

Annotating Comparisons: Guidelines

Insulting Comparisons vs. Negative Comparisons

A **comparison** is the act of evaluating two or more things by determining the relevant characteristics of each thing to be compared, and then determining which characteristics of each are similar to the other, which are different, and to what degree.

An **insulting comparison** is an expression which is disrespectful or scornful. An insulting comparison may be accurate, but at the same time abusive, such as the comparison *You are like an inbred*.

A (non-insulting) **negative comparison** either contains words that themselves have a negative meaning, or the wording of the comparison makes it clear that it is meant in a negative way. For the purposes of this survey, a negative comparison is also **not insulting**.

A **positive or neutral comparison** contains words that themselves have a positive or at least neutral meaning, or the wording of the comparison makes it clear that it is meant in a positive or at least neutral way.

Insulting Comparisons

The insulting comparisons presented in this task are **implicit insults**, which means that they do not contain explicitly insulting words but are still perceived as insults.

Examples are:

- *With your mouth open you look as intelligent as you are.*
- *With your weight you have to take 3 seats at the cinema.*
- *You look like a sticky frog.*
- *Your drawings have the charm of a car crash.*
- *Your mouth reminds me of a fish.*

Negative Comparisons

While insulting comparisons are a more specific type of negative expressions, for the purposes of this survey we label comparisons as negative comparisons if they are **negative but not actually insulting**.

Often, this is the case for expressions which point out a negative trait in the addressed

person, but are more of a **well-meaning criticism**, or an **expression of concern** on the speaker's part.

For example, if you come in to work and notice that your colleague is obviously very sick, you might wish to express your concern without insulting the colleague. You could say something like:

You look like death warmed up. You are as pale as a ghost.

These comparisons are negative, but they are not meant to be insulting. Rather, they express that the speaker has noticed something negative, but wishes to express concern by pointing it out.

Another example would be polite criticism of a colleague's slow progress at work. You would want to express your disappointment or frustration, without actually offending the other person. You could say something like:

Your progress is as slow as a glacier. Your work is like a half-done cake.

Further examples are:

- *Your expression reminds me of a thunderstorm.*
- *With that dress, you look less beautiful than usual.*
- *Your self-confidence is as brittle as glass.*
- *You look like you have a case of the flu.*

Positive/Neutral Comparisons

All other comparisons that are not negative and not insulting will have a **positive meaning, or least a neutral** one. For the purposes of this survey, you do not need to distinguish between positive and neutral comparisons.

Examples of positive comparisons are:

- *You remind me of a summer day.*
- *Your painting is as vivid as a red sunset.*

Examples of neutral comparisons are:

- *Your car is as green as an olive.*
- *You are as tall as a tree.*

Goal of this Survey

Your task is to label example comparisons with one of three options:

- **insulting**
- **negative**
- **positive/neutral**

You are given **10 examples per page**. For each example, read the comparison carefully. Ask yourself if the example is insulting or not. Then label it as either **insulting comparison** or **negative comparison** or **positive/neutral comparison**.

Advice on how to decide whether a given example comparison is insulting or not:

- You should always ask yourself whether you imagine the addressed person to perceive the remark as an insult.
- You may be hardened, therefore you should imagine how a sensitive person might react.
- Would you say this sentence to someone without offending them?
- Can it be taken as an expression of concern or well-meaning criticism?

The survey also provides a **fourth option**, which is labelled as **Can't decide, because**. You should only select this option if, after considering the example carefully, **you feel sure that you cannot assign the correct label** for it. If you select this option, please provide a short comment on why. Reasons might be if the comparison makes no sense to you, or if it is such a borderline case that you feel unsure whether or not it is insulting.

Rules

- Read each example carefully.
- Give yourself time to consider the example.
- If you select the **Can't decide option**, please provide a meaningful comment on why.
- You may use the **Previous button** at the bottom of the page to return to previous pages to check your annotations again, or read over the guidelines again. Your progress will not be lost!