

Grammar Reference

Comparatives and Superlatives

Meaning and Use

Comparatives

Meaning and use

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

*My new phone is **smaller than** my old phone.*

*The film is **more exciting than** the book.*

*He's **better than** me at tennis.*

We use **superlatives** to compare one person or thing with several other people or things of the same kind. Superlatives tell us which thing or person is the greatest in some way.

*It's **the smallest** room in the house.*

*We've got **the cutest** dog in the world.*

*Antarctica is **the coldest place** on Earth.*

Form

Comparatives

We make comparatives in two ways: by adding **-er** to an adjective or by putting **more** in front of the adjective. We often use the word **than** after the comparative, but not always.

*David is **older than** Juan.*

*Who is **more famous** – Brad Pitt or Benedict Cumberbatch?*

We add **-er** to adjectives with one syllable, but if the adjective ends in **-e**, just add

-r.

*old – **older***

*small – **smaller***

*nice – **nicer***

*wide – **wider***

If an adjective ends in one vowel and one consonant, **double the consonant** and add

-er (except when the final consonant is 'w').

*hot – **hotter***

*big – **bigger***

*new – **newer***

*few – **fewer***

If an adjective has two syllables and ends in **-y**, change the **y** to **i** and add **-ier**.

*happy – **happier***

*noisy – **noisier***

*easy – **easier***

We put **more** before other adjectives with two or more syllables.

*Sit in the chair – it's **more comfortable** than the sofa.*

*A tablet is **more useful** than a desktop.*

Take note: (not) as ... as

To say that two things or people are similar in some way, use **as + adjective + as**.

*I think that skiing is **as dangerous as** snowboarding.*

We can use **not as + adjective + as** to say that two things or people are not equal in some way.

*Isabel is not **as successful as** her sister.*

Superlatives

We make superlatives in two ways: by adding **-est** to an adjective or by putting **most** in front of the adjective. We usually use **the** before the superlative.

*Usain Bolt is probably **the fastest** man in the world.*

*It's **the cheapest** restaurant in town.*

If an adjective has one syllable, add **-est** to form the superlative, but if the adjective already ends in **-e**, just add **-st**.

*high – **highest***

*small – **smallest***

*nice – **nicest***

*wide – **widest***

If an adjective ends in one vowel and one consonant, **double the consonant** and add

-est (except when it ends in **-w**)

*hot – **hottest***

*big – **biggest***

*new – **newest***

If an adjective has two syllables and ends in **-y**, **change the 'y' to 'i'** and add **-est**

*happy – **happiest** funny – **funniest***

We put **most** before adjectives with two or more syllables.

*It's the **most beautiful painting** I've ever seen.*

Take note: superlative and present perfect

We often use the superlative with the present perfect.

*It's the **most delicious** meal I've ever had.*

*Anna is **the friendliest** girl he's ever met.*

Remember!

After superlative adjectives, we usually use **in**, not **of**.

*He was the tallest person **in** his family.*

Take note: irregular comparatives and superlatives

Some adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms.

good – better – best

bad – worse – worst

*It's the **best** film I've seen in a long time.*

*It's the **worst** winter in history.*

