

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.

- 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 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 will be preceded by *more*, and superlative adjectives will be 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 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 or further	Farthest or furthest

Exceptions :

Adjectives are exceptions to the rules discussed in this handout when they simply do not have a comparative or superlative form. Some examples include blind, unique, vertical, wrong, left, intelligent, complete, perfect, etc.