

# THE COMPARISON OF REGULAR ADJECTIVES

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## INTRODUCTION

Adjectives have three degrees of comparison: **positive**, **comparative** and **superlative**.

According to the way in which the adjectives form the comparison degrees, they are **regular** and **irregular**.

Adjectives made of one syllable and of two syllables (ending in -er, -ly, -y, -w) add **-er** for comparative and **the ... -est** for superlative.

Positive

Comparative

Superlative

short

short**er** (than)

**the shortest** (of / in)

big

bigger**er** (than)

**the biggest** (of / in)

large

larger**er** (than)

**the largest** (of / in)

heavy

heavier**er** (than)

**the heaviest** (of / in)

clever

clever**er** (than)

**the cleverest** (of / in)

Adjectives made of two or more syllables take **more** for comparative and **the most** for superlative.

Positive

Comparative

Superlative

beautiful

**more** beautiful  
(than)

**the most** beautiful  
(in / of)

difficult

**more** difficult  
(than)

**the most** difficult  
(in / of)

## INTRODUCTION

Some adjectives are irregular because they change form completely for comparative and superlative degrees.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	the best
bad	worse	the worst
ill	worse	the worst
much	more	the most
many	more	the most
little	less	the least
far	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● farther</li> <li>● further</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the farthest</li> <li>● the furthest</li> </ul>
late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● later</li> <li>● latter (the second of two)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the latest (the most recent)</li> <li>● the last (the final)</li> </ul>

- **farther** is usually used for space  
He lives **farther** than me.
- **further** is used for space and time; it also means additional  
They need **further** information to solve the case.
- **latter** means the second of the two  
I have two sisters: the former is a teacher, **the latter** is a doctor.

- **the latest** means the most recent

Have you read **the latest** novel by Paulo Coelho?

- **the last** means the final

Have you read **the last** play by Shakespeare?

## OTHER COMPARISON FORMS

### The Comparative of Superiority

**comparative adjective + than**

The princess is **more beautiful than** her sister.

### The Comparative of Equality

**as + positive adjective + as**

The soldier was **as brave as** a lion.

### The Comparative of Inferiority

**less + positive adjective + than**

A silver ring is **less expensive than** a gold ring.

### The Relative Superlative

- **of superiority**

**the biggest, the shyest, the most attractive, the best, the last**

He bought **the most expensive** painting.

- **of inferiority**

**the least + positive adjective**

That's **the least important** question of all.

## The Absolute Superlative

### very + positive adjective

Instead of **very**, you can use: enormously, bitterly, extremely, terribly, awfully.

The food in Romania is **very delicious**.

That's an **enormously large** flat.



### Keep in mind!

- ✓ some words **double the final consonant** (big-bigger-the biggest; hot-hotter-the hottest; red-redder-the reddest)
- ✓ **consonant + y = i** (happy-happier-the happiest)  
Some adjectives do not change: shy-shyer-the shyest; sly-slyer-the slyest.
- ✓ **vowel + y = y** (gray-grayer-the grayest)
- ✓ talk about gradual change with **comparative** forms: taller and taller, more and more delighted
- ✓ talk about parallel increase of a characteristic with **two comparatives + the**: the more, the merrier
- ✓ emphasise superlative adjectives with **by far**: She is by far the most intelligent girl in my school.
- ✓ a great number of **idioms are comparatives of equality**: as cold as ice, as good as gold, as hungry as a wolf, as mad as a hatter, as soft as silk, as white as snow, as wise as an owl.