

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:

- 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 better .
- 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 away ?
- 15 You were a little depressed yesterday, but you look 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 . Have you lost weight?
- 5 I want a smaller apartment. We don't have enough space here.
- 6 He doesn't study very hard. He's less interested 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 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're busier than usual in the office today.