

Degrees of Comparison

Adjectives change in form when they show comparison.

Positive Degree: An adjective is said to be in the positive degree when there is no comparison.

Comparative Degree: An adjective is said to be in the comparative degree when it is used to compare two nouns/pronouns.

Superlative Degree: An adjective is in superlative degree when it is used to compare more than two nouns/pronouns. We use the article 'the' before the superlative degrees.

Formation of Comparative & Superlative Degrees of Adjectives

Adjectives usually form their comparative and superlative degrees:

1) by addition of '-er' and '-est' to the positive degree

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
bright	brighter	brightest
black	blacker	blackest
bold	bolder	boldest
clever	cleverer	cleverest
cold	colder	coldest
fast	faster	fastest
great	greater	greatest
high	higher	highest
kind	kinder	kindest
long	longer	longest
rich	richer	richest
small	smaller	smallest
strong	stronger	strongest
sweet	sweeter	sweetest
tall	taller	tallest
thick	thicker	thickest
young	younger	Youngest

2) by addition of '-r' and '-st' to the positive degree ending in 'e'

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
brave	braver	bravest
fine	finer	finest
large	larger	largest
nice	nicer	nicest
noble	nobler	noblest
pale	paler	palest
simple	simpler	simplest
wise	wiser	wisest
white	whiter	whitest

3) When the positive ends in 'y' and has a consonant before it, we change 'y' into 'i' and then add 'er' and 'est'.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
costly	costlier	costliest
dry	drier	driest
easy	easier	easiest
happy	happier	happiest
heavy	heavier	heaviest
lazy	lazier	laziest
wealthy	wealthier	wealthiest

4) when the positive degree ends in a consonant with a vowel before it, we double the consonant & then add '-er' and '-est'

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
big	bigger	biggest
dim	dimmer	dimmest
fat	fatter	fattest
hot	hotter	hottest
thin	thinner	thinnest

5) by addition of '-er' and '-est' to the positive degree when it ends in '-y'

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
gay	gayer	gayest
grey	greyer	greyest

6) by placing 'more' and 'most' before the positive form

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
active	more active	most active
attractive	more attractive	most attractive
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
brilliant	more brilliant	most brilliant
careful	more careful	most careful
courageous	more courageous	most courageous
cunning	more cunning	most cunning
difficult	more difficult	most difficult
famous	more famous	most famous
faithful	more faithful	most faithful
important	more important	most important
proper	more proper	most proper
popular	more popular	most popular
splendid	more splendid	most splendid
suitable	more suitable	most suitable

7) Some adjectives do not follow any of the rules explained earlier. They are compared irregularly. Here are the different forms of such adjectives.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
bad	worse	worst
evil	worse	worst
good	better	best
ill	worse	worst
far	farther	farthest
well	better	best
late	later	latest (time)
late	latter	last (position)
little	less	least
much	more	most
many	more	most
old	elder	eldest

Exercise

Rewrite the sentences given below using different degrees of comparison.

1. Shakespeare is the most famous of all writers in English.
2. Iron is more useful than any other metal.
3. I earn as much money as Ram.
4. China is larger than India.
5. Greenland is the largest island in the world.
6. Air is lighter than water.
7. I am taller than my brother.
8. Shyam is the strongest boy in the class.

Answers

1. No other writer in English is as famous as Shakespeare. / Shakespeare is greater than any other writer in English.
2. No other metal is as useful as iron. / Iron is the most useful of all metals.
3. Ram does not earn more money than I do.
4. India is not as large as China.
5. Greenland is larger than any other island in the world. / No other island in the world is as large as Greenland.
6. Water is not as light as air.
7. My brother is not as tall as I am.
8. Shyam is stronger than any other boy in the class. / No other boy in the class is as strong as Shyam.

Positive: – He is as wise as Solomon.

Comparative: – Solomon was not wiser than he is.

Positive: – Birds do not fly as fast as the aeroplane.

Comparative: – The aeroplane flies faster than birds.

Positive: – No other metal is as costly as gold

Comparative: – No other metal is costlier than gold

Superlative: – Gold is the costliest of all metals.

Positive: – Very few cities in India are as big as Mumbai.

Comparative: – Mumbai is bigger than most other cities in India

Superlative: – Mumbai is one of the biggest cities in India.

- Very few countries in the world are **as large as** China. (Positive)
- China is **larger than** most other countries in the world. (Comparative)
- China is one of **the largest** countries in the world. (Superlative)

- No other man was **as strong as** Hercules. (Positive)
- Hercules was **stronger than** any other man. (Comparative)
- Hercules was **the strongest** man in the world. (Superlative)

- No other boy in the class is **as intelligent as** James. (Positive)
- James is **more intelligent than** any other boy in the class. (Comparative)
- James is **the most intelligent** boy in the class. (Superlative)

- Very few Indian saints were **as popular as** Vivekananda. (Positive)
- Vivekananda was **more popular than** most other Indian saints. (Comparative)
- Vivekananda was one of **the most popular** Indian saints. (Superlative)

- Maria is **not as intelligent as** Sonia. (Positive)
- Sonia is **more intelligent** than Maria. (Comparative)