### SOME RULES ABOUT FORMING COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

* **1. One syllable adjectives** generally form the comparative by adding **-er** and the

superlative by adding **-est**, e.g.

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| **Adjective** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| soft | softer | the softest |
| cheap | cheaper | the cheapest |
| sweet | sweeter | the sweetest |
| thin | thinner | the thinnest |

**NOTE:**

* if a one-syllable adjective ends in a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant letter, the consonant letter is doubled, e.g. thin - thi***nn***er/thi***nn***est, big - bi***gg***er/bi***gg***est.
* If an adjective ends in -e, this is removed when adding -er/-est, e.g. wide - wid***er***/wid***est***.
* If an adjective ends in a consonant followed by -y, -y is replaced by –I when adding -er/-est, e.g. dry - dr***i***er/dr***i***est.
* **2.** **Two-syllable adjectives which end in -y** usually form the comparative by adding

-er and the superlative by adding -est, (note the **change of -y to -i** in the comparative

/superlative).

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| **Adjective** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| happy | happier | the happiest |
| funny | funnier | the funniest |
| easy | easier | the easiest |

* **3.**  **Two-syllable adjectives ending in -ed, -ing, -ful, or -less** always form the comparative with **more** and the superlative with **most**.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| worried | more worried | the most worried |
| boring | more boring | the most boring |
| careful | more careful | the most careful |
| useless | more useless | the most useless |

 As a general rule, most other two-syllable adjectives also form comparatives and superlatives with more and most. However, **a few two-syllable adjectives can take either -er/-est or more/most**. Here are three examples.

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| **Adjective** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| narrow | narrower/more narrow | the narrowest/most narrow |
| simple | simpler/more simple | the simplest/most simple |
| quiet | quieter/more quiet | the quietest/most quiet |

* **4.**  **Adjectives which have three or more syllables** always form the comparative and

superlative with **more** and **most**.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| dangerous | more dangerous | the most dangerous |
| difficult | more difficult | the most difficult |
| exciting | more exciting | the most exciting |
| ridiculous | more ridiculous | the most ridiculous |

* **5.**  The following adjectives have **irregular** comparative and superlative forms:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| good | better | the best |
| bad | worse | the worst |
| far | farther/further | the farthest/furthest |

**NOTE:**

* + The adjectives ill and well, describing bad and good health, have irregular comparative forms. The comparative of ill is worse, and the comparative of well is better, e.g.

She’s feeling much **better/worse** today.

* + The usual comparative and superlative forms of the adjective old are older and oldest. However, the alternative forms elder and eldest are sometimes used. Elder and eldest are generally restricted to talking about the age of people, especially people within the same family, and are not used to talk about the age of things, e.g.

*Helen is* ***the eldest*** *of the 4 sisters.*

*That is* ***the oldest*** *castle in Europe.*

* + Comparatives are often qualified by using words and phrases such **as much, a lot, far, a bit/little, slightly,** e.g.:

*You should go by train, it is* ***much cheaper****.*

*Could you be* ***a bit quieter****?*

*I’m feeling* ***a lot better*** *today.*

*Her hair is* ***slightly shorter*** *than mine.*

* Two comparatives can be contrasted by placing the before them, indicating that a change in one quality is linked to a change in another, e.g.:

***The more stressed*** *you are,* ***the worse*** *it is for your health.*

***The smaller*** *the gift,* ***the easier*** *it is to send.*

***The sooner****,* ***the better****.*

* Two comparatives can also be linked with and to show a continuing increase in a particular quality, e.g.:

*Her illness is becoming* ***worse and worse****.*

*This series is becoming* ***more and more thrilling****.*

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