

Degrees of Adjectives – Positive – Comparative

Introduction

1) An adjective is a word or set of words that modifies (i.e. describes) a noun or pronoun. Adjectives may come before or after the word they modify.

*This is a **cute** cat. This cat is **cute**.*

2) Most adjectives can show degree of quality or quantity by forming two degrees of comparison: the comparative degree and the superlative degree. These degrees are formed from the positive degree, which is the usual form of adjectives.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
<i>This is a tall building.</i>	<i>This building is taller than that one.</i>	<i>This is the tallest building.</i>

Comparative adjectives are used to compare differences between the two objects they modify. When forming the comparative degree follow the pattern *noun/pronoun (subject) + verb + comparative adjective + than + noun/pronoun (object)*.

*My room is **larger** than Jake's.*

The second item of comparison can be omitted if it is clear from the context that something is being compared to something else.

*If you start working out you'll get **thinner**. (=You'll get thinner in comparison to your past self.)*

Comparative adjectives with one syllable are normally formed by adding *-er* to the adjective.

smart – smarter

If an adjective has a *consonant + single vowel + consonant* spelling, the *final consonant* must be *doubled* before adding *-er*.

big – bigger

Adjectives ending in *constant + -y* change *-y* to *-i* and add *-er*.

dry – drier

Adjectives with two syllables can form the comparative either by adding *-er* or by preceding the adjective with *more*.

happy – happier

tangled – more tangled

In many cases, both forms are used, although one usage will be more common than the other. If you are not sure whether a two-syllable adjective can take a comparative ending, use *more* instead.

Adjectives with three or more syllables form the comparative by preceding the adjective with *more*.

beautiful – more beautiful

Some adjectives do not follow any of the rules explained earlier. They are compared irregularly. Here are the most common irregular adjectives.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
<i>good</i>	<i>better</i>	<i>the best</i>
<i>bad</i>	<i>worse</i>	<i>the worst</i>
<i>far</i>	<i>farther/further</i>	<i>the farthest/furthest</i>
<i>little</i>	<i>less</i>	<i>the least</i>
<i>much/many</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>the most</i>

The superlative degree will be covered in the following lesson.

Short Story Dialogue

– *How are you doing?*

– *I'm OK. And how are you?*

– *I'm fine, thank you! I must say that you look **more tired** in comparison to when I saw you last time.*

– *Yeah, my life is definitely **more complicated** now. I'm finishing my studies and... I'm craving for sleep! I try to choose **healthier** options when I eat, I try to be **more active** but it doesn't help when you sleep 4 hours a day.*

– *I totally get you! Life was definitely **easier** when we were kids.*

Independent Practice - Degrees of Adjectives – Positive – Comparative

1) Underline the correct word or phrase.

- a. It was *better/more good* this time!
- b. This dress is a lot longer *that/than* the other one.
- c. Today Tom feels *more bad/worse* than yesterday.
- d. Bill is *more attentive/more attentiver* when he is talking to someone in person.
- e. Our drive took *longier/longer* than we expected.

2) Form the comparative degree.

- a. Non-smokers usually live (long) than smokers.
- b. The weather this winter is even (bad) than last winter.
- c. A holiday by the sea is (good) than a holiday in the mountains.
- d. This skirt is (beautiful) than that one.
- e. Our house is (big) than theirs.

Independent Practice: Answers - Degrees of Adjectives – Positive – Comparative

1) Underline the correct word or phrase.

- a. It was better/more good this time!
- b. This dress is a lot longer that/than the other one.
- c. Today Tom feels *more bad*/worse than yesterday.
- d. Bill is more attentive/*more attentiver* when he is talking to someone in person.
- e. Our drive took *longier*/longer than we expected.

2) Form the comparative degree.

- a. Non-smokers usually live **longer** than smokers.
- b. The weather this winter is even **worse** than last winter.
- c. A holiday by the sea is **better** than a holiday in the mountains.
- d. This skirt is **more beautiful** than that one.
- e. Our house is **bigger** than theirs.