

Comparative and superlative adjectives

Comparative adjectives

Using Comparative Adjectives

Comparative Adjectives are used depending on the situation:

Comparative of superiority:

- Short adjectives: adjective+ er +than

E .g : He is taller **than** her.

- Long adjective: more+ adjective+ than

E.g : Samir is **more** studious than his friend.

Comparative of inferiority :

- Short and long adjectives: Less+ adjective+ than

E .g : Karim is less motivated than Sarah

Equality :

as +adjective+as

E.g : he is **as** kind **as** his brother.

2- Superlative adjectives

Superlative adjectives are similar to **comparative adjectives**, except they express the most extreme degree of comparison, they are only used when talking about groups of three or more people or things.

Forming Superlative Adjectives

We form superlative adjectives either by adding “-est” to the end of the adjective, or by adding the word *most* before the adjective.

“Short” Adjectives

With one-syllable adjectives, we add “-est” and double the final consonant if preceded by one vowel. For example:

big – biggest

thin – thinnest

sad – saddest

slim – slimmest

The final consonant is **not** doubled if it is preceded by two vowels or another consonant, as

in:

weak – weakest

strong – strongest

(If the adjective ends in an “e,” then you only need to add “-st,” as in the case of *large* – *largest*.)

If an adjective has two syllables and ends in “-y,” we replace “y” with “i” and add “-est,” as in:

happy – happiest

furry – furriest

“Long” Adjectives

“Long” adjectives are adjectives that have three or more syllables, or adjectives that have two syllables and *do not* end in “-y.” Rather than changing the ending of long adjectives to make them superlative, we use the word *most* before the adjective to indicate the highest degree of something, or *least* to indicate the lowest degree. For example:

careful – most/least careful

caring – most/least caring

beautiful – most/least beautiful

amazing – most/least amazing

Exceptions

Here are a few of the adjectives that have **irregular** superlative forms:

bad – worst

good – best

far – farthest/furthest*

Adjectives with multiple superlative forms

There are also some adjectives that can either take the “-est” ending or be preceded by “most” to become superlative. The following are some of the most common: clever, likely, narrow, quiet, simple.

Examples:

- “John is **the tallest** student in his class.”

- “Daniel always buys **the most advanced** smartphones available.”
- ““It is **the highest** mountain in the world.”
- “There are many expensive brands of watches, but these are **the most expensive** kind.”
- “This is **the best** book I’ve ever read.”
- “Among her four sisters, Georgina has **the worst** eyesight.”

We can also identify a superlative attribute of a person or thing compared to him-/her-/itself in other points in time. In this case, we generally do **not** use the word *the*.

For example:

- “I am **most alert** after my morning coffee.” (compared to a different time of day)
- “The car is **fastest** when the engine has warmed up.” (compared to when the engine is cold).

Reference:

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