

SUPERLATIVES

A

Study these examples:

What is **the longest** river in the world?

What was **the most enjoyable** holiday you've ever had?

Longest and **most enjoyable** are *superlative forms*.

The superlative form is **-est** or **most** In general, we use **-est** for short words and **most** ... for longer words. The rules are the same as those for the comparative – see Unit 105.

long → longest	hot → hottest	easy → easiest	hard → hardest
but most famous	most boring	most difficult	most expensive

A few adjectives are irregular:

good → **best** **bad** → **worst** **far** → **furthest/farthest**

For spelling, see Appendix 6.

B

We normally use **the** before a superlative (**the longest** / **the most famous** etc.):

- Yesterday was **the hottest** day of the year.
- The movie was really boring. It's **the most boring** movie I've ever seen.
- She is a really nice person – one of **the nicest** people I know.
- Why does he always come to see me at **the worst** possible time?

Compare superlative and comparative:

- This hotel is **the cheapest** in town. (*superlative*)
It's **cheaper** than all the others in town. (*comparative*)
- He's **the most patient** person I've ever met.
He's much **more patient** than I am.

C

Oldest and **eldest**

The superlative of **old** is **oldest**:

- That church is **the oldest** building in the town. (*not the eldest*)

We use **eldest** (or **oldest**) when we are talking about people in a family:

- My eldest son** is 13 years old. (*or My oldest son*)
- Are you **the eldest** in your family? (*or the oldest*)

D

After superlatives we normally use **in** with places:

- What's the longest river **in the world**? (*not of the world*)
- We had a nice room. It was one of the best **in the hotel**. (*not of the hotel*)

We also use **in** for organisations and groups of people (a class / a company etc.):

- Who is the youngest student **in the class**? (*not of the class*)

For a period of time, we normally use **of**:

- Yesterday was the hottest day **of the year**.
- What was the happiest day **of your life**?

E

We often use the *present perfect* (**I have done**) after a superlative (see also Unit 8A):

- What's **the most important** decision **you've ever had** to make?
- That was **the best** holiday **I've had** for a long time.

Exercises

108.1 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (-est or most ...) + a preposition (of or in).

- 1 It's a very good room. It's the best room in the hotel.
- 2 It's a very cheap restaurant. It's the cheapest restaurant in the town.
- 3 It was a very happy day. It was the happiest day in my life.
- 4 She's a very intelligent student. She's the most intelligent student in the class.
- 5 It's a very valuable painting. It's the most valuable painting in the gallery.
- 6 Spring is a very busy time for me. It's the busiest time in the year.

In the following sentences use **one of** + a superlative + a preposition.

- 7 It's a very good room. It's one of the best rooms in the hotel.
- 8 He's a very rich man. He's one of the richest men in the country.
- 9 It's a very big castle. It's one of the biggest castles in Europe.
- 10 She's a very good player. She's one of the best players in the team.
- 11 It was a very bad experience. It was one of the worst experiences in my life.
- 12 It's a very famous university. It's one of the most famous universities in the world.

108.2 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (-est or most ...) or a comparative (-er or more ...).

- 1 We stayed at the cheapest hotel in the town. (cheap)
- 2 Our hotel was cheaper than all the others in the town. (cheap)
- 3 The United States is very large, but Canada is larger. (large)
- 4 What's the smallest country in the world? (small)
- 5 I wasn't feeling well yesterday, but I feel a bit better today. (good)
- 6 It was an awful day. It was worse day of my life. (bad)
- 7 What is the most popular sport in your country? (popular)
- 8 Everest is the highest mountain in the world. It is higher than any other mountain. (high)
- 9 This building is over 250 metres high, but it's not the tallest in the city. (tall)
- 10 I prefer this chair to the other one. It's more comfortable. (comfortable)
- 11 What's the quickest way to get to the station? (quick)
- 12 Which is faster – the bus or the train? (quick)
- 13 What's the most expensive thing you've ever bought? (expensive)
- 14 Sue and Kevin have got three daughters. They're the youngest is 14 years old. (old)

108.3 What do you say in these situations? Use a superlative + ever. Use the words in brackets (in the correct form).

- 1 You've just been to the cinema. The movie was extremely boring. You tell your friend: (boring / movie / see) That's the most boring movie I've ever seen.
- 2 Your friend has just told you a joke, which you think is very funny. You say: (funny / joke / hear) That's the funniest joke I've ever heard.
- 3 You're drinking coffee with a friend. It's really good coffee. You say: (good / coffee / taste) This is the best coffee I've ever tasted.
- 4 You are talking to a friend about Sarah. Sarah is very generous. You tell your friend about her: (generous / person / meet) She is the most generous person I've ever met.
- 5 You have just run ten kilometres. You've never run further than this. You say to your friend: (far / run) That is the farthest I've ever run.
- 6 You decided to give up your job. Now you think this was a bad mistake. You say to your friend: (bad / mistake / make) It was the worst mistake I've ever made.
- 7 Your friend meets a lot of people, some of them famous. You ask your friend: (famous / person / meet?) Who is the most famous person I've ever met?