

Comparative and superlatives adverbs

Introduction



I eat **more healthily** now than when I was young.



He eats **the most** unhealthily of all his family.

Definition and use

We use comparative **adverbs** to compare two activities/actions or to show change.

We can use comparative structures with **adverbs of manner** and some **adverbs of time** and **frequency**.

We use superlative **adverbs** to compare more than two activities or actions.

Construction

Comparative adverbs: Adverbs ending in 'ly'

Superiority	Inferiority	Equality
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'more' + adverb + 'than'

She works **more** quietly **than** him.

1. 'less' + adverb + 'than'

He works **less** quietly **than** her.

'as' + adverb + 'as'

She works **as** quietly **as** him.

2. 'not as' + adverb + 'as'

He **doesn't** work **as** quietly **as** her.

Note that

1. The second form for inferiority is more common in conversation.
2. It isn't always necessary to include 'than' and the second part of the sentence.

For example:

It started to rain **more** heavily.

She's working **less** efficiently now.

Adverbs with the same form as the adjective

Superiority	Inferiority	Equality
adverb + 'er' + 'than'	'not as' + adverb + 'as'	'as' + adverb + 'as'
She works faster than him.	She doesn't work as fast as he does.	She works as fast as he does.
She works harder than him.	She doesn't work as hard as him.	She works as hard as him.
She arrived earlier than him.	She didn't arrive as early as him.	She arrived as early as him.

Irregular comparative adverbs

Superiority	Inferiority	Equality
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adverb + 'than'	'not as' + adverb + 'as'	'as' + adverb + 'as'
She speaks French better than he does.	He doesn't speak French as well as she does.	She speaks French as well as he does.
He speaks French worse than she does.	She doesn't speak French as badly as he does.	She speaks French as badly as he does.
He lives further from the station than her.	She doesn't live as far from the station as him.	She lives as far from the station as him.
She eats less than he does.	She doesn't eat as much as he does.	She eats as much as he does.

Superlative adverbs

	Superiority	Inferiority
Adverbs ending in 'ly'	'the most' + adverb She works the most quietly.	'the least' + adverb She works the least quietly.
Adverbs with the same form as the adjective	'the' + adverb + 'est' She works the fastest . She arrived the earliest .	See note 2. below
Irregular comparative adverbs	'the' + adverb She speaks French the best . She speaks French the worst . He lives the furthest from the station.	See note 2. below

Note that

1. It is generally more common to use comparative adverbs than superlative ones. For example, we are more likely to say:

He behaved more professionally than the other delegates did.
than
He behaved **the most** professionally.

and

She works less quietly than the others do./She doesn't work as quietly as the

others do.
than
She works **the least** quietly.

2. With these adverbs, an alternative structure is preferred:

She works the least fast. ✗	She doesn't work as fast as her colleagues. ✓ She works more slowly than her colleagues. ✓
He speaks French the least well. ✗ He speaks French the least badly. ✗	He doesn't speak French as well as the others. ✓ He doesn't speak French as badly as the others. ✓
He lives the least far from the office. ✗	He lives the nearest to the office. ✓ He doesn't live as far from the office as the others. ✓

Examples



She's swimming **more** confidently now.



Unfortunately, some laptops work **less** efficiently **than** others do. Of all the computers I've owned, this one works **the least** efficiently.



We **don't** go cycling **as** often **as** before.



This project **isn't** going **as** well **as** we hoped - everyone needs to start **earlier** each day and work **harder**.



He doesn't drive **as** carefully **as** his wife.



He dresses **as** badly **as** he dances. Of everyone in the class, he dances **the worst**!



I'm sorry. We can't have the meeting **as** soon **as** we want to.



My children's behaviour is getting **worse**, not **better**!



Peter always deals with Katashi because he speaks Japanese **the most** confidently.

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