

Adjectives, comparatives and superlatives

1. Adjectives

An **adjective** is a word which describes the “**quality**” of a **noun**. **Adjectives**, in English, are placed before the noun.

What colour is the car? It is **red**. = It is a **red car**.

Adjectives are never plural.

One **red car**. => **Two red cars**. (not ‘two reds cars’)

Adjectives are not masculine or feminine.

He is a **tall boy**. => **She is a tall girl**.

2. Comparatives of short adjectives (less than 2 syllables)

Comparative adjectives are, as their name suggests, used to **compare** the **quality** or **quantity** of one thing in relation to another.

These **comparatives** can be:

- **unequal** – one noun is different from the other: She is **taller than** her brother.
- **equal** – both nouns possess the same quality. He is **as tall as** his sister.

The second structure can also be negative and mean the same thing as the first structure.

He is **not as tall as** his sister.

The **comparative** of regular adjectives is formed by adding **er** to the root adjective if there are not more than two syllables.

tall – taller / strong – stronger / high – higher / hard – harder / soft – softer / quiet – quieter

If an **adjective** ends in a consonant + y, the y becomes **ier**.

ugly – uglier / funny – funnier / happy – happier / tasty – tastier / easy – easier

Short adjectives ending in a vowel and a consonant must double the consonant.

big – bigger / hot – hotter / wet – wetter / fat – fatter

3. Comparatives of long adjectives (more than 2 syllables)

If an **adjective** has more than two syllables, then we cannot add **er** and must use **more... than**.

This chair is **more comfortable than** that one.

That chair is **not as comfortable as** that one.
This job is **more important than** what you are doing.
What you are doing is **not as important as** this job.
My shoes were **more expensive than** yours.
Your shoes were **not as expensive as** mine.

The **comparative adjective** can only be used to **compare** two things. If we compare more than two things, then we must use the **superlative**.

4. Surlatives

These express the difference in quality or quantity between three or more things.

Examples:

'A' is big. 'B' is smaller than 'A'. 'C' is bigger than 'A'.

> 'C' is **the biggest**.

> 'B' is **the smallest**.

The **superlative** of regular adjectives is formed by adding **-est** to the root adjective if there are not more than two syllables.

If an **adjective** ends in a consonant + y, the y becomes **iest**.

ugly – ugliest / funny – funniest / happy – happiest / tasty – tastiest / easy – easiest

Short adjectives ending in a vowel and a consonant must double the consonant.

big – biggest / hot – hottest / wet – wettest / fat – fattest

If the root adjective has more than two syllables, we cannot just add an **-est** on the end but we need to use **"the most + adjective"**.

Examples:

Exercises 1 and 2 were difficult but exercise 3 was **the most difficult**.

That was not the **most interesting** talk I have ever heard.

5. Irregular adjectives

Some adjectives are irregular. Three of the most common of these are.

good – better – the best

bad – worse – the worst

far – farther – the farthest