

# Comparative/Superlative Adjectives

Comparatives and Superlatives are special forms of adjectives. They are used to compare two or more things. Generally, comparatives are formed using -er and superlatives are formed using -est. This part will explain the rules for forming comparatives and superlatives, and also show some basic ways of using them.

## Forming regular comparatives and superlatives

How these forms are created depends on how many syllables there are in the adjective.

| Adjective form                                                                                                         | Comparative                                                                     | Superlative                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Only one syllable</b> , ending in "E". Examples: wide, fine, cute                                                   | <b>Add -R</b><br>wider, finer, cuter                                            | <b>Add -ST</b><br>widest, finest, cutest                                        |
| <b>Only one syllable</b> , with one vowel and one consonant at the end. Examples: hot, big, fat                        | Double the consonant, and add -ER:<br>hotter, bigger, fatter                    | Double the consonant, and add -EST:<br>hottest, biggest, fattest                |
| <b>Only one syllable</b> , with more than one vowel or more than one consonant at the end. Examples: light, neat, fast | Add -ER:<br>lighter, neater, faster                                             | Add -EST:<br>lightest, neatest, fastest                                         |
| <b>Two syllables</b> , ending in Y. Examples: happy, silly, lonely                                                     | Change Y to I, then add -ER: happier, sillier, lonelier                         | Change Y to I, then add -EST: happiest, silliest, loneliest                     |
| <b>Two syllables or more</b> , not ending in Y. Examples: modern, interesting, beautiful                               | Use MORE before the adjective:<br>more modern, more interesting, more beautiful | Use MOST before the adjective:<br>most modern, most interesting, most beautiful |

## Use

Comparatives are used to compare two things. You can use sentences with than, or you can use a conjunction like but.

- Fatima is taller than Ghaya.
- Ghaya is tall, but Fatima is taller.

Superlatives are used to compare more than two things. Superlative sentences usually use the, because there is only one superlative.

- Sana is the tallest in the class.
- Ghaya is tall, and Fatima is taller, but Sana is the tallest.

## Equatives - as...as

The structure "as...as" is used to compare things that are equal. For example:

- Ahmed is 163cm and Ali is 163cm. Ahmed is as tall as Ali.
- This house is 40 years old, that house is also 40 years old. This house is as old as that house.
- Bach's music is as good as Mozart's.
- Spring is as warm as fall.

## Practice

Choose the correct answer from a, b, c, or d:

1. It's \_\_\_\_\_ than I thought.

- a. good
- b. better
- c. gooder
- d. best

2. Brazil is \_\_\_\_\_ England.

- a. big than
- b. bigger as
- c. bigger than
- d. big as

**3. She is \_\_\_\_\_ in the class.**

- a. the best
- b. best
- c. better than
- d. as good as

**4. I'm not as successful \_\_\_\_\_ she is.**

- a. as
- b. like
- c. than
- d. that

**5. That French restaurant that we went to yesterday was \_\_\_\_\_ the Italian restaurant we always go.**

- a. more expensive
- b. the more expensive
- c. as expensive as
- d. as expensive than

**6. She finished \_\_\_\_\_ than everyone else.**

- a. more quickly
- b. quickest
- c. quickly
- d. as quickly as

**7. It was \_\_\_\_\_ test I have ever done.**

- a. the most hard
- b. the harder
- c. the hardest
- d. as hard as

8. There were \_\_\_\_\_ people at the game than expected.

- a. many
- b. more
- c. most
- d. the most

9. This is the \_\_\_\_\_ kitchen I've ever seen.

- a. dirtiest
- b. dirtyest
- c. dirtier
- d. as dirty as

10. She talks \_\_\_\_\_ you do.

- a. the most
- b. as more as
- c. the more
- d. more than

## “Too” and “Enough”

**Enough** means a satisfactory amount or degree.

- I'm so busy, I haven't got enough time.
- Do you have enough potatoes?

**Enough** comes after adjectives and adverbs:

- This jacket isn't big enough for me.
- She speaks English well enough to go to an American university.

**Enough** usually comes before nouns:

- We have enough money to buy our own apartment.

We often use **enough...for**, especially with people and things. For example:

- This job isn't good enough for her.
- We have enough time for a quick lunch.

**Enough...to** + infinitive is also a common structure. For example:

- She's old enough to drive a car.
- We have enough time to eat some lunch.

**Too** means more than enough, an excessive amount or degree. **Too** usually means there is a problem. For example:

- This room is too hot. He eats too quickly.

**Too** is also used with for: For example:

- This book is too simple for me.
- Our apartment is too small for us.

**Too...to** + infinitive is also a common structure. For example:

- This book is too easy to study.
- Our apartment is too small to live in.

**Too** does not have the same meaning as very.

- My desk is very big. (*This is just a comment on the size of my desk.*)
- My desk is too big. (*There is a problem with the size of my desk.*)

## Practice

Choose the correct answer from a, b, c, or d:

1. That man is \_\_\_\_\_ poor to buy a car.

- a. enough
- b. too
- c. very
- d. for

**2. I am just \_\_\_\_\_ tired to work anymore.**

- a. too
- b. very
- c. enough
- d. quite

**3. Is this box light \_\_\_\_\_ for you to carry?**

- a. very
- b. too
- c. extremely
- d. enough

**4. Do you have \_\_\_\_\_ money for emergencies?**

- a. enough
- b. too
- c. very
- d. really

**5. We don't get enough sleep because we have \_\_\_\_\_ much to do.**

- a. too
- b. enough
- c. very
- d. fair