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)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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.

LIVEWORKSHEETS