

Module English

Second year

Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe, identify, or quantify nouns and pronouns. They help specify our writing by offering more details about nouns and pronouns.

Comparative Adjectives

Comparative adjectives are used to compare two things—they help describe differences between two nouns.

Comparative Adjective Sentence Formula

Comparative adjectives are generally used in the following sentence structure:

Noun (subject) + verb + comparative adjective + than + noun (object)

Example

My television + is + bigger + than + my computer.

My television is bigger than my computer.

- In some cases, the sentence will end after the comparative adjective and not include the object of comparison. This structure is possible when the context has provided enough information to make the comparison clear.

Example

My brother is 6 feet tall, but my father is taller. (“than my brother” is implied)

Superlative Adjectives

Superlative adjectives are used to compare three or more things. They help describe things on either end of a spectrum (e.g., smallest and largest, tallest and shortest).

Superlative Adjective Sentence Formula

Superlative adjectives are generally used in the following sentence structure:

Noun (subject) + verb + the + superlative adjective + noun (object)

Example

My English professor + is + the + smartest + person.

My English professor is the smartest person.

- Just like comparative adjectives, the object of comparison can sometimes be left out.

Example

We took an exam in class today, and I scored the highest. (“in the class” is implied)

Creating Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

Changing an adjective into its comparative or superlative form depends on the number of syllables in the base form of the adjective (e.g., small, tall, big).

One-Syllable Adjectives

The suffix **-er** will be added for comparative adjectives and **-est** for superlative adjectives. When the adjective has a single vowel between two consonants (consonant + single vowel + consonant), the second consonant will be doubled.

Example of a Comparative Adjective with a Single Vowel Between Two Consonants

Adjective: hot

h (consonant) + o (single vowel) + t (second consonant)

Comparative form: hotter

h (consonant) + o (single vowel) + tt (doubled second consonant) + er (comparative suffix)

In a sentence: The temperature is hotter today than yesterday.

Adjective -----> Comparative-----> Superlative

fast -----> faster -----> fastest

cheap -----> cheaper-----> cheapest

fresh-----> fresher -----> freshest

big-----> bigger-----> biggest

sad -----> sadder-----> saddest

Two-Syllable Adjectives

For comparative adjectives, the suffix **-er** will be added, or it will be preceded by **more**. For superlative adjectives, the suffix **-est** will be added, or it will be preceded by **most**. Occasionally, both forms are used, but one will be more common. When in doubt, use **more** or **most** instead of a suffix. For adjectives ending in **y**, the **y** will become an **i**, and the appropriate suffix will be added.

Adjective-----> Comparative -----> Superlative

gentle -----> gentler-----> gentlest

clumsy-----> clumsier-----> clumsiest

happy-----> happier-----> happiest

anxious-----> more anxious-----> most anxious

polite -----> more polite-----> most polite

Three Syllables or More

Comparative adjectives are preceded by **more**, and superlative adjectives are preceded by **most**.

Adjective ----->Comparative ----->Superlative

important-----> more important-----> most important

attractive-----> more attractive-----> most attractive

embarrassed-----> more embarrassed-----> most embarrassed

Irregular Adjectives and Exceptions

Although there are several rules for writing in English, these rules often have irregularities and exceptions. Sometimes, the deviants follow a pattern that makes them easy to spot, but this is not the case for comparative and superlative adjectives. Abnormal adjectives simply have to be committed to memory.

Irregular adjectives

Adjectives are irregular when their comparative and superlative forms do not adhere to the rules discussed in this handout. The chart below displays some examples of irregular adjectives.

Adjective-----> Comparative-----> Superlative

good ----->better-----> best

bad-----> worse-----> worst

little-----> less-----> least

much ----->more-----> most

far ----->farther/further ----->farthest/furthest

Activity 1

Directions: Complete the sentences with the correct comparative or superlative adjective based on the adjective provided in parentheses.

1. The Burj Khalifa building in Dubai is the _____ (tall) building in the world.
2. Labradors are _____ (big) than Chihuahuas.
3. We built rockets in physics class today. Mine flew the _____ (high).
4. My necklace is _____ (expensive) than my bracelet.
5. I got a C on my essay, which is _____ (bad) than the 100% I got last time.
6. Homework is _____ (important) than watching television.
7. Watching television makes me _____ (happy) than doing homework.
8. To save money, I am searching for the _____ (cheap) textbooks.
9. My grandmother's chocolate chip cookies are the _____ (good).
10. Driving on a dirt road is _____ (bumpy) than driving on asphalt.

Answer Key for Activity 1

