

Comparative and superlative adjectives

1- Comparative adjectives

Definition

Comparative adjectives are adjectives that compare differences between the attributes of two nouns. These are often measurements, such as height, weight, depth, distance, etc., but they don't have to be. We can also use comparative adjectives to compare non-physical characteristics.

Forming Comparative Adjectives

We form comparative adjectives either by adding “-er” to the end of the adjective, or by adding the word *more* (or *less*) before the adjective.

We class **comparative adjectives** into two types: **short** and **long**.

Short adjectives are adjectives that have only one syllable, or else have two syllables and end in “-y.”

For the majority of short adjectives, we form the comparative according to the following rules:

One syllable Add “-er” to the end of the adjective. *Tall* becomes **Taller**

Two syllables ending in “-y” Replace “-y” with “-ier”

happy becomes **happier**.

Notes :

1- If the adjective ends in “-e,” we just add “-r,” not “-er.” This is to avoid doubling the letter “e.”

e.g:

- *Large* becomes **larger**, not *largeer*.

- *Cute* becomes **cuter**, not *cuteer*.

- *Safe* becomes **safer**, not *safeer*.

2- If the last three letters of the adjective are in the pattern *consonant, vowel, consonant*, we double the final consonant before adding “-er” to the word.

E.g:

Reference

Peter Herring, the Farlex Grammar Book: Complete English Grammar Rules.

- *Big* becomes **bigger**, not *biger*.
- *Sad* becomes **sadder**, not *sader*.
- *Thin* becomes **thinner**, not *thiner*.

Long Adjectives

“**Long**” adjectives are adjectives that have three or more syllables, or adjectives that have two syllables and do not end in “-y.” For these adjectives, we can follow these rules:

- Two syllables not ending in “-y”

Insert the word *more/less* before the adjective.

e.g. *careful* becomes **more/less careful**.

- Three or more syllables

Insert the word *more/less* before the adjective.

e.g. *Intelligent* becomes **more /less intelligent**.

Irregular adjectives

As with most grammatical “rules” in English, there are some exceptions to the patterns above. Here are a few of the adjectives that have **irregular** comparative forms:

Bad **worse**

Good **better**

There are also some adjectives that have two generally accepted comparative forms. These are some of the most common:

Adjective	Comparative Form 1	Comparative Form 2
clever	cleverer	more/less clever
likely	likelier	more/less likely
narrow	narrower	more narrow
	quieter	

Reference

Peter Herring, the Farlex Grammar Book: Complete English Grammar Rules.

quiet	simpler	more/less quiet
simple		more/less simple

Adjective Comparative Form 1 Comparative Form 2

far* **farther** **further**

*When referring to distance, *farther* and *further* can be used interchangeably. However, in American English, *farther* is preferred when comparing physical distances and *further* when comparing figurative distances. For example:

- “San Francisco is **farther** from New York than Boston.” (physical distance)

BUT

- “I was able to make **further** progress at work.” (figurative distance)

In British English, *further* is more common both for physical *and* figurative distances.

Using Comparative Adjectives

To *form* comparative adjectives we follow this structure:

Noun 1 + *be* + comparative adjective + *than* + noun 2

E.g:

-“An airplane is bigger than a car.”

- “Tom is faster than John.”

-“Ahmed is more studious than Karim.”

Reference

Peter Herring, the Farlex Grammar Book: Complete English Grammar Rules.