

A2 · TEENS · LESSON 12 · COMPARISONS

Bigger, *better*, best.

English has three gears for comparing: one thing is bigger *than* another, and one thing is *the* biggest of them all. Learn the ladder — and when to switch between *-er*, *more*, and *the most*.

tall → taller → tallestShort · add *-er* / *-est***more interesting**Long · use *more* / *the most***good → better → best**

Irregular · memorise

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Warm-Up

Compare · Rank · Describe

Before we begin...

Everything around you is ready to be compared. Look up from this page for a moment and find three things in your room that are different sizes, colours, or ages.

1. Name **two things** in your room and say which is **bigger**. Now compare their colour or age.
2. What is **the oldest thing** you own? How old is it?
3. Think about your friends. Who is **the funniest**? Who is **the most organised**?
4. Your home country vs. a country you'd love to visit — name **three differences** using *bigger*, *hotter*, *more interesting*, etc.

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Grammar Focus

Comparatives & Superlatives

To **compare two things**, English uses the *comparative* — the form with *-er* or *more*. To say one thing is **top of the group**, it uses the *superlative* — the form with *the -est* or *the most*.

Which form you choose depends on *how long the adjective is*. Short adjectives (1 syllable) use **-er** / **-est**. Long adjectives (3+ syllables) use **more** / **the most**. Two-syllable adjectives? We'll meet the rules together.

THE LADDER — ADJECTIVE → COMPARATIVE → SUPERLATIVE			
RULE	ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
+ er / est 1 syllable	tall	taller than	the tallest
drop e + er / est ends in -e	nice	nicer than	the nicest
double + er / est CVC ending	big	bigger than	the biggest
y → ier / iest ends in -y	happy	happier than	the happiest
more / the most 3+ syllables	interestin g	more interesting than	the most interesting
irregular memorise!	good	better than	the best

USE 1 · COMPARATIVE — TWO THINGS SIDE BY SIDE

A is bigger than B

Use the comparative when you're comparing **exactly two** things, people, or places. The little word *than* almost always follows.

"My brother is **taller than** me."

"This film is **more exciting than** the book."

"Today is **hotter than** yesterday."

You don't always need than — you can also say "She's faster" or "The weather got colder" when the comparison is obvious.

USE 2 · SUPERLATIVE — TOP OF THE GROUP**A is the biggest (of all)**

Use the superlative when one thing is **number one** in a group of three or more. Always put *the* in front. Often we add *in / of* + the group.

"Leila is **the tallest** girl in our class."

"This is **the most beautiful** beach in Turkey."

"That was **the worst** meal of my life."

MEMORISE THESE**Irregular forms — no rules, just memory**

Six adjectives break all the rules. Learn them now, because you'll use them every single day.

good better than **the best**

bad worse than **the worst**

far farther /
further **the
farthest**

little less than **the least**

**much /
many** more than **the most**

**old
(family)** elder **the eldest**

PATTERN · COMPARATIVE

- A is adjective+er + than + B.**
- A is more + adjective + than + B.**
- A is not as + adjective + as + B.**

"Not as ... as" is another way to compare —
 "I'm not as tall as my sister" = "I'm shorter than my sister."

PATTERN · SUPERLATIVE

- the + adjective+est + in the class**
- the most + adjective + in the world**
- one of the + adjective+est + plural noun**

"One of the best films" is a softer superlative — it doesn't commit to "the best ever", just "in the top group".



Key Vocabulary

10 useful adjectives to compare with

WORD	IPA	MEANING	EXAMPLE
cheap	/tʃi:p/	(adj, 1 syll) costing little money	<i>The bus is cheaper than the train.</i>
expensive	/ɪk'spens.ɪv/	(adj, 3 syll) costing a lot of money	<i>This café is the most expensive here.</i>
crowded	/'kraʊ.dɪd/	(adj, 2 syll) full of people	<i>The beach is more crowded in August.</i>
modern	/'mɒd.ən/	(adj, 2 syll) of the present time	<i>Our new classroom is more modern.</i>
boring	/'bɔ:..rɪŋ/	(adj, 2 syll) dull; not interesting	<i>That film was more boring than homework.</i>
comfortable	/'kʌmf.tə.bəl/	(adj, 4 syll) nice to be in / to use	<i>This is the most comfortable chair here.</i>
far	/fɑ:/	(adj, irregular) a long way from here	<i>Her house is further than mine.</i>
twice	/twaɪs/	(adv) two times	<i>London is twice as big as Paris.</i>
slightly	/'slɑɪt.li/	(adv) a little; a small amount	<i>It's slightly colder today.</i>
far	/fɑ:/	(adv, intensifier) much; by a large amount	<i>She's far better at maths than me.</i>



Reading

Four comparisons, four cities

THE COMPARISON ISSUE · VOLUME 12

Bigger, Better, Best

Four teenagers compare their worlds — a sister, a street, a school, and a sky. Each story spotlights one pattern so you can hear the difference in action.

Across four cities, four teenagers hold their worlds up to each other — a sister, a street, a school, and a sky. Each story spotlights one corner of the grammar so you can hear the difference in real voices.

STORY ONE · COMPARING SISTERS

Priya, 14 · Chennai

People always get it wrong. They see Priya and her sister Asha together and assume Asha is **the older** one, because Asha is **taller, louder**, and, frankly, **more confident** than Priya. But Asha is thirteen. Priya is fourteen. "I'm *older*," Priya always says, "but she's *faster* at everything else."

It's true. Asha runs **faster**, sings **better**, and makes friends **more easily**. Priya, though, is **the better** student — top of the class in maths, and **the quietest** person in any room. Their mother says they are **the best** combination: one loud, one calm, both kind.

"I used to be jealous," Priya admits. "But now I think: she's not *better than* me. She's just *different from* me. And that's **the most important** lesson my little-big sister ever taught me."

COMPARE Notice how Priya uses both kinds: comparatives (*taller, louder, more confident*) to compare **two sisters**, and superlatives (*the best, the most important*) to rank within a whole group.

STORY TWO · TWO STREETS, ONE CITY

Yusuf, 15 · Istanbul

Yusuf lives on İstiklal Caddesi, which he swears is **the most crowded** street in Turkey. He and his best friend Berke argue about it weekly. "No," Berke says, "Bağdat Caddesi on the Asian side is **busier**." Yusuf laughs. "On weekends? Maybe. On a random Wednesday? No chance."

Here's what Yusuf loves about his street: it's **noisier** than the Asian side, **older** (some buildings are from the 1800s), and **cheaper** for simit — a sesame bread ring — by almost twenty per cent. But he admits Berke's neighbourhood is **cleaner, quieter**, and has **better** playgrounds for his cousins.

"İstiklal isn't **the prettiest** street in Istanbul," Yusuf says one afternoon, watching the trams slide past. "But it's definitely **the most alive**. And for me, that's what makes it **the best**."

IN + SUPERLATIVE "The most crowded street *in Turkey*" — superlatives often need **in** (places) or **of** (groups). "The best meal *of my life*." "The tallest boy *in the class*."

STORY THREE · THE NEW SCHOOL

Tevita, 16 · Auckland

Tevita transferred schools three months ago. His new school is **bigger, newer, and more modern** than his old one. The canteen has **better** food. The library is **quieter**. The gym is **twice as big**. On paper, everything here is superior.

So why did he cry in the bathroom last Tuesday?

Because *bigger* and *better* aren't always *the same as* **happier**. His old school was **smaller, shabbier, and far less** organised — but he knew everyone's name. Here he's **the newest** person, and sometimes **the loneliest**. "Maybe next term will be **easier**," he tells his mum. She nods. "It usually is," she says.

NOT AS ... AS Tevita could say the same thing this way: "My old school *wasn't as organised as* my new one." Both forms work — they just flip the focus of the comparison.

STORY FOUR · THE SKY ABOVE SAN PEDRO

Sofia, 17 · near Atacama, Chile

Sofia lives outside San Pedro de Atacama, in one of **the driest** places on Earth. It is also, her physics teacher insists, **the best** place on the planet to see stars. Last weekend she drove two hours to a stargazing park with her uncle, an amateur astronomer.

"The city sky," he told her, looking up, "has maybe fifty visible stars. This sky has **more than** four thousand. That's **eighty times more**. And the farther you drive from any town, the **clearer** it gets."

Sofia doesn't usually believe adults. But she believed him that night. She had never seen anything **more beautiful** — and she's lived near beaches, volcanoes, and salt flats. "This," she said quietly, "is **the most perfect** sky of my life."

V Practice

Fill the blanks with the correct form

Choose the correct form for each sentence. Coloured tags tell you what kind of form to look for: comparative, superlative, irregular, as ... as, or long adjective.

LEGEND: COMPARATIVE SUPERLATIVE IRREGULAR AS...AS LONG ADJ

1. My phone is ____ yours. COMPARATIVE
 - A newer that
 - B newer than
 - C more new than
2. This is ____ street in our city. SUPERLATIVE
 - A more quiet
 - B the quieter
 - C the quietest
3. She sings ____ than her brother. IRREGULAR
 - A better
 - B more good
 - C gooder
4. Today is ____ yesterday was. AS...AS
 - A as hotter as
 - B as hot as
 - C hotter as

5. That was ____ meal of my life. **IRREGULAR**
- A the baddest B the most bad C the worst
6. Your phone is ____ mine. **LONG ADJ**
- A more expensive than B expensiver than C the most expensive
7. The Nile is ____ river in the world. **SUPERLATIVE**
- A the most long B the longest C longer
8. My grandmother is ____ person in my family. **SUPERLATIVE**
- A more kind B the kindest C the most kind

VI

Speaking

Compare out loud

Your turn — five promptsAnswer with full sentences. Use *than*, *the*, or *as ... as* in every answer.

1. Compare your phone and your best friend's phone. Which is *better*? Why?
2. What is *the most beautiful* place you have ever visited? Say why in two sentences.
3. Compare summer and winter in your country. Give three differences.
4. Who is *the funniest* person in your family? Who is *the most serious*?
5. Your home city vs. another city you know: which is *bigger*, *cheaper*, *more exciting*?

MODEL DIALOGUE — ROME vs BARCELONA**A:** "So, which did you like better — Rome or Barcelona?"**B:** "Barcelona is warmer and the food is cheaper, but Rome has the best history. It's the most incredible city I've ever seen."**A:** "More incredible than Paris?"**B:** "Paris is prettier, I think. But Rome feels older, wilder, more alive. If I had to choose the best one, I'd pick Rome."

VI

Writing

Compare two places (80-120 words)

Which sentence is correct?

- A My room is more big than yours.
- B My room is bigger than yours.
- C My room is the more bigger.
- D My room is biggest than yours.

Q2 OF 8 · LONG ADJECTIVE

Complete: "That's _____ film I've ever seen."

- A the boringest
- B more boringer
- C the most boring
- D most boring

Q3 OF 8 · IRREGULAR

"His English is _____ than mine."

- A better
- B gooder
- C more good
- D the best

Q4 OF 8 · SPELLING RULE

What is the comparative of "happy"?

- A more happy
- B happier
- C happyer
- D the happiest

Q5 OF 8 · READING RECALL

In Story One, what is *the best* combination, according to Priya's mother?

- A Two loud sisters.
- B Two quiet sisters.
- C One loud, one calm, both kind.
- D The older and the taller.

Q6 OF 8 · AS ... AS

"I'm _____ as my sister." (same height)

- A as taller
- B taller as
- C the tallest
- D as tall

Q7 OF 8 · PREPOSITION

"Mount Everest is the highest mountain _____ the world."

- A in
- B of
- C than
- D from

Q8 OF 8 · INTENSIFIER

"London is _____ bigger than my hometown." (much bigger)

- A very
- B far
- C so
- D too

Answer Key

PRACTICE (PART VI)

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. C 6. A 7. B 8. B

QUIZ (PART IX)

Q1. B Q2. C Q3. A Q4. B Q5. C Q6. D Q7. A Q8. B