

Comparison 1 (cheaper, more expensive etc.)

A

Study these examples:

How shall we travel? Shall we drive or go by train?

Let's drive. It's **cheaper**.

Don't go by train. It's **more expensive**.

Cheaper and **more expensive** are *comparative* forms.



After comparatives you can use **than** (see Unit 107):

- It's **cheaper** to drive **than** go by train.
- Going by train is **more expensive than** driving.

B

The comparative form is **-er** or **more** ...

We use **-er** for short words (one syllable):

cheap → cheaper **fast** → faster
large → larger **thin** → thinner

We also use **-er** for two-syllable words that end in **-y** (**-y** → **ier**):

lucky → luckier **early** → earlier
easy → easier **pretty** → prettier

For spelling, see Appendix 6.

We use **more** ... for longer words (two syllables or more):

more serious **more often**
more expensive **more comfortable**

We also use **more** ... for adverbs that end in **-ly**:

more slowly **more seriously**
more easily **more quietly**

Compare these examples:

- You're **older** than me.
- The exam was quite easy – **easier** than I expected.
- Can you walk a bit **faster**?
- I'd like to have a **bigger** car.
- Last night I went to bed **earlier** than usual.

- You're **more patient** than me.
- The exam was quite difficult – **more difficult** than I expected.
- Can you walk a bit **more slowly**?
- I'd like to have a **more reliable** car.
- I don't play tennis much these days. I used to play **more often**.

You can use **-er** or **more** ... with some two-syllable adjectives, especially:

clever **narrow** **quiet** **shallow** **simple**

- It's too noisy here. Can we go somewhere **quieter** / **more quiet**?

C

A few adjectives and adverbs have irregular comparative forms:

good/well → **better**

- The garden looks **better** since you tidied it up.
- I know him **well** – probably **better** than anybody else knows him.

bad/badly → **worse**

- 'How's your headache? Better?' 'No, it's **worse**.'
- He did very badly in the exam – **worse** than expected.

far → **further** (or **farther**)

- It's a long walk from here to the park – **further** than I thought. (or **farther** than)

Further (but *not* farther) can also mean 'more' or 'additional':

- Let me know if you hear any **further** news. (= any more news)

Exercises

105.1 Complete the sentences using a comparative form (**older / more important** etc.).

- 1 It's too noisy here. Can we go somewhere quieter ?
- 2 This coffee is very weak. I like it
- 3 The hotel was surprisingly big. I expected it to be
- 4 The hotel was surprisingly cheap. I expected it to be
- 5 The weather is too cold here. I'd like to live somewhere
- 6 My job is a bit boring sometimes. I'd like to do something
- 7 It's a shame you live so far away. I wish you lived
- 8 I was surprised how easy it was to get a job. I thought it would be
- 9 Your work isn't very good. I'm sure you can do
- 10 Don't worry. The situation isn't so bad. It could be
- 11 I was surprised we got here so quickly. I expected the trip to take
- 12 You're talking very loudly. Can you speak ?
- 13 You hardly ever call me. Why don't you call me ?
- 14 You're standing too near the camera. Can you move a bit away?
- 15 You were a little depressed yesterday, but you look today.

105.2 Complete the sentences. Use the comparative forms of the words in the box. Use **than** where necessary.

big	crowded	early	easily	high	important
interested	peaceful	reliable	serious	simple	thin

- 1 I was feeling tired last night, so I went to bed earlier than usual.
- 2 I'd like to have a more reliable car. The one I have keeps breaking down.
- 3 Unfortunately her illness was we thought at first.
- 4 You look Have you lost weight?
- 5 I want a apartment. We don't have enough space here.
- 6 He doesn't study very hard. He's in having a good time.
- 7 Health and happiness are money.
- 8 The instructions were very complicated. They could have been
- 9 There were a lot of people on the bus. It was usual.
- 10 I like living in the country. It's living in a town.
- 11 You'll find your way around the town if you have a good map.
- 12 In some parts of the country, prices are in others.

105.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences. Use a comparative form (**-er** or **more** ...).

- 1 Yesterday the temperature was six degrees. Today it's only three degrees.
It's colder today than it was yesterday.
- 2 The journey takes four hours by car and five hours by train.
It takes by car.
- 3 Dan and I went for a run. I ran ten kilometres. Dan stopped after eight kilometres.
I ran Dan.
- 4 Chris and Joe both did badly in the test. Chris got 30%, but Joe only got 25%.
Joe did Chris in the test.
- 5 I expected my friends to arrive at about 4 o'clock. In fact they arrived at 2.30.
My friends I expected.
- 6 You can go by bus or by train. The buses run every 30 minutes. The trains run every hour.
The buses the trains.
- 7 We were very busy in the office today. We're not usually so busy.
We usual in the office today.

A

Before comparatives you can use:

much **a lot** **far** (= a lot) **a bit** **a little** **slightly** (= a little)

- Let's go by car. It's **much cheaper**. (or **a lot cheaper**)
- 'How do you feel now?' '**Much better**, thanks.'
- Don't go by train. It's **a lot more expensive**. (or **much more expensive**)
- Could you speak **a bit more slowly**? (or **a little more slowly**)
- This bag is **slightly heavier** than the other one.
- Her illness was **far more serious** than we thought at first. (or **much more serious** / **a lot more serious**)

B

You can use **any** and **no** + *comparative* (**any longer** / **no bigger** etc.):

- I've waited long enough. I'm not waiting **any longer**. (= not even a little longer)
- We expected their apartment to be very big, but it's **no bigger** than ours. or ... it **isn't any bigger** than ours. (= not even a little bigger)
- How do you feel now? Do you feel **any better**?
- This hotel is better than the other one, and it's **no more expensive**.

C

Better and better / **more and more** etc.

We repeat comparatives (**better and better** etc.) to say that something changes continuously:

- Your English is improving. It's getting **better and better**.
- The city has grown fast in recent years. It's got **bigger and bigger**.
- As I listened to his story, I became **more and more convinced** that he was lying.
- These days **more and more people** are learning English.

D

The ... the ...

You can say **the** (sooner/bigger/more etc.) **the better**:

- 'What time shall we leave?' '**The sooner the better**.' (= as soon as possible)
- A: What sort of box do you want? A big one?
B: Yes, **the bigger the better**. (= as big as possible)
- When you're travelling, **the less luggage** you have **the better**.

We also use **the ... the ...** to say that one thing depends on another thing:

- The warmer** the weather, **the better** I feel. (= if the weather is warmer, I feel better)
- The sooner** we leave, **the earlier** we will arrive.
- The younger** you are, **the easier** it is to learn.
- The more expensive** the hotel, **the better** the service.
- The more** electricity you use, **the higher** your bill will be.
- The more** I thought about the plan, **the less** I liked it.

E

Older and elder

The comparative of **old** is **older**:

- David looks **older** than he really is.

You can use **elder** (or **older**) when you talk about people in a family. You can say (**my/your** etc.) **elder sister/brother/daughter/son**:

- My elder sister** is a TV producer. (or **My older sister** ...)

We say 'my **elder sister**', but we do not say that 'somebody is elder':

- My sister is **older** than me. (not **elder** than me)

Exercises

106.1 Use the words in brackets to complete the sentences. Use **much / a bit** etc. + a comparative form. Use **than** where necessary.

- Her illness was much more serious than we thought at first. (much / serious)
- This bag is too small. I need something (much / big)
- I liked the museum. It was I expected. (much / interesting)
- It was very hot yesterday. Today it's (a bit / cool)
- I'm afraid the problem is it seems. (far / complicated)
- You're driving too fast. Can you drive ? (a bit / slowly)
- It's to learn a language in a country where it is spoken. (a lot / easy)
- I thought she was younger than me, but in fact she's (slightly / old)

106.2 Complete the sentences using **any/no** + comparative. Use **than** where necessary.

- I've waited long enough. I'm not waiting any longer .
- I'm sorry I'm a bit late, but I couldn't get here
- This shop isn't expensive. The prices are anywhere else.
- I need to stop for a rest. I can't walk
- The traffic isn't particularly bad today. It's usual.

106.3 Complete the sentences using the structure in Section C (... and ...).

- It's getting more and more difficult to find a job. (difficult)
- That hole in your sweater is getting (big)
- My bags seemed to get as I carried them. (heavy)
- As I waited for my interview, I became (nervous)
- As the day went on, the weather got (bad)
- Health care is becoming (expensive)
- Since Anna went to Canada, her English has got (good)
- As the conversation went on, Paul became (talkative)

106.4 Complete the sentences using the structure in Section D (the ... the ...).

- I like warm weather.
The warmer the weather, the better I feel . (feel)
- I didn't really like him when we first met.
But the more I got to know him, (like)
- If you're in business, you want to make a profit.
The more goods you sell, (profit)
- It's hard to concentrate when you're tired.
The more tired you are, (hard)
- Kate had to wait a very long time.
The longer she had to wait, (impatient / become)

106.5 Use the words on the right to complete the sentences.

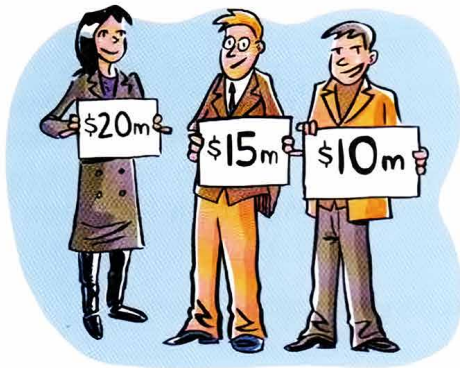
- I like to travel light. The less luggage, the better.
- The problem is getting and more serious.
- The more time I have, the it takes me to do things.
- I'm walking as fast as I can. I can't walk faster.
- The higher your income, more tax you have to pay.
- I'm surprised Anna is only 25. I thought she was
- Jane's sister is a nurse.
- I was a little late. The journey took longer than I expected.
- We have a lot to discuss. We need to start the meeting later than 9.30.
- Don't tell him anything. The he knows, the

any
better
elder
less
less
longer
more
no
older
slightly
the

Comparison 3 (as ... as / than)

A

Study this example situation:



SARAH JOE DAVID

Sarah, Joe and David are all very rich.
Sarah has \$20 million, Joe has \$15 million
and David has \$10 million. So:

Joe is rich.

He is **richer than** David.

But he **isn't as rich as** Sarah.
(= Sarah is **richer than** he is)

Some more examples of **not as ... (as)**:

- Jack **isn't as old as** he looks. (= he looks **older than** he is)
- The town centre **wasn't as crowded as** usual. (= it is usually **more crowded**)
- Lisa **didn't do as well** in the exam **as** she had hoped. (= she had hoped to do **better**)
- The weather is better today. It's **not as cold**. (= yesterday was **colder than** today)
- I **don't know as many** people **as** you do. (= you know **more** people **than** me)
- 'How much did it cost? Fifty pounds?' 'No, **not as much as** that.' (= **less than** fifty pounds)

You can also say **not so ... (as)**:

- It's not warm, but it **isn't so cold as** yesterday. (= it isn't **as cold as** ...)

Less ... than is similar to **not as ... as**:

- I spent **less** money **than** you. (= I **didn't** spend **as** much money **as** you)
- The city centre was **less** crowded **than** usual. (= it **wasn't as** crowded **as** usual)
- I play tennis **less than** I used to. (= I **don't** play **as** much **as** I used to)

B

We also use **as ... as** (*but not so ... as*) in positive sentences and in questions:

- I'm sorry I'm late. I got here **as fast as** I could.
- There's plenty of food. You can have **as much as** you want.
- Let's walk. It's **just as quick as** taking the bus.
- Can you send me the information **as soon as possible**, please?

Also **twice as ... as**, **three times as ... as** etc.:

- Petrol is **twice as expensive as** it was a few years ago.
- Their house is about **three times as big as** ours.

C

We say **the same as** (*not the same like*):

- Laura's salary is **the same as** mine. *or* Laura gets **the same** salary **as** me.
- David is **the same** age **as** James.
- Sarah hasn't changed. She still looks **the same as** she did ten years ago.

D

Than me / than I am etc.

You can say:

- You're taller **than me**. *or* You're taller **than I am**.
(*not usually* You're taller than I)
- He's not as clever **as her**. *or* He's not as clever **as she is**.
- They have more money **than us**. *or* They have more money **than we have**.
- I can't run as fast **as him**. *or* I can't run as fast **as he can**.

Exercises

107.1 Complete the sentences using **as ... as**.

- I'm tall, but you are taller. I'm not *as tall as you*.
- My salary is high, but yours is higher. My salary isn't
- You know a bit about cars, but I know more.
You don't
- We are busy today, but we were busier yesterday.
We aren't
- I still feel bad, but I felt a lot worse earlier.
I don't
- Our neighbours have lived here for quite a long time, but we've lived here longer.
Our neighbours haven't
- I was a little nervous before the interview, but usually I'm a lot more nervous.
I wasn't

107.2 Write a new sentence with the same meaning.

- Jack is younger than he looks. Jack isn't *as old as he looks*.
- I didn't spend as much money as you. You *spent more money than me*.
- The station was nearer than I thought. The station wasn't
- The meal didn't cost as much as I expected. The meal cost
- I go out less than I used to. I don't
- Karen's hair isn't as long as it used to be. Karen used to
- I know them better than you do. You don't
- There are fewer people at this meeting than at the last one.
There aren't

107.3 Complete the sentences using **as ... as + the following**:

bad comfortable ~~fast~~ hard long often quietly soon well

- I'm sorry I'm late. I got here *as fast as* I could.
- It was a difficult question. I answered it I could.
- 'How long can I stay with you?' 'You can stay you like.'
- I need the information quickly, so let me know possible.
- I like to keep fit, so I go swimming I can.
- I didn't want to wake anybody, so I came in I could.

In the following sentences use just as ... as.

- I'm going to sleep on the floor. It's the bed.
- You always say how tiring your job is, but I work you.
- At first I thought he was nice, but really he's everybody else.

107.4 Write sentences using **the same as**.

- David and James are both 22 years old. David *is the same age as* James.
- You and I both have dark brown hair. Your hair mine.
- I arrived at 10.25 and so did you. I arrived you.
- My birthday is 5 April. It's Tom's birthday too. My birthday Tom's.

107.5 Complete the sentences with **than ... or as ...**.

- I can't reach as high as you. You are taller *than me*.
- He doesn't know much. I know more
- I don't work particularly hard. Most people work as hard
- We were very surprised. Nobody was more surprised
- She's not a very good player. I'm a better player
- They've been very lucky. I wish we were as lucky

Superlatives (the longest / the most enjoyable etc.)

A

Study these examples:

What is **the longest** river in the world?

What was **the most enjoyable** holiday you've ever had?

Longest and **most enjoyable** are *superlative* forms.

The superlative form is **-est** or **most** In general, we use **-est** for short words and **most** ... for longer words. The rules are the same as those for the comparative – see Unit 105.

long → longest **hot** → hottest **easy** → easiest **hard** → hardest
but **most** famous **most** boring **most** difficult **most** expensive

A few adjectives are irregular:

good → **best** bad → **worst** far → **furthest/farthest**

For spelling, see Appendix 6.

B

We normally use **the** before a superlative (**the** longest / **the** most famous etc.):

- Yesterday was **the hottest** day of the year.
- The movie was really boring. It's **the most boring** movie I've ever seen.
- She is a really nice person – one of **the nicest** people I know.
- Why does he always come to see me at **the worst** possible time?

Compare superlative and comparative:

- This hotel is **the cheapest** in town. (*superlative*)
It's **cheaper** than all the others in town. (*comparative*)
- He's **the most patient** person I've ever met.
He's much **more patient** than I am.

C

Oldest and **eldest**

The superlative of **old** is **oldest**:

- That church is **the oldest** building in the town. (*not* the eldest)

We use **eldest** (*or oldest*) when we are talking about people in a family:

- My eldest son** is 13 years old. (*or My oldest son*)
- Are you **the eldest** in your family? (*or the oldest*)

D

After superlatives we normally use **in** with places:

- What's the longest river **in the world**? (*not* of the world)
- We had a nice room. It was one of the best **in the hotel**. (*not* of the hotel)

We also use **in** for organisations and groups of people (a class / a company etc.):

- Who is the youngest student **in the class**? (*not* of the class)

For a period of time, we normally use **of**:

- Yesterday was the hottest day **of the year**.
- What was the happiest day **of your life**?

E

We often use the *present perfect* (I **have done**) after a superlative (see also Unit 8A):

- What's **the most important** decision **you've ever had** to make?
- That was **the best** holiday **I've had** for a long time.

Exercises

108.1 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (-est or most ...) + a preposition (of or in).

- 1 It's a very good room. It's the best room in the hotel.
- 2 It's a very cheap restaurant. It's the town.
- 3 It was a very happy day. It was my life.
- 4 She's a very intelligent student. She's the class.
- 5 It's a very valuable painting. It's the gallery.
- 6 Spring is a very busy time for me. It's the year.

In the following sentences use **one of** + a superlative + a preposition.

- 7 It's a very good room. It's one of the best rooms in the hotel.
- 8 He's a very rich man. He's one the country.
- 9 It's a very big castle. It's Europe.
- 10 She's a very good player. She's the team.
- 11 It was a very bad experience. It was my life.
- 12 It's a very famous university. It's the world.

108.2 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (-est or most ...) or a comparative (-er or more ...).

- 1 We stayed at the cheapest hotel in the town. (cheap)
- 2 Our hotel was cheaper than all the others in the town. (cheap)
- 3 The United States is very large, but Canada is (large)
- 4 What's country in the world? (small)
- 5 I wasn't feeling well yesterday, but I feel a bit today. (good)
- 6 It was an awful day. It was day of my life. (bad)
- 7 What is sport in your country? (popular)
- 8 Everest is mountain in the world. It is than any other mountain. (high)
- 9 This building is over 250 metres high, but it's not in the city. (tall)
- 10 I prefer this chair to the other one. It's (comfortable)
- 11 What's way to get to the station? (quick)
- 12 Which is - the bus or the train? (quick)
- 13 What's thing you've ever bought? (expensive)
- 14 Sue and Kevin have got three daughters. is 14 years old. (old)

108.3 What do you say in these situations? Use a superlative + ever. Use the words in brackets (in the correct form).

- 1 You've just been to the cinema. The movie was extremely boring. You tell your friend:
(boring / movie / see) That's the most boring movie I've ever seen
- 2 Your friend has just told you a joke, which you think is very funny. You say:
(funny / joke / hear) That's
- 3 You're drinking coffee with a friend. It's really good coffee. You say:
(good / coffee / taste) This
- 4 You are talking to a friend about Sarah. Sarah is very generous. You tell your friend about her:
(generous / person / meet) She
- 5 You have just run ten kilometres. You've never run further than this. You say to your friend:
(far / run) That
- 6 You decided to give up your job. Now you think this was a bad mistake. You say to your friend:
(bad / mistake / make) It
- 7 Your friend meets a lot of people, some of them famous. You ask your friend:
(famous / person / meet?) Who ?