

# Repeating and double comparatives

## Repeating comparatives



I'm going to stay indoors today - it's getting **colder and colder** out there.

## Definition

This is a common comparative structure that can be used with both adjectives and adverbs.

**It's getting colder and colder.**

= It's becoming increasingly cold; the temperature continues to drop.

**He's driving more and more confidently.**

= His confidence increases every time he drives.

**I enjoy this job less and less every day.**

= My enjoyment continues to decrease.

## Construction

One-syllable and some two-syllable adjectives*	Other two- and three-syllable adjectives*	Irregular adjectives
<b>smaller and smaller</b> <b>bigger and bigger</b> <b>wider and wider</b>  <b>narrower and narrower</b>  <b>happier and happier</b>	<b>more and more complex</b> <b>more and more honest</b> <b>more and more expensive</b> <b>more and more difficult</b>	<b>better and better</b> <b>worse and worse</b> <b>further and further</b>
<b>Less and less important</b> <b>Less and less interesting</b>		

\*For spelling rules and different forms of comparative adjectives, see [Comparative adjectives: superiority, inferiority and equality](#).

Adverbs ending in 'ly'	Irregular adverbs	Other adverbs
<b>more and more quickly</b> <b>more and more efficiently</b> <b>less and less noisily</b> <b>less and less dangerously</b>	<b>worse and worse</b> <b>better and better</b> <b>further and further</b>	<b>louder and louder</b> <b>faster and faster</b> <b>harder and harder</b> <b>earlier and earlier</b> <b>less and less</b> <b>more and more often</b>

## Uses

They are used to emphasise continuing change or progress. Here are some examples of situations in which we might use them:

Use	Examples
To comment on current affairs or activities	<p>The situation is becoming <b>more and more</b> serious.</p> <p>It seems <b>less and less</b> likely that the president will be re-elected.</p>
To state facts	<p>As you travel north, it gets <b>colder and colder</b>.</p> <p>Our memories become <b>worse and worse</b> as we get older.</p> <p>People are working <b>harder and harder</b> nowadays.</p>
When we're worried about a situation that's deteriorating	<p>It's getting <b>more and more</b> difficult for young people to find a job.</p> <p>He's getting <b>fatter and fatter</b> - he really needs to lose weight.</p> <p>She's behaving <b>less and less</b> professionally.</p>

## Quantities and amounts

We use 'more and more', 'less and less' or 'fewer and fewer' to talk about quantities and amounts. Note that 'less' is used for uncountable nouns and 'fewer' for countable whilst 'more' is used for both:

I'm eating **more and more** chocolate.  
 I'm drinking **less and less** coffee.  
 I have **fewer and fewer** responsibilities.

And we do not always need a noun - 'more' and 'less' can be used adverbially:

He's smoking **more & more** - I'm really worried about him.  
 As time goes by, I like him **less and less**.

## Examples



His temperature is getting **higher and higher** and he's feeling **worse and worse**.



The new boss expects us to work **later and later** every evening - I've had enough!



As we went **further and further** into the town, the streets got **narrower and narrower**.



She's behaving **more and more** rudely.



**Fewer and fewer** people are buying CDs - they're downloading music instead.



I spoke **louder and louder** during the presentation but the people at the back still couldn't hear me.

## Double comparatives



**The older** we get, **the more relaxed** we feel.

## Definition

We use "the..the..." with comparatives to talk about, for example,

- situations that change at the same time.
- something that happens as a consequence of something else.
- something that can be explained by something else.

<b>The older</b> we get, <b>the more relaxed</b> we feel.	= As we get older, we feel more relaxed.
<b>The more insistent</b> he was, <b>the less</b> she felt inclined to co-operate.	= Each time he was insistent, she felt even less inclined to co-operate than the previous time.

# Construction

One sentence or phrase consisting of two clauses separated by a comma.

'the' + comparative, 'the' + comparative

**The younger** you are, **the easier** it is to learn a language.

We can use a variety of comparative forms of either superiority or inferiority, including adjectives and adverbs. These can be combined in any way and, if the context is clear, they can be abbreviated:

**The more** cars we sell in Eastern Europe next year, **the sooner**  
we can consider  
building a plant there.

**The more quickly** we work now, **the less** we'll have to do  
tomorrow.

**The earlier** we get there, **the more** opportunity we'll have to  
speak to them.

**The richer** he becomes, **the less** he sees of his old  
friends.

**The faster the better.**

# Uses

This structure can be used in a variety of situations including statements of facts and universal truths or to give warnings or advice.

# Examples



**The harder** I tried to fix it, **the more**  
**frustrated** I became, so I just gave up!

**The longer** I lie here, **the worse** I feel.



**The more healthily you eat now, the stronger you'll be when you grow up.**



**The nearer it gets to the deadline, the more stressed I feel.**



**The further into this project they get, the more difficult they're finding it to agree.**



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