

Comparatives and Superlatives

- The **comparative** form of an adjective or adverb indicates comparison between exactly two qualities (greater or lesser).
- The **superlative** form of an adjective or adverb indicates comparison among more than two qualities (greatest or least).

• Forming comparatives and superlatives:

Adjective

Comparative

Superlative

Only one syllable, ending in “e”.

Example: cute

Add -r:

Example: cuter

Add -st:

Example: cutest

Only one syllable, with one vowel and one consonant at the end. *Example: big*

Double the consonant and add -er.

Example: bigger

Double the consonant and add -est.

Example: biggest

Only one syllable with more than one vowel or more than one consonant at the end. *Example: neat*

Add -er.

Example: neater

Add -est.

Example: neatest

Two syllables ending in “y”.

Example: happy

Change the “y” to an “i” then add -er.

Example: happier

Change the “y” to an “i” then add -est.

Example: happiest

Two syllables or more not ending in “y”.

Example: modern

Use MORE before the adjective.

Example: more modern

Use MOST before the adjective.

Example: most modern

• Examples:

1. Nothing could have been *easier*.
2. Jack is the *meanest* person in the school.
3. Stacy is the *older* of the two sisters.
4. We chose the *earliest* of the four appointments.
5. This is the *most challenging* assignment of the semester.

• Irregular comparatives and superlatives:

	Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Adjectives	Good	Better	Best
	Bad	Worse	Worst
	A little	Less	Least
	Many, much, some	More	Most
Adverbs	Well	Better	Best
	Badly	Worse	Worst

• Examples:

1. John did *well* on the test, Alex did *better*, and Sammy did the *best*.
2. That was the *worst* movie that I have ever seen.
3. Jordan is a *better* athlete than his brother.
4. Tina wears *less* makeup than Sarah.
5. Travis is taking *more* classes than Angela.

• Avoiding Illogical Comparatives and Superlatives:

- Many adjectives and adverbs can logically exist only in the positive degree and, therefore, cannot have comparative or superlative forms.
- Examples of these words include *perfect*, *unique*, *dead*, *parallel*, and *impossible*.
- These words can be modified by words that suggest approaching the absolute state, such as *nearly* or *almost*.

• Examples:

1. He revised his draft until it was *almost perfect*.
WRONG: He revised his draft until it was *more perfect*.
2. The task at hand was *nearly impossible*.
WRONG: The task at hand was *most impossible*.
3. The vase in her collection was *unique*.
WRONG: The vase in her collection was *very unique*.
4. I read an *excellent* book yesterday.
WRONG: I read *the most excellent* book yesterday.
5. The grass was *almost dead* before it rained.
WRONG: The grass was *more dead* before it rained.

