

Comparatives and superlatives of superiority

Introduction



Sam is **taller than** his sister.



The white egg is **the biggest** and the red egg is **the smallest**.

Definition and use

We use comparative adjectives to compare two things or people.

We use superlative adjectives to compare more than two things or people.

Construction

The construction usually depends on the number of syllables.

Comparatives:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| One-syllable | adjective + 'er' + 'than' colder than | Sweden is colder than France. |
| Two-syllables and ending in a consonant and 'y' | adjective + 'er' + 'than' busier than | I'm busier than my boss. |
| More than two syllables | 'more' + adjective + 'than' more expensive than | Cars are more expensive than motorbikes. |

Superlatives:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| One-syllable | 'the' + adjective + 'est' the coldest | Antarctica is the coldest place in the world. |
| Two-syllables and ending in a consonant and 'y' | 'the' + adjective + 'est' the busiest | September is the busiest month for us. |
| Others with two syllables | 'the most' + adjective the most honest | She's the most honest person in the department. |
| More than two syllables | 'the most' + adjective the most expensive | This is the most expensive car in the world. |

| One vowel and one consonant - double and add 'est' | More than one vowel or consonant - add 'est' | Ends in 'e' - add 'st' | Change 'y' to 'i' and add 'est' |
|---|--|--|--|
| big - the biggest thin - the thinnest wet - the wettest | steep - the steepest rich - the richest near - the nearest | nice - the nicest wide- the widest close - the closest | dry - the driest pretty - the prettiest happy - the happiest |

Sometimes we use both in one sentence. For example:
England is **bigger than** Belgium but France is **the biggest**.

| Adjective | Comparative adjective | Superlative adjective |
|--|--|--|
| big cheap pale funny good bad | bigger cheaper paler funnier better worse | the biggest the cheapest the palest the funniest the best the worst |

Irregular adjectives

good -> better

bad -> worse

far -> further

Examples



Simon is younger **than** Todd.



This box is smaller **and heavier than** the blue box.



Quality is **more important than** price.



I have **the worst** office in the department!



They have four daughters. **The oldest** is nine and **the youngest** is one.



Janette's present is **bigger than** Holly's.



My apartment is **more modern than** my house.



The weather today is **better than** yesterday. We often have **the best** weather in September.



The pink flower is **the prettiest**.



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