

# 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
<b>To comment on current affairs or activities</b>	<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>
<b>To state facts</b>	<p>As you travel north, it gets colder <b>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>
<b>When we're worried about a situation that's deteriorating</b>	<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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