

ENGLISH

Grammar: Comparison



Degrees of Comparison

What is Comparison?

The grammatical structure of **comparison** has three degrees:

1. Positive degree
2. Comparative degree
3. Superlative degree

Let us understand how these degrees are used to compare adjectives and adverbs.

The Positive Degree

The positive degree is used to draw a comparison at a same level.

- *Bhushan is as tall as his cousin Jitesh.*
- *This restaurant is as expensive as the one we went to last month.*
- *Gaurav ran as fast as Sushant at the race.*

The positive degree is formed by using the **adjective** or the **adverb** with the correlative conjunctions '**as...as**'.

The Comparative Degree

The comparative degree is used to compare two unequal qualities or quantities.

- *Mount Everest is taller than Mount Fuji.*
- *Ayush was quieter than his sister at the picnic.*

The comparative degree is formed by adding the suffix '**-er**' + '**than**' to the **adjective** or the **adverb**.

However, for some adjectives and adverbs, instead of the suffix, the words '**more**' or '**less**' are used to show the comparative form.

- *A dog is more faithful than a cat as a pet. (# faithfuller)*
- *Jaya was more hardworking than her brother in school. (# harderworking)*
- *Faisal felt less important than Sumit in his group. (# importanter)*
- *Rohit was less active than Pramila during the warm-up sessions. (# activer)*

Finally, the comparative forms of some irregular adjectives and adverbs are completely different from the original.

- *She was as good as Sharon in the dance competition.*

- *She was **better** than Sharon in the dance competition.*

The Superlative Degree

The superlative degree is used to show the highest or the lowest quality or quantity of an **adverb** or an **adjective**.

- *Rahim is **the oldest** member of the group.*
- *The man in the blue shirt was **the earliest** to arrive for the interview.*

The superlative is formed by adding the suffix ‘-est’ to the **adjective** or the **adverb**.

The superlative forms of some irregular adjectives and adverbs are completely different from the original.

- *She was **the best** candidate at the competition.*
- *Parag was the **least** affected by the loss in the family.*

Note the use of **the** before the words used in the superlative form. Superlative adjectives and adverbs take the definite article before them as the superlative form is the only one of a series.

Special Adjectives

Some adjectives are special and can have two forms of comparison:

- -er/est
- more/most

Let us look at some examples:

| Positive | Comparative | Superlative |
|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| common | commoner/more common | commonest/most common |
| likely | likelier/more likely | likeliest/most likely |
| clever | cleverer/more clever | cleverest/most clever |
| pleasant | pleasanter/more pleasant | pleasantest/most pleasant |
| subtle | subtler/more subtle | subtlest/most subtle |
| polite | politer/more polite | politest/most polite |
| sure | surer/more sure | surest/most sure |
| stupid | stupider/more stupid | stupidest/most stupid |
| quiet | quieter/more quiet | quietest/most quiet |
| simple | simpler/more simple | simplest/most simple |

Examples

| 1. Add 'er' and 'est' | | | 2. Double the final consonants | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| Positive | Comparative | Superlative | Positive | Comparative | Superlative |
| mild | milder | mildest | hot | hotter | hottest |
| clean | cleaner | cleanest | slim | slimmer | slimmest |
| clever | cleverer | cleverest | thin | thinner | thinnest |
| light | lighter | lightest | fat | fatter | fattest |
| 3. Add 'r' and 'st' | | | 4. Delete the final 'y' and add 'ier' and 'iest' | | |
| Positive | Comparative | Superlative | Positive | Comparative | Superlative |
| pale | paler | palest | hazy | hazier | haziest |
| brave | braver | bravest | costly | costlier | costliest |
| noble | nobler | noblest | wealthy | wealthier | wealthiest |
| fine | finer | finest | dry | drier | driest |

| 5. Comparison using 'more' and 'most' | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Positive | Comparative | Superlative |
| difficult | more difficult | (the) most difficult |
| courageous | more courageous | (the) most courageous |
| beautiful | more beautiful | (the) most beautiful |
| carefully | more carefully | (the) most carefully |

| 6. Irregular adjectives and adverbs | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Positive | Comparative | Superlative |
| good | better | best |
| well | better | best |
| badly | worse | worst |
| many | more | most |
| much | more | most |
| little | less | least |
| far | further | furthest |
| far | farther | farthest |