

Grammar Handout 003

Adjectives: Comparative and Superlative Degree

The comparative degree is used when two elements are compared. The superlative degree is used when more than two elements are compared.

General guidelines for forming the comparative and superlative degree are:

	<u>Comparative (Comparing 2)</u>	<u>Superlative (Comparing 3 or more)</u>
For one-syllable words	Add <i>-er</i>	Add <i>-est</i>
For many two-syllable words*	Add <i>-er</i> or <i>-ier</i>	Add <i>-est</i> or <i>-iest</i>
For other two-syllable or longer words*	Use <i>more</i> or <i>less</i>	Use <i>most</i> or <i>least</i>
Tricky comparatives/superlatives:		
Good	better	best
Bad	worse	worst

*For specific guidelines, see the reverse side of this handout.

Exercise: Write the correct form of the comparative/superlative for each of the following sentences.

- One of the (large) mammals is the elephant. 1. _____
- That tongue-twister is the (hard) to say. 2. _____
- Sales are (good) this year than last. 3. _____
- Davie is (handy) in the kitchen than his sister. 4. _____
- Your grass is the (green) in the neighborhood. 5. _____
- He is the (thoughtful) teenager I know. 6. _____
- Do you consider French or Spanish (hard)? 7. _____
- The new road is (safe) than the old one. 8. _____

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| 9. It was the (delightful) trip I ever took. | 9. _____ |
| 10. Valerie is the (fast) runner in our group. | 10. _____ |
| 11. He is (energetic) than I am. | 11. _____ |
| 12. Of all his friends, Eric is the (good) athlete. | 12. _____ |
| 13. Football is (lively) than baseball. | 13. _____ |
| 14. She is the (creative) girl in the class. | 14. _____ |
| 15. Jenny has the (high) voice in the girls' trio. | 15. _____ |

The Rules for Using Comparative/Superlative Adjectives

Rule	Comparative (Comparing two)	Superlative (Comparing three or more)
-er/-est is added to the end of a 1-syllable adjective	cold – colder – coldest small – smaller – smallest tall – taller – tallest	The winter is colder than the summer. Winter is the coldest season. The green hat is smaller than the yellow hat. The green hat is my smallest hat. Most basketball players are taller than I. They are also the tallest students in our school.
-er /-est is added to the end of an adjective with 2 syllables IF the word ends in -y (Adjectives that end in -y change the -y to i and add -er /est.)	early – earlier – earliest happy – happier – happiest crazy – crazier – craziest	I came home earlier than my sister. The earliest I can be there is Tuesday. I am happier now than I was one year ago. Yesterday was the happiest day of my life. My friend is crazier than I, but my brother is the craziest of all.
"more" / "most" is used for words that have 2 syllables IF the word doesn't end in -y	honest more honest most honest difficult more difficult most difficult modern more modern most modern	Policemen are more honest than criminals. Lincoln was our most honest President. The last test was more difficult than the test today. My algebra test was the most difficult I have had. Our generation is more modern than our parents' generation. His ideas are the most modern of all my teachers.
"more" / "most" is used for words that have 3 or more syllables	expensive more expensive most expensive difficult more difficult most difficult comfortable more comfortable most comfortable	Her ring is more expensive than mine. Jane's house is the most expensive on the block. It is more difficult to bake a cake than roast a turkey. Skiing is the most difficult sport. This chair is more comfortable than that one. This is the most comfortable bed in the house.

Rule	Comparative (Comparing two)	Superlative (Comparing three or more)
adjectives that end in -e: only -r/-st is added to the end of the adjective	<p>nice – nicer - nicest</p> <p>safe – safer - safest</p>	<p>This material is nicer than the one I selected. She is the nicest teacher I have.</p> <p>The turnpike is safer than I-95. Airplane travel is the safest way to go.</p>
adjectives that end in a consonant-vowel- consonant: the last consonant is doubled	<p>big – bigger – biggest</p> <p>fat – fatter - fattest</p> <p>hot – hotter - hottest</p>	<p>My house is bigger than my sister’s house. That is the biggest city I have ever visited.</p> <p>My sister is fatter than I am. The fattest cat I saw weighed twenty-two pounds.</p> <p>This summer is hotter than last summer. This is the hottest day yet.</p>