

2º Bachillerato. MAKING COMPARISONS

Comparative and superlative of adjectives

FORM

1. Adjectives of one syllable add **-er** and **-est**:
warm/warmer/warmest
big/bigger/biggest
Adjectives ending in one vowel and one consonant double the final consonant:
fat/fatter/fattest
2. Adjectives of three or more syllables take **more** and **most**
interesting/more interesting/most interesting
beautiful/more beautiful/most beautiful
3. Adjectives of two syllables
 - a. the majority of these take **more/most**:
harmful/more harmful/most harmful
foolish/more foolish/most foolish
 - b. those ending in **-y** or **-ly** change **-y** to **-ier/-iest**:
easy/easier/easiest
kindly/kindlier/kindliest
 - c. those ending in **-le**, **-er** and **-ow** (*simple, feeble, clever, narrow*) may take **-er/-est**, though the forms with **more** and **most** are more common (also *handsome, polite, quiet, pleasant, common, cruel and stupid*). So a simple rule for two-syllable adjectives is: use **more** and **most** except for the ones ending in **-y**.
clever/cleverer/cleverest or clever/more clever/most clever
common/commoner/commonest or common/more common/most common
4. Irregular forms:
good/better/best
bad/worse/worst
far/farther/farthest
(or *further/furthest*, with the meaning of 'additional', 'extra' or 'more advanced').
old/older/oldest
(or *elder/eldest*, before the words *brother, sister, son, daughter, etc.*)

USE

1. The comparative is usually followed by **than**:
He is taller/more intelligent than John.
2. The superlative is usually followed by **in** or **of**. Use **of** when the thing/person being compared belongs to the same category as the object of the comparison, otherwise use **in**:
He's the fastest -in the race.
-of the competitors.
He's the tallest -in the army.
-of the soldiers.
She's the brightest -in my family.
-of my sisters.
(Note: it is not correct to use the superlative when only two persons/things are being compared: ~~*He's the youngest of the two brothers.~~)
3. Comparatives and superlative forms can function as nouns with the definite article:
The tallest will stand on the right.
The younger of the two brothers was the most intelligent in the class.
4. Note this form:
The larger the town is, the higher the crime rate is.
The more prosperous it becomes, the less pleasant it is to live in.
The older I get, the happier I am.
The more dangerous it is, the more I like it.

Exercise 1

Complete the sentences with the superlative forms (**most** or **-est**) of the adjectives in brackets followed by **in** or **of**.

- eg. Mary is the tallest girl in the class. (tall)
1. Shakespeare is the all English authors. (famous)
 2. This is the book my collection. (valuable)
 3. I'm not the footballer the team. (bad)
 4. Your design was the the ones I saw. (pretty)
 5. Henry is one of the people the world (boring)

Exercise 2

Complete the following sentences.

1. The more I know him...
2. The sooner you start...
3. The more you work...
4. The more people you know...
5. The earlier you get up...
6. The richer someone gets...
7. The faster you drive...

Comparative and superlative of adverbs

1. Adverbs of one syllable add **-er** and **-est**
hard/harder/hardest
fast/faster/fastest
2. Adverbs of two or more syllables take **more** and **most**:
carefully/more carefully/most carefully
exception: *early/earlier/earliest*
3. Irregular forms:
well/better/best
little/less/least
badly/worse/worst
much, many/more/most

As... as

As... as is used to show equality:

John is as tall as Henry, and he runs just as quickly as Robert.

The negative form is **not as... as** or **not so... as**:

Robert is not as/so tall as Peter, and he doesn't run as/so quickly as Nick.

Modifying comparatives and superlatives

1. Comparatives can be modified in this way:

Paris is	<table><tr><td> </td><td><i>a lot</i></td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td><i>much</i></td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td><i>far</i></td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td><i>a great deal</i></td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td><i>a little</i></td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td><i>somewhat</i></td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td><i>a bit</i></td><td> </td></tr></table>		<i>a lot</i>			<i>much</i>			<i>far</i>			<i>a great deal</i>			<i>a little</i>			<i>somewhat</i>			<i>a bit</i>		<i>more/less interesting than London</i>
	<i>a lot</i>																						
	<i>much</i>																						
	<i>far</i>																						
	<i>a great deal</i>																						
	<i>a little</i>																						
	<i>somewhat</i>																						
	<i>a bit</i>																						

2. Superlatives can be strengthened by the addition of **by far**:

Rome is by far the most beautiful city in Europe.

Similarly:

<i>George is</i>	<i>twice</i>	
	<i>half</i>	
	<i>nearly</i>	
	<i>almost</i>	<i>as rich as Tom</i>
	<i>just</i>	
	<i>not quite</i>	
	<i>not nearly</i>	

EXERCISE 3

Rewrite each of these sentences in such a way that it means exactly the same as the sentence before it.

e.g. Paul is much shorter than George = Paul isn't nearly as tall as George.

1. The blue dress isn't quite as pretty as the red one.
The red...
2. He speaks German better than he speaks French.
He doesn't...
3. This is the worst film I've ever seen.
I've...
4. Joe didn't sweep the floor as thoroughly as Mary wanted him to.
Joe swept...
5. I'm not nearly such a careful driver as he is.
He drives....

Comparative clauses: *so* and *such*

Such is an adjective and is used before an adjective + noun. It is never used before **much** and **many**:

He was such a big man with such dark eyes that I was very frightened.

So is an adverb and is used before adverbs and with adjectives not followed by nouns. It is used with **much** and **many** even when they are followed by nouns:

The film was so good, had so many stars and was so well directed that I could have watched it three times.

Exercise 4

Join each pair of sentences using **so** or **such** followed by **that**

e.g. *He spoke convincingly. The people believed him*

He spoke so convincingly that the people believed him.

Then rephrase the sentence to use the other construction.

e.g. *He spoke in such a convincing way that the people believed him.*

1. He sang beautifully. Half the audience cried.
2. He had a good voice. He became a popular singer.
3. He made many hit records. He became very rich.
4. He had expensive tastes. He spent all of his money.
5. He received a lot of fan mail. He could not answer it all.
6. His car was big. He needed two parking spaces.