

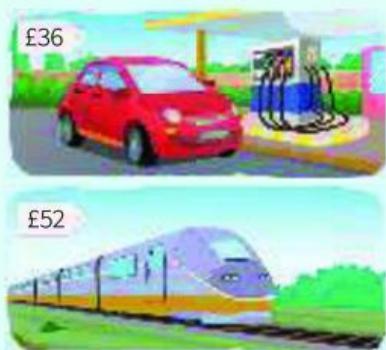
A Look at these examples:

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 expensive**
more often **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**.

We use both **-er** or **more** . . . with some two-syllable adjectives, especially:

clever **narrow** **quiet** **shallow** **simple**

- It's too noisy here. Can we go somewhere **quieter**? or ... somewhere **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)

Note that **further** (but not **farther**) also means '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.).

- This restaurant is very expensive. Let's go somewhere cheaper.
- This coffee is very weak. I like it more.
- The town was surprisingly big. I expected it to be smaller.
- The hotel was surprisingly cheap. I expected it to be more expensive.
- The weather is too cold here. I'd like to live somewhere warmer.
- Sometimes my job is a bit boring. I'd like to do something more interesting.
- It's a shame you live so far away. I wish you lived closer.
- It was quite easy to find a place to live. I thought it would be more difficult.
- Your work isn't very good. I'm sure you can do better.
- Don't worry. The situation isn't so bad. It could be worse.
- You hardly ever call me. Why don't you call me more often?
- You're too near the camera. Can you move a bit further away?

105.2 Complete the sentences. Use the comparative forms of the words in the box. Use **than** where necessary.

big **early** **high** **important** **interested** **peaceful** **reliable** **serious** **slowly** **thin**

- I was feeling tired last night, so I went to bed earlier than usual.
- I'd like to have a more reliable car. The one I have keeps breaking down.
- Unfortunately the problem was more serious than we thought at first.
- You look thinner. Have you lost weight?
- We don't have enough space here. We need a larger apartment.
- James doesn't study very hard. He's less interested in having a good time.
- Health and happiness are more important than money.
- I like living in the country. It's quieter than living in a town.
- I'm sorry I don't understand. Can you speak more slowly, please?
- In some parts of the country, prices are higher in others.

105.3 Complete the sentences. Choose from:

than **more** **worse** **quietly** **longer** **better** **careful** **frequent**

- Getting a visa was complicated. It took longer than I expected.
- Sorry about my mistake. I'll try and be more careful in future.
- Your English has improved. It's better than it was.
- You can travel by bus or by train. The buses are more frequent than the trains.
- You can't always have things immediately. You have to be more patient.
- I'm a pessimist. I always think things are going to get worse.
- We were busier than usual in the office today. It's not usually so busy.
- You're talking very loudly. Can you speak more quietly?

105.4 Read the situations and complete the sentences. Use a comparative form (-er or more ...).

- Yesterday the temperature was six degrees. Today it's only three degrees. It's colder today than it was yesterday.
- Dan and I went for a run. I ran ten kilometres. Dan stopped after eight kilometres. I ran longer than Dan.
- The journey takes four hours by car and five hours by train. The journey takes more time by train than by car.
- 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.
- There is always a lot of traffic here, but today the traffic is really bad. The traffic today is busier than usual.