

GRAMMAR FOCUS

0.7 Comparative structures

Adjectives

We form the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives as follows:

Adjectives		Comparative	Superlative
one-syllable adjectives	young nice hot	younger nicer hotter	the youngest the nicest the hottest
one- or two-syllable adjectives ending in -y	pretty dry	prettier drier	the prettiest the driest
two-syllable or longer adjectives	dangerous	more dangerous	the most dangerous
irregular adjectives	good bad far	better worse further	the best the worst the furthest

- less + adjective:
*Marie is **less ambitious** than Tess.*
- the least + adjective:
*His last book was **the least interesting**.*

Adverbs

We form the comparative and superlative forms of adverbs as follows:

Adverbs		Comparative	Superlative
most adverbs	quietly carefully	more quietly more carefully	the most quietly the most carefully
adverbs same as adjectives	hard near early late fast	harder nearer earlier later faster	the hardest the nearest the earliest the latest the fastest
irregular adverbs	well badly far little a lot/ much	better worse further less more	the best the worst the furthest the least the most

- less + adverb:
*From now on this page will be updated **less regularly**.*
- the least + adverb:
*This country is one of **the least effectively** governed countries in the world.*

Other forms of comparison

- To compare two people, things or activities, we can use *than*:
*The inside of the hospital is more modern **than** the outside.*
*Does brown hair grow more quickly **than** blonde hair?*
- We can also use (not) as + adjective/adverb + as:
*Your essay is **not as good as** mine.*

- To talk about a small difference between two people, things or activities, we can use **a little/a bit/slightly** + adjective/adverb in the comparative form:
*Boys are **a bit more likely** than girls to be born early.*
*The event was received **slightly more positively** than the previous one.*
- To talk about a big difference, we can use **quite a bit/far/much/a lot** + adjective/adverb in the comparative form:
*We're going to need a **much more powerful** telescope.*
*The new system works **far better** than everyone expected.*
- We use **not** + adjective/adverb + **enough** to say we have less than we need or want and **too** + adjective/adverb to say we have more than we need or want:
*The new version of this video game is still **not realistic enough**.*
*I didn't play **well enough** to win.*
*The survivors were **too exhausted** to answer any questions.*
*We left the hotel **too early** to have breakfast there.*
- To say that with one change (to a certain degree) comes another change (to the same degree), we use *the* + comparative, *the* + comparative:
***The sooner** you get here, **the better**.*
***The harder** I try, **the worse** the situation becomes.*

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

- 1 He really is _____ (talented) singer I've ever heard.
- 2 Rome isn't _____ (expensive) as I thought it would be.
- 3 Is it possible for you to come over a bit _____ (early)?
- 4 He's far _____ (intelligent) you might think.
- 5 It's much _____ (far) I expected.
- 6 Driving is the _____ (safe) way of travelling. All other ways are safer.
- 7 'When can you finish?' 'The _____ (soon, good), to be honest.'