FCE U1.2

What follows is a review of **comparatives and superlatives**. The rules are listed in #2, and the text offers examples. Read the text and answer Q1, then complete the chart in #3 to practice the forms. Finally, complete exercise 4 using the words from the chart.

Comparison

1 Read this short text about the fashion industry. Do you agree with its viewpoint? ☐ yes ☐ no

Why is it that fashion houses design their clothes for the youngest and skinniest men and women? We may not actually want to look like supermodels, but it is a fact that the most underweight models have dominated the world's catwalks for a very long time. It seems it is not in the interests of the fashion industry to represent an 'average' person. Although 'slimmer' may not always mean 'more desirable' in the real world, fashion succeeds because it carries with it that image of the least achievable figure.

2 These comparison structures are used with adjectives.

rules

-er than	*more ... than*	*the most ...*
the -est	*less ... than*	*the least ...*

a Why do we say *younger than* but ***less*** *serious than*; and *the young**est*** but *the* ***most*** *underweight*?

b Which common adjectives can we either add *-er/-est* to or use *more/most* with?

c What are the spelling rules for forming the comparative and superlative of words like *slim* and *skinny*?

3 Give the comparative and superlative forms of these adjectives.

bright	brighter	the brightest
big		
thin		
dirty		
casual	more/less casual	
outrageous	more/less outrageous	
good		the best
bad	worse	

4 Now complete the following sentences by using one of the adjectives in 3, choosing either the comparative or the superlative form.

a Have you painted this room recently? Everything's looking a lot _____ than before.

b Out of all my friends, Jake wears _____ _____ clothes – take his handmade plastic coat, for example!

c Don't dress up for the club tonight – everyone's looking _____ there nowadays.

d You can't put those disgusting jeans on again – they're _____ pair I've ever seen!

e I'm a bit worried about Sally. She doesn't eat a thing and so she's getting _____ than ever.

f My brother has _____ taste in ties ever – awful designs in really odd colours!

g There's no way you can fit into my shoes – your feet are a lot _____ than mine!

h Market stalls often offer slightly _____ value for money than shops.

In sentences *g* and *h*, you see the use of *a lot* and *slightly*. These are **adverbs of degree**, which are commonly used with comparative adjectives. Some adverbs of degree can be used with superlatives, such as *by far* as in the following sentence: *Chris is by far the most creative student on our design course.* Other adverbs of degree are: *a bit, a great deal*, and *much*. Use these three and *by far* to complete the sentences below.

This ring is only _____ more expensive and it's _____ nicer than the others.

Tracksuits may be _____ warmer, but shorts are _____ the best for running, whatever the weather.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Now, let's build on this information... The expression ***as ... as*** translates to "*tan ... como*" in Spanish. It is a comparative that shows that things are the same (or very similar), as in *"Julian is as tall as Peter"*. And obviously, the negative—***not as ... as*** (or ***not so ...as*** although this is less common)—shows inequality.

Let's practice this. Look at the various shoes to the right. Write comparative sentences using *as ... as* or *not as ... as* and the adjective of your choice for the following pairs:



[trainers / blue heels] _____

[brown boots / workboots] _____

[flip flops / red boots] _____

[pink sneakers / trainers] _____

[red pumps / brown shoes] _____

We have been talking about comparative adjectives, but what about **comparative adverbs**? These are very easy to form/use. Usually, it is sufficient to add *more* (or *less*) to the adverb, as in "more commonly" (found in the text below)—or, in the case of superlatives, to add *the most* (or *the least*). Read the article below about knock-offs, which are cheap imitations of designer items. In addition to *more commonly*, there are three more comparative adverbs in the text. Find them and write them on the lines below.

FASHION KNOCK-OFFS

Counterfeit consumer goods – more commonly known as 'knock-offs' – are imitation goods that are offered for sale at much lower prices than the genuine products, and they are a big problem for the fashion industry. Knock-offs are now far more readily available than they were a few years ago, both on the web and on market stalls worldwide. These fake designer goods damage the actual brands in more ways than one, reducing their sales and causing them to be regarded less exclusively, no longer the luxury items they once were. Some people view the matter less seriously, arguing that knock-offs offer a type of free advertising and promotion to the real designer labels. However, there is no getting away from the fact that this is an illegal activity, and the fashion industry is starting to fight back with high-tech solutions that will distinguish the real goods from cheap copies.

_____ _____ _____

The final activity in this lesson is key word transformation. This is an exercise that is found in the FC exam. You are given a sentence and a word and, using that word (without changing it in any way), you must create a second sentence that communicates the same thing as the original. You can use up to 5 words in the blank. In this exercise, all of the changes that you will make will include a comparative structure (although in the exam many structures are tested).

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Here is a tip for this exercise: remove the repeated words so you are left with the phrase that you must reproduce with the key word. Let's walk through this using the example...

~~Mary is~~ shorter than ~~her brother.~~

NOT

Mary is _____ her brother.

Cross out the repeated words. What is left is the phrase that you must reproduce in the 2nd sentence using the given word—in this case "shorter than". Ask yourself, "What phrase with NOT would communicate the same thing as "shorter than"?

Complete the key word transformations below.

0 Mary is shorter than her brother.
NOT
Mary is *NOT AS TALL AS* her brother.

1 These sunglasses cost a bit less than my last pair.
WERE
These sunglasses _____ than my last pair.

2 Coco Chanel was an extremely talented designer.
MOST
Coco Chanel was one of _____ in the world.

3 I preferred you with curlier hair.
STRAIGHT
I preferred your hair when it wasn't _____ is now.

4 This shoe shop is the cheapest one I've found.
EXPENSIVE
This shoe shop is _____ all the ones I've found.

5 Suzanne's host at the dinner party wasn't as elegantly dressed as she was.
MORE
At the dinner party, Suzanne was far _____ her host.

6 It takes much less time to travel by train than by car.
LOT
Travelling by train _____ travelling by car.

7 Harry wears smarter clothes now he has a girlfriend.
LESS
Harry dressed _____ he didn't have a girlfriend.

8 That model is only 17 – I thought she was older.
AS
That model is not _____ I thought.

LIVEWORKSHEETS