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ENGLISH

Comparatives

Comparison of Adjectives

An adjective is used to make comparisons between two or more nouns. It may highlight the similarity or difference between the nouns. There are three degrees of comparison:

- Positive degree
- Comparative degree
- Superlative degree

The **positive degree** of the adjective is used when only the noun is being described.

Bengaluru is a big city.

(The adjective 'big' merely describes the city.)

In the positive degree, the adjective alone is used in the sentence. Sometimes, in the positive degree, the phrase 'as (adjective) as' is used to show comparison between two things.

Sita is as tall as Gita.

More Examples:

This is a quiet place.

Shankar is a qualified employee.

Hema bought a beautiful house.

The **comparative degree** of the adjective is used when the noun is compared to another.

Delhi is bigger than Bengaluru.

(The adjective 'bigger' is used to compare 'Delhi' to 'Bengaluru'.)

In the comparative degree, the preposition 'than' is used after the adjective.

More Examples:

Rajesh is smarter than his brother.

The first batch of bread is tastier than this one.

Bindu is clearly more confident this time.

The **superlative degree** of the adjective is used when the noun is compared to three or more things.

But Mumbai is the biggest city of all.

(The adjective 'biggest' is used to compare 'Mumbai' to 'Delhi' and 'Bengaluru'.)

More Examples:

Milk is the most important ingredient.

Krishna is the eldest among his siblings.

This is the worst class I have ever seen.

In the superlative degree, the definite article 'the' is used with the adjective.

Regular Comparison

Most adjectives with single syllables end with the suffix '-er' or '-est' in the comparative degree and superlative degree, respectively.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
tall	taller	tallest
short	shorter	shortest
kind	kinder	kindest
bold	bolder	boldest
great	greater	greatest

When the positive degree adjectives end in '-y' preceded by a consonant, the 'y' becomes 'i' and 'er' and 'est' are added.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
busy	busier	busiest
lazy	lazier	laziest
happy	happier	happiest
cheery	cheerier	cheeriest
easy	easier	easiest

When the adjective ends in a 'consonant–vowel–consonant' structure, the last consonant is repeated and 'er' or 'est' is added.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
hot	hotter	hottest
red	redder	reddest
big	bigger	biggest
fat	fatter	fattest
thin	thinner	thinnest

Some adjectives which contain two or more syllables form the comparative and superlative degrees by adding the words 'more' and 'most', respectively.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
gorgeous	more gorgeous	most gorgeous
talented	more talented	most talented
spacious	more spacious	most spacious
contagious	more contagious	most contagious
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful

Some comparisons are irregular and do not follow the same rules as conventional adjectives. Their comparative and superlative degrees are not formed from their positive degree.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
much/many	more	most
far	farther	farthest
ill	worse	worst
fore	former	foremost
fore	further	furthest
out	utter	utmost
old	elder	eldest

Changing the Degree

It is possible to change the degree of the adjective without changing its meaning. Let us read the following sentences:

Krishna is the tallest boy in the class. (superlative)
No other boy in the class is as tall as Krishna is. (positive degree)
Krishna is taller than any other boy in the class. (comparative)

In the above sentences, the degrees of the adjectives are different; however, the meaning of all the three sentences is the same. Let us look at the rules for changing the degree of the adjectives.

Changing into the Positive Degree

While changing the sentence into any degree, it is important to understand what kind of comparison is made.

- a. Manu is the smartest person I have ever met.
- b. Manu is one of the smartest people I have ever met.

- In Sentence a, Manu is the smartest; in Sentence b, Manu is one of the smartest people which means there are other smart people whom the speaker has met.
- While changing Sentence a to the positive degree, the phrase 'No other...' should be used to start the new sentence. The adjective in the positive degree should be accompanied by the phrase 'as (adjective) as'.

- a. Manu is the smartest person I have met.
No other person I have met is as smart as Manu is.

- While changing Sentence b into the positive degree, the phrase 'not many people' or 'few people' can be used to introduce the sentence.
- Even in such cases, the adjective in the positive degree should be accompanied by the phrase 'as (adjective) as'.

- b. Manu is one of the smartest people I have met.
Not many people I have met are as smart as Manu is.
Few people that I have met are as smart as Manu is.

Let us look at more examples:

- a. The Queen of Sheba was wiser than any other woman in the world._
No other woman in the world was as wise as the Queen of Sheba was.

- b. Chandran is one of the sneakiest thieves he has encountered._
Few thieves he has encountered are as sneaky as Chandran is.