

# Grammar Reference

## Meaning and use

We use **comparative adjectives and adverbs** to compare one person or thing with another person or thing.

*Today is **hotter than** yesterday.*

*I think documentaries are **more interesting than** the news.*

*Can you drive **faster?** – I'm late.*

*My brother speaks **more fluently than** me.*

We can repeat **comparatives** with **and** to say how something changes.

*Train journeys in the UK are becoming **more and more expensive**.*

*The sky grew **darker and darker** and we knew the storm would break soon.*

We can use two different comparatives with **the** to say how something changes as something else changes.

***The faster** they went, **the louder** they screamed.*

***The taller** she grew, **the thinner** she became.*

We use **superlative adjectives and adverbs** to compare one person or thing with several other people or things of the same kind.

*September is **the busiest** month for our business..*

*Angelina Jolie was **the highest** paid actress last year.*

*Which student has worked **the hardest** this year?*

We often use superlatives with the **present perfect** to talk about a particular life experience.

*That was **the funniest** film **I've seen** this year.*

*He swam **the fastest** he **has** ever **swum** to win gold.*

## Form

We make **comparatives** in two ways: by adding **-er** or by putting **more** in front of the adjective or adverb.

*This hotel is **cheaper than** the one on the beach.*

*Life in the country is **more peaceful** than in the city.*

*Ali spoke **more accurately** than Khalid in the exam.*

We usually use **than** with the comparative, but not always.

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

*Can you talk **more quietly**, please - I'm trying to work.*

We make **superlatives** by adding **-est** or by putting **most** in front of the adjective or adverb.

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

*He spoke **the most confidently** in the final interviews.*

We usually use **the** before the superlative, but we sometimes use a possessive adjective.

*August is **the quietest** month in Paris.*

*December is **our busiest** time of year.*

For adjectives and adverbs with **one syllable**, add **-er** in the comparative form, and **-est** in the superlative form. If the adjective or adverb already ends in **-e**, then just add **-r** (comparative) or **-st** (superlative).

Adjective/adverb: *great nice fast*

Comparative: *greater nicer faster*

Superlative: *greatest nicest fastest*

If an adjective **ends in a vowel + consonant**, double the last letter before adding **-er** or **-est** (unless it ends in **-w**).

Adjective: *big hot new*

Comparative: *bigger hotter newer*

Superlative: *biggest hottest newest*

If an adjective or adverb has **three or more syllables**, use **more** in the comparative, and **most** in the superlative.

Adjective/adverb: *expensive fluently*

Comparative: *more expensive more fluently*

Superlative: *most expensive most fluently*

To form the comparative and superlative of some **two-syllables** adjectives, you can either add **-er/-est** or use **more/most**.

Adjective: *quiet common pleasant*

Comparative: *quieter / more quiet commoner / more common pleasanter / more pleasant*

Superlative: *quietest / most quiet commonest / most common pleasantest / most pleasant*

To form the comparative and superlative of **two-syllable** adjectives or adverbs that **end in -y**, change the **'y'** to **'i'** before adding **-er/-est**.

Adjective/adverb: *busy early*

Comparative: *busier earlier*

Superlative: *busiest earliest*

## Remember: irregular comparatives and superlatives

Some adjectives and adverbs have irregular comparative and superlative forms.

*His cold has got **worse** since he went back to work.*

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

Adjective: *good bad far little*

Comparative: *better worse further less*

Superlative: *best worst furthest least*

Adverb: *well badly*

Comparative: *better worse*

Superlative: *best worst*

## Take note: much/a lot

We use **much** or **a lot** before an adjective or adverb to emphasise the degree of comparison.

*Shirley is **much more popular than** Janet.*

*This winter is **a lot worse** than last year.*

*I work **much more effectively** when I have a good night's sleep.*

## Take note: (not) as ... as

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

*Mario is **as clever as** his brother.*

*Juliana shouted **as loudly as** the others but the teacher didn't choose her.*

### Idioms with (not) as ... as

There are many set idioms in English which use **as + adjective + as** to make comparisons. These are often used in narrative texts to make writing more interesting and colourful.

*He was **as quiet as a mouse**.*

*The material was **as thin as ice**.*

*Her hands were **as warm as toast**.*

*He ran **as fast as the wind** to escape.*

*When Anna heard the news, she turned **as white as a sheet**.*

*He picked her up and she was **as light as a feather**.*

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

*Ishbel is **not as talented as** her sister.*

*The final wasn't **so exciting as** the semi-final.*