

COMPARATIVES (PART 1)

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:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ 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.