

IELTS BACKGROUND - GRAMMAR & LISTENING

LESSON 11

SKILL	CONTENT
GRAMMAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 408 1206 417">✓ Comparison 1: Comparatives <li data-bbox="576 428 1206 435">✓ Double comparatives
LISTENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 446 1206 455">✓ Listen to conversations <li data-bbox="576 467 1206 476">✓ Listen to short talks

We recommend the rule 1:2:1, which means 1 hour for reviewing past lessons, 2 hours for homework and 1 hour for extensive reading and listening (with materials close to the topics in class).

NOTES

A. GRAMMAR

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 more .
- 3 The hotel was surprisingly big. I expected it to be smaller .
- 4 The hotel was surprisingly cheap. I expected it to be more expensive .
- 5 The weather is too cold here. I'd like to live somewhere warmer .
- 6 My job is a bit boring sometimes. I'd like to do something more interesting .
- 7 It's a shame you live so far away. I wish you lived closer .
- 8 I was surprised how easy it was to get a job. I thought it would be more difficult .
- 9 Your work isn't very good. I'm sure you can do better .
- 10 Don't worry. The situation isn't so bad. It could be worse .
- 11 I was surprised we got here so quickly. I expected the trip to take longer .
- 12 You're talking very loudly. Can you speak quieter ?
- 13 You hardly ever call me. Why don't you call me more often ?
- 14 You're standing too near the camera. Can you move a bit further away?
- 15 You were a little depressed yesterday, but you look more cheerful 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 worse than we thought at first.
- 4 You look thinner than . Have you lost weight?
- 5 I want a larger than apartment. We don't have enough space here.
- 6 He doesn't study very hard. He's less interested than in having a good time.
- 7 Health and happiness are more important than money.
- 8 The instructions were very complicated. They could have been more difficult.
- 9 There were a lot of people on the bus. It was more crowded than usual.
- 10 I like living in the country. It's quieter than living in a town.
- 11 You'll find your way around the town more easily than if you have a good map.
- 12 In some parts of the country, prices are higher than 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 longer by car.
- 3 Dan and I went for a run. I ran ten kilometres. Dan stopped after eight kilometres. I ran farther than Dan.
- 4 Chris and Joe both did badly in the test. Chris got 30%, but Joe only got 25%. Joe did worse than 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 arrived earlier than I expected.
- 6 You can go by bus or by train. The buses run every 30 minutes. The trains run every hour. The buses run more frequently than the trains.
- 7 We were very busy in the office today. We're not usually so busy. We are busier than usual in the office today.

Comparison 2 (much better / any better / better and better / the sooner the better)

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 1 I like warm weather.
The warmer the weather, the better I feel . (feel)
- 2 I didn't really like him when we first met.
But the more I got to know him, . (like)
- 3 If you're in business, you want to make a profit.
The more goods you sell, . (profit)
- 4 It's hard to concentrate when you're tired.
The more tired you are, . (hard)
- 5 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.

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

any
better
elder
less
less
longer
more
no
older
slightly
the

B. LISTENING

Directions: You will hear some conversations between two people. You will be asked to answer three questions about what the speakers say in each conversation. Select the best response to each question and mark the letter (A), (B), (C), or (D) on your answer sheet. The conversations will be spoken only one time and will not be printed in your test book.

1. Where is the man working at?

- (A) A telephone company
- (B) A shipping company
- (C) A heating gas company
- (D) A bank

6. What is said about the Johnsons?

- (A) They order food often.
- (B) They love pizza.
- (C) They have a lot of money.
- (D) They have a large family.

2. What does the man say about the woman's bill?

- (A) The price has increased.
- (B) The account number has been changed.
- (C) The company made a mistake.
- (D) The woman might have used a lot of gas.

7. What is this conversation about?

- (A) Mr. Coleman's package
- (B) Wrong address for packages
- (C) Cathy's credit card limit
- (D) Packages in the security office

3. What information is the woman requested to give?

- (A) Her address
- (B) Her account number
- (C) Her phone number
- (D) Her credit card number

8. Who is NOT receiving a package?

- (A) Mr. Meyers
- (B) Cathy
- (C) Mr. Johnson
- (D) Mr. Lee

4. Where does this conversation most likely take place?

- (A) In front of a person's house
- (B) Inside a person's living room
- (C) In a restaurant
- (D) In a car

9. What does Cathy say she will do?

- (A) Pick up the packages herself
- (B) Give all the packages to Mr. Lee
- (C) Thank Mr. Meyers
- (D) Talk to Mr. Lee

5. What is the problem?

- (A) Two houses share the same address.
- (B) The man brought a wrong order.
- (C) The man was late.
- (D) The man has no change.

Directions: You will hear some **short talks** given by a single speaker. You will be asked to answer three questions about what the speaker says in each short talk. Select the best response to each question and mark the letter (A), (B), (C), or (D) on your answer sheet. The talks will be spoken only one time and will not be printed in your test book.

1. What does the company offer?

- (A) Help with online registration
- (B) Directory assistance
- (C) Financial advice
- (D) Security service

2. What must callers do to speak to staff?

- (A) Follow instructions
- (B) Make an appointment
- (C) Visit a downtown office
- (D) Call during working hours

3. What number should callers press to leave a message?

- (A) 3
- (B) 5
- (C) 6
- (D) 8

7. Who most likely are the listeners?

- (A) Visitors at an exhibit
- (B) Guests at a restaurant
- (C) New workers at an orientation
- (D) Participants at a conference

8. What must listeners do to buy food at the cafeteria?

- (A) Pay cash
- (B) Fill out a form
- (C) Purchase coupons
- (D) Contact staff

9. What does the speaker invite listeners to do?

- (A) Help out at the counter
- (B) Explore the facility
- (C) Give suggestions for the menu
- (D) Ask questions

4. Who most likely is Sandra Ross?

- (A) A popular author
- (B) A professional cook
- (C) An office manager
- (D) A store owner

5. What is implied about the dessert?

- (A) It is a new item.
- (B) The flavor is unusual.
- (C) Many people like it.
- (D) It takes a long time to make.

6. What can listeners receive?

- (A) Samples of the dishes
- (B) Special offers on kitchenware
- (C) An invitation to the next show
- (D) A free booklet of recipes