

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