

# Comparatives

## Definition of Comparatives

Every day, people compare things, places, and people. They compare things and objects using specific words such as than, more, or less, etc. This [comparison](#) is called “comparative form.” In grammar, a comparative is an adjective or adverb form used to make a comparison between two nouns, such as people, places, or things, to describe actions (verbs), or the words describing verbs (other adverbs).

For instance, in the excerpt ” ‘Take some more tea,’ the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly. ‘I’ve had nothing yet,’ Alice replied in an offended tone, ‘so I can’t take more.’ ‘You mean you can’t take less,’ said the Hatter: ‘it’s very easy to take more than nothing.’ ” (*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*, by Lewis Carroll) See that all underlined words in the above lines are comparatives.

## Characteristics of Comparatives

### One Syllable Comparatives/Adjectives

One syllable comparatives are made by adding “-er” to the base form of the adjective, or one-syllable adverb. For instance:

This dress is brighter than that dress.

They may reach higher than us.

### Two Syllables Comparatives/Adjectives

Two syllables comparatives/adjectives are made by replacing “-y” with “-ier,” if the base form of a two-syllable comparative ends in “-y.” For instance:

She is funnier than you.

### Two, three, or more Syllables Comparatives/Adjectives

These comparatives are made by adding “more” or “less” before three-syllable adjectives, or adverbs ending in “-ly.” For instance:

This book is more expensive than that book.

He plays more beautifully now that he is grown.

## Common Use of Comparatives

This house is better than that one.

They are looking happier

Today the shops are more crowded than yesterday.

English lessons are more enjoyable than mathematics lessons.

She is taller than her sister.

## Examples of Comparatives in Literature

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### Example #1: *Right Ho, Jeeves* (By P.G. Wodehouse)

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“He had been looking like a dead fish. He now looked like a deader fish, one of last year’s, cast up on some lonely beach and left there at the mercy of the wind and tides.”

In this example, the comparative is shown underlined as “deader.” This presents a single syllable adjective or comparative, to which “-er” has been added at the end.

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### Example #2: *I’ll Mature When I’m Dead* (by Dave Barry)

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“[W]e did learn some important life lessons from sports. I learned, for example, that even though I was not as big, or fast, or strong, or coordinated as the other kids, if I worked really hard—if I gave 100 percent and never quit—I would still be smaller, slower, weaker, and less coordinated than the other kids.”

This is another good instance of single syllable and two or more syllable comparatives. The single syllable adjectives are “small,” “slow,” and “weak.” The example of a two or more syllable comparative is “less coordinated.”

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### Example #3: *Lost Worlds* (by Michael Bywater)

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“Keg beer ... poured at random, got everywhere, and always ran out. But in its benign gleam, the music sounded better, the lights were softer, the girls more beautiful and potentially yielding, oneself manlier, one’s friends friendlier, the night darker, the stars brighter, the moon fuller, the air warmer, the hour later, the future brighter, the present aching with that particular adolescent promise which does not need to be fulfilled to make it miraculous.”

This excerpt presents an excellent example of all types of comparatives, the single-syllable comparatives include “better,” “softer,” “darker,” “brighter,” “fuller,” “warmer,” and “later.” The two-syllable comparatives are “manlier” and “friendlier. Two or more than two syllables comparative include “more beautiful.”

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**Example #4: *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* (by Iris Murdoch)**

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“After a second of shock he had recognized Edgar Demarnay. They had not met for several years. An Edgar grown fatter and grosser and older, but Edgar still, with his big pink boy’s face and his fat lips and his copious short fluffy hair now pale grey instead of pale gold.”

There are three comparatives in this example: “fatter,” “grosser,” and “older.” Through the given comparatives, the author has described the physical features of a [character](#), Edgar.

## **Function of Comparatives**

The basic function of comparatives is to make a comparison between two people or things. They help define and describe people, things, and actions. By comparing two things, in fact, comparatives highlight the good or bad qualities of the two things being compared, and let the [audience](#) see it. Also, they give a better understanding of the things and people.