

There are **three forms** of adjectives and adverbs. The **positive**, which you just studied, is simply the basic adjective or adverb. **This form serves only to modify, not compare.**

Positive Adjective Form

Mary is a smart girl.
Mary is beautiful.

Positive Adverb Form

Tom runs quickly.
He got a beautifully even suntan.

In addition to their simple or positive forms, adjectives and adverbs have two other forms, the comparative and superlative, that are used for making comparisons.

The **comparative** form of adjectives and adverbs **compares two people, places or things.**

With **adjectives**, add **er** to the positive form of most one-syllable words and some two-syllable words. For other words, place **more** before the positive form.

With most **adverbs**, place **more** before the positive form.

Comparative Adjective Form

Mary is smarter than Jill.
BUT
Mary is more beautiful than Jill.

Comparative Adverb Form

Tom runs more quickly than I do.
He got a more beautifully even suntan than I did.

The **superlative** form of adjectives and adverbs **compares three or more people, places, or things.**

With **adjectives**, add **est** to the positive form of most one-syllable words and some two-syllable words. For other words, place **most** before the positive form.

With most **adverbs**, place **most** before the positive form.

Superlative Adjective Form

Mary is the smartest of all.
BUT
Mary is the most beautiful of all.

Superlative Adverb Form

Tom runs most quickly of the three.
He got the most beautifully even suntan of all.

****Note:** Do not make **double comparisons**. Never use more or most with er or est endings.

Procedure for Choosing the Correct Adjective Form

1. Look to see if a **comparison** is being made. **If it isn't, choose the positive form of the adjective.** (No *er*, *est* ending or *more*, *most* word).

Example: Jim is _____ .

- a. upset
- b. more upset
- c. most upset

Solution: Jim is **not** being **compared** to **anyone**. Therefore, you need the **positive form** of the **adjective**. Immediately eliminate choices B and C because they contain comparison words – *more*, *most*. Choice A is the positive form of the adjective.

2. If a **comparison of two people, places, or things** is being made, choose the **comparative form** of the **adjective**. Look for the choices that have an *er* ending or *more* word.

Example: Of the two men, Jim is _____ .

- a. upset
- b. more upset
- c. most upset

Solution: A **comparison of two people** (Jim and another man) is being made. Therefore, you need the **comparative form of the adjective**. Consider only those choices with an *er* ending or *more* word. Immediately eliminate choices A and C – neither has an *er* ending or *more* word. Choice B is the comparative form of the adjective.

3. If a **comparison of three or more people, places, or things** is being made, choose the **superlative form** of the **adjective**. Look for the choices that have an *est* ending or *most* word.

Example: Of all the men, Jim is the _____ .

- a. upset
- b. more upset
- c. most upset

Solution: A **comparison of three or more people** (Jim and some other men) is being made. Therefore, you need the **superlative form of the adjective**. Consider only those choices with an *est* ending or *most* word. Immediately eliminate choices A and B – neither has an *est* ending or *most* word. Choice C is the superlative form of the adjective.

Directions: For each sentence, decide which adjective form is needed – positive, comparative, or superlative. Write the letter of your choice next to its corresponding number.

***Hint:** Look for key words and phrases that may signal comparisons.

1. *of the two, of the twins, between Bob and Ted*, and the word *than* can **signal comparisons of two people, places, or things**. You need the **comparative form** with an *er* ending or *more* word.
2. *of all, in the world, in school, on the team, on the job, ever seen, ever heard*, and other similar phrases can **signal comparisons of three or more people, places, or things**. You need the **superlative form** with an *est* ending or *most* word.

1. Sally is the _____ girl in our class.
A. tall
B. taller
☒ C. tallest
2. Of the two, I think Tim is _____.
A. smart
☒ B. smarter
C. smartest
3. Mom bought a _____ dress than I did.
A. pretty
☒ B. prettier
C. prettiest
4. In all the world, Paris is probably the _____ city.
A. romantic
B. more romantic
☒ C. most romantic
5. Mary's _____ cry got my attention.
☒ A. hysterical
B. more hysterical
C. most hysterical
6. My husband is very _____.
☒ A. handsome
B. more handsome
C. most handsome

7. The _____ girl that I took to prom is sick.
Ⓐ lovely
Ⓑ lovelier
Ⓒ loveliest
8. Between the two, I think the yellow dress is _____.
Ⓐ stylish
Ⓑ more stylish
Ⓒ most stylish
9. I was _____ than ever before.
Ⓐ tired
Ⓑ more tired
Ⓒ most tired
10. Of the three choices, the second one is the _____.
Ⓐ nice
Ⓑ nicer
Ⓒ nicest
-

Be careful on the next ten exercises. **All** of them contain **double comparisons**. **Eliminate** those choices immediately.

11. Billy raced _____ than I did.
Ⓐ fast
Ⓑ faster
Ⓒ more faster
Ⓓ most fast
12. He gave the _____ speech I'd ever heard.
Ⓐ long
Ⓑ longer
Ⓒ longest
Ⓓ most longest
13. The _____ gentleman offered to give her money for the bus fare.
Ⓐ kind
Ⓑ kinder
Ⓒ more kinder
Ⓓ most kindest

14. My friend's _____ disposition makes her fun to be with.
A. sunny
B. sunnier
C. sunniest
D. most sunniest
15. Mom bakes the _____ pies in the whole world.
A. juicy
B. juicier
C. juiciest
D. most juiciest
16. Her _____ manner endears her to everyone.
A. friendly
B. friendlier
C. more friendlier
D. friendliest
17. That was the _____ game I've ever watched.
A. great
B. greater
C. greatest
D. most greatest
18. Ted is the _____ person on the team.
A. heavy
B. heavier
C. heaviest
D. most heaviest
19. Sue's the _____ of the twins.
A. sweet
B. sweeter
C. more sweeter
D. most sweetest
20. Of everyone in class, Gina's English skills are the _____.
A. weak
B. weaker
C. weakest
D. most weakest
-

Procedure for Choosing the Correct Adverb Form

1. Look to see if a comparison is being made. If it **isn't**, choose the **positive** form of the adverb. (**Exclude** choices with **more**, **most** words.)

Example: Bob sang _____ .
A. loudly
B. more loudly
C. most loudly

Solution: Bob's singing is **not** being **compared** to anyone else's singing. Therefore, you need the **positive** form of the adverb. Immediately eliminate choices B and C because they contain comparison words – more, most. **Choice A is the positive form of the adverb.**

2. If a comparison of **two** people, places, or things is being made, choose the **comparative form** of the adverb. Look for the choices that have a **more** word.

Example: Bob sang _____ **than** Ted did.
A. loudly
B. more loudly
C. most loudly

Solution: A comparison of **two** things (Bob's singing and Ted's singing) is being made. Therefore, you need the **comparative form** of the adverb. Consider only those choices with a **more** word. Immediately eliminate choices A and C – neither has a **more** word. **Choice B is the comparative form of the adverb.**

3. If a comparison of **three or more** people, places, or things is being made, choose the **superlative form** of the adverb. Look for the choices that have a **most** word.

Example: Bob sang _____ of **all**.
A. loudly
B. more loudly
C. most loudly

Solution: A comparison of **three or more** things (Bob's singing and other people's singing) is being made. Therefore, you need the **superlative** form of the adverb. Consider only those choices with a **most** word. Immediately eliminate choices A and B – neither has a **most** word. **Choice C is the superlative form of the adverb.**

Directions: For each sentence, decide which adverb form is needed – **positive, comparative or superlative**. Write the letter of your choice next to its corresponding number.

*** Hint:** Look for key words and phrases that **may signal** comparisons.

1. **Of the two, of the twins, between Bob and Ted,** and the word **than** can signal comparisons of **two** people, places or things. You need the **comparative form** with a **more** word.
2. **Of all, in the world, in school, on the team, on the job, ever seen, ever heard,** and other similar phrases can signal comparisons of **three or more** people, places or things. You need the **superlative form** with a **most** word.

1. Mary behaved _____ at the party.
☒ A. nicely
B. more nicely
C. most nicely
2. Charles sang _____ of everyone in the choir.
A. loudly
B. more loudly
☒ C. most loudly
3. The patient's illness was _____ painful.
☒ A. unbelievably
B. more unbelievably
C. most unbelievably
4. My dog barked _____ than her dog.
A. fiercely
☒ B. more fiercely
C. most fiercely
5. Of the three men, the _____ exhausted one collapsed.
A. thoroughly
B. more thoroughly
☒ C. most thoroughly
6. They are the _____ married couple of anyone I know.
A. happily
B. more happily
☒ C. most happily
7. I am _____ coming to the conclusion that you are right.
☒ A. slowly
B. more slowly
C. most slowly

8. It was the _____ attempted stunt I had ever witnessed.
A. dangerously
B. more dangerously
☒ C. most dangerously
9. The students arrived for class _____ than ever before.
A. cheerfully
☒ B. more cheerfully
C. most cheerfully
10. I _____ descended the stairs in the subway.
☒ A. rapidly
B. more rapidly
C. most rapidly
11. Mom sat _____ on the chair in the den.
☒ A. quietly
B. more quietly
C. most quietly
12. The group _____ accepted the honor.
☒ A. gladly
B. more gladly
C. most gladly
13. Most people are _____ nervous in a dentist's office than in a doctor's office.
☒ A. obviously
☒ B. more obviously
C. most obviously
14. Of all the teachers I've ever had, Miss Bell yelled the _____ in class.
A. frequently
B. more frequently
☒ C. most frequently
15. She cried _____ when she heard the news.
☒ A. bitterly
B. more bitterly
C. most bitterly

You are left with only two choices now.

Choice B: **brightest** – the **superlative adjective**

Choice D: **most** brightly – the **superlative adverb**

To help you decide if you want the adjective or adverb, remove the word ***the*** from in front of the blank and remove the **comparing** words. Go back to the **positive forms** of the adjective and adverb.

Tom is adjective.

A. bright B. brightly

Obviously, **bright**, the adjective is correct because the **adjective is following a linking verb and is modifying** the word **Tom** on the other side.

Therefore, if you **want an adjective when no comparing words are present**, you still want an adjective when comparing words are added. The only difference is that now you need the **superlative form** of the adjective, which is **Choice B**.

Of all the people, Tom is the **brightest**.

Example: The _____ performed piano solo of the two was Mary's.

A. expertly C. most expertly
B. **more expert** D. **more expertly**

Solution: *Of the two* signals that a **comparison of two** is being made. Therefore, you need the **comparative form** of either an adjective or adverb. Consider only those choices with an **er ending or more word**. Immediately eliminate choices A and C – neither has an er ending or more word.

You are left with only two choices now.

Choice B: **more expert** – the comparative adjective

Choice D: **more expertly** – the comparative adverb

To help you decide if you want the adjective or adverb, **remove** the **comparing words**. (You can't remove the word **the** from in front of the blank because it is the first word of the sentence.) Go back to the positive forms of the adjective and adverb.

adjective noun
The adverb performed piano solo was Mary's.
A. expert B. expertly

Obviously, **expertly**, the **adverb**, is the correct answer because it tells **how** she performed. Also, the word after the blank is an adjective and **adverbs modify adjectives**.

Therefore, if you want an **adverb** when no comparing words are present, you **still** want an **adverb** when comparing words are added. The only difference is that now you need the **comparative form** of the **adverb**, which is **Choice D**.

The more expertly performed piano solo of the two was Mary's.

Example: She _____ crept out of the room.

| | | | |
|----|-------------|----|-------------|
| A. | slower | C. | slowly |
| B. | more slower | D. | most slowly |

Solution: **No comparison is being made.** Therefore, you need the **positive form** of either an adjective or adverb. **Eliminate** all choices that make a **double comparison**. (Choice B) and those that have an **er, est** ending or a **more, most** word (choice A and choice D).

You are left with only one choice: Choice C: **slowly** – the **positive form** of the adverb

Obviously, **slowly**, the **adverb**, is the correct answer because it tells **how** she crept. Also, the word after the blank is an action verb and adverbs modify action verbs.

She slowly crept out of the room.

Directions: Number from 1 to 40 on a separate sheet of paper. Read each sentence carefully and choose either an adjective form or adverb form to fill in the blanks. Then write the letter of your choice next to its corresponding number.

1. My _____ written essay got a D grade.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|----|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> A. | poorly | C. | more poorly |
| <input type="radio"/> B. | poor | D. | most poorly |

2. Some experts believe that smoking is _____ than drinking.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----|------------------|
| A. | dangerous | C. | most dangerously |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> B. | more dangerous | D. | more dangerously |

3. Does this plan seem _____ probable than the other?

| | | | |
|----|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| A. | realistic | C. | more realistic |
| B. | realistically | <input checked="" type="radio"/> D. | more realistically |

4. The driver of the van reacted _____ to the situation.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----|--------------|
| A. | angry | C. | more angrily |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> B. | angrily | D. | most angrily |

5. Her test scores were the _____ I had ever seen.
A. impressive C. more impressively
☒ B. most impressive D. most impressively
6. Of all the applicants, my sister spoke _____.
A. intelligent ☒ C. most intelligently
B. more intelligently D. intelligently
7. She behaved _____ than anyone else.
A. shockingly C. most shockingly
B. shocking ☒ D. more shockingly
8. George's _____ puppy greeted everyone.
☒ A. friendly C. friendliest
B. friendlier D. more friendlier
9. Of the two players, Mary is the _____.
A. dedicated ☒ C. more dedicated
B. most dedicated D. dedicate
10. Martha is, without a doubt, the _____ person I know.
A. creative C. creatively
B. most creatively ☒ D. most creative
11. Tom practiced his piano lessons _____ of all the students.
☒ A. most faithfully C. faithfully
B. more faithfully D. faithful
12. My graduation day will be the _____ day of my life.
A. happy C. more happy
B. happily ☒ D. happiest
13. Bob is the _____ of all the football players.
A. thin C. thinly
B. thinner ☒ D. thinnest
14. The child behaved _____ at the party.
A. wilder C. more wilder
☒ B. wildly D. more wildly
15. The patient seemed _____ than the doctor.
A. healthy C. more healthier
☒ B. healthier D. healthiest

16. We _____ considered the man's questions.
A. careful C. more carefully
B. most carefully ☒ D. carefully
17. He is an example of a _____ happy individual.
A. perfect C. more perfect
☒ B. perfectly D. most perfectly
18. Barbara probably has the _____ manners of all the kids.
A. nice C. more nicely
B. nicer ☒ D. nicest
19. New York is _____ than my home town.
A. largely ☒ C. larger
B. largest D. more largely
20. Paris is one of the three _____ visited cities in Europe.
A. frequently C. more frequently
B. frequent ☒ D. most frequently
21. Dad gave the _____ reasons I'd ever heard.
A. convincing C. more convincing
B. convincingly ☒ D. most convincing
22. She _____ ran out of the room.
A. swift ☒ C. swiftly
B. more swiftly D. most swiftly
23. Of all the books on order, the _____ ordered history texts arrived first.
☒ A. most recently C. more recently
B. recently D. recent
24. Dad seemed _____ happy today.
A. unusual C. more unusually
☒ B. unusually D. most unusually
25. Sam played _____ than I did.
☒ A. more roughly C. rough
B. most roughly D. roughly