that they are true for you.



1 I'm slightly better...



...than my husband at remembering names!

2 I have a far greater fear of...



3 I'm a lot better at English than...



4 The weather right now is much more...



5 My job is a little less...



6 I'm slightly more confident about...





Compare two countries

Compare two countries using modifying adverbs.
Use the information below as a guide.



Area (km2)

Population

Cities

Weather

Attractions



Answer key

P.7: 1. F a lot smaller, 2. T, 3. F a lot smaller, 4. F a lot more, 5. T, 6. Whatever your student says!

P.8: 1. b 2. e 3. a 4. c 5. d

P.14: 1. friend 2. idiot 3. nightmare 4. waste 5. silence 6. nonsense 7. darkness 8. surprise



Summary

Modifying comparatives – a big difference:

- We use **comparative adjectives** when we compare one thing to another.
- If we want to show that there is a **big difference** between two things, we can use **intensifiers** such as ***a lot***, ***much*** and ***far***.
- *Food in Switzerland is far more expensive than food in Poland.*

Modifying comparatives – a small difference:

- To show that there is only a **small difference** between two things, we can use **mitigators** such as ***slightly***, ***a little*** and ***a bit***.
- Note the use of ***only***, which further emphasises the degree of difference.
- *You're **only a little** younger than me.*

Modifying superlatives:

- We can use ***by far*** and ***easily*** in order to **intensify a superlative**.
- Note that ***by far*** can go after the verb or at the end of the sentence.
- *That was the best option **by far**.*
*She's **easily** the most talented actor in the industry today.*

Adjectives as intensifiers:

- The following adjectives are often used to **intensify nouns**: ***real***, ***absolute***, ***complete***, ***total***, ***utter***
- Certain adjective-noun combinations are most often used to describe a **negative** situation.
- *There was **total** silence after she dropped the antique vase.*
- *It was an **absolute** nightmare of a trip!*



Vocabulary

rewarding

industry

transatlantic

blow

complete and utter



Notes

