

Degrees of Comparison

Degrees of Comparison are used when we compare one person or one thing with another.

There are three Degrees of Comparison in English.

1. Positive degree.
2. Comparative degree.
3. Superlative degree.

Positive	dark	tall	useful
Comparative	darker	taller	more useful
Superlative	darkest	tallest	most useful

There are two ways of forming the comparative and the superlative:

1) By adding er, est to the positive:

Small	smaller	smallest
tall	taller	tallest

2) By means of more and most:

Difficult	more difficult	most difficult
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I

A) When an adjective of one syllable ends in two consonants or in a single consonant preceded by two vowels, er and est are added:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
long	longer	longest
sweet	sweeter	sweetest

B) When an adjective of one syllable ends in a single consonant preceded by a short vowel, the consonant is doubled before er, and est:

Hot	hotter	hottest
Fat	fatter	fattest

C) When an adjective of one syllable ends in e, only r and st are added:

Brave	braver	bravest
Wise	wiser	wisest

D) When an adjective of one syllable ends in y preceded by a consonant, we change the 'y' into i before adding er, est:

Happy	happier	happiest
Merry	merrier	merriest

Exception: shy, shyer, shyest

E) But if the final Y is preceded by a vowel, we simply add er, est:

Gay	gayer	gayest
Grey	greyer	greyest

F) Adjectives of two syllables ending in er, le, y and ow generally form their comparative and superlative in the same way as the adjectives of one syllable:

clever	cleverer	cleverest
noble	nobler	noblest
happy	happier	happiest
mellow	mellower	mellowest

II. Adjectives of more than two syllables, and many adjectives of two syllables, form the comparative and superlative by means of more and most.

Awful	more awful	most awful
Careful	more careful	most careful
Beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful

We can change the degrees of comparison of adjectives and adverbs, without changing the meaning of the sentences.

Examine the following examples:

- 1) Positive : I am not so/as tall as he.
Comparative : He is taller than I
- 2) Positive : He is as dull as an ass.
Comparative : An ass is not duller than he is.

- 3) Superlative : London is the biggest city in the world.
Comparative : London is bigger than any other city in the world.
Positive : No other city in the world is so big as London.
- 4) Superlative : Subhas Bose was one of the greatest Patriots of India.
Comparative : Subhas Bose was greater than most (many) other patriots of India.
Positive : Very few patriots of India were so great as Subhas Bose.
- 5) Positive : Some girls in the class are at least as beautiful as Sita.
Comparative : Sita is not more beautiful than some other girls in the class Or
Some girls in the class are not less beautiful than Sita.
Superlative : Sita is not the most beautiful of all the girls in the Class.

Type -I By adding 'er' and 'est'		
POSIT	COMPAR	SUPERL
bright	brighter	brightest
black	blacker	blackest
bold	bolder	boldest
clever	cleverer	cleverest
cold	colder	coldest
fast	faster	fastest
great	greater	greatest
high	higher	highest
kind	kinder	kindest
long	longer	longest
small	smaller	smallest
strong	stronger	strongest
sweet	sweeter	sweetest
tall	taller	tallest
young	younger	youngest

Type -II By adding 'r' and 'st'		
brave	braver	bravest
fine	finer	finest
large	larger	largest
nice	nicer	nicest
noble	nobler	noblest
pale	paler	palest
simple	simpler	simplest
wise	wiser	wisest
white	whiter	whitest

Type -III By deleting the final 'y' and adding 'ier' and 'iest'		
costly	costlier	costliest
dry	drier	driest
easy	easier	easiest
happy	happier	happiest
heavy	heavier	heaviest
lazy	lazier	laziest
mercy	mercier	merciest
wealthy	wealthier	wealthiest

Type -IV By doubling the final consonants		
POSIT	COMPAR	SUPERL
big	bigger	biggest
dim	dimmer	dimmest
fat	fatter	fattest
hot	hotter	hottest
thin	thinner	thinnest

Type -V By using more and most		
active	more active	most active
brilliant	more brilliant	most brilliant
careful	more careful	most careful
cunning	more cunning	most cunning
difficult	more difficult	most difficult
famous	more famous	most famous
faithful	more faithful	most faithful
proper	more proper	most proper
popular	more popular	most popular

Type -VI Irregular Comparisons		
bad	worse	worst
evil	worse	worst
good	better	best
ill	worse	worst
far	farther	farthest
well	better	best
late	later	latest
little	less	least
much	more	most
many	more	most
near	nearer	nearest
old	older	oldest

Bits for practice

- 1) This summer is _____ than the previous summer. (hot)
- 2) Harsha is the _____ boy in the class. (intelligent)
- 3) Her doll is _____ than yours. (pretty)
- 4) Name the _____ city in the world. (big)
- 5) He is the _____ friend I have. (good)
- 6) Iron is _____ than any other metal. (useful)
- 7) Ram's work is bad, Hari's is _____, but Govind's work is the _____. (bad)
- 8) Silver is _____ than gold. (cheap)
- 9) The Eiffel Tower is _____ than the Qutub Minar. (tall)
- 10) Akbar was the _____ Mughal Emperor. (great)
- 11) Prevention is _____ than cure. (good)
- 12) Mathematics is the _____ subject. (difficult)
- 13) Apples are _____ than oranges. (Costly)
- 14) Mr. Sharma is the _____ person I have ever seen. (fat)
- 15) This suitcase is _____ than that one. (heavy)
- 16) The number of boys present was _____ than the number of girls present in the class. (many)
- 17) Sita was the _____ tired of them all. (little)
- 18) Rohan's house is the _____ from college. (far)
- 19) Have you heard the _____ news? (late)
- 20) He is the _____ member in the Rajya Sabha. (old)

Answers

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|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1) hotter | 2) most intelligent | 3) prettier | 4) biggest |
| 5) best | 6) more useful | 7) worse, worst | 8) cheaper |
| 9) taller | 10) greatest | 11) better | 12) most difficult |
| 13) costlier | 14) fattest | 15) heavier | 16) more than |
| 17) least | 18) farthest | 19) latest | 20) oldest |

Write answers to the following as directed

Exercise I:

- 1) Mount Everest is the highest peak in the world. (Use 'higher than')
- 2) 'Shakuntala' is better than any other drama in Sanskrit. (Use 'as good as')
- 3) No other town in Malaysia is as old as Malacca (use 'the oldest')
- 4) The lion is the most ferocious animal. (Use 'as ferocious as')
- 5) He is richer than all other men in the village. (Use 'the richest')

Exercise II:

- 1) Very few animals are as useful as the cow. (Use 'the most useful')
- 2) Latif is more hardworking than most other boys. (Use 'as hard working as')
- 3) Ashoka was one of the most powerful emperors. (Use 'more powerful than')
- 4) India is hotter than most other countries. (Use 'the hottest')
- 5) Very few poets are as great as Keats. (Use 'greater than')

Exercise III:

- 1) Silver is not as precious as gold. (Use 'more precious than')
- 2) The pen is mightier than the sword. (Use 'not as mighty as')
- 3) A deer runs faster than a horse. (Use 'not fast as')
- 4) Your knife is not as sharp as mine. (Use 'sharper than')
- 5) A foolish friend is not as good as a wise enemy. (Use 'better than')

Exercise IV:

- 1) Sharukh Khan is not greater than Dilip Kumar. (Use 'as great as')
- 2) My house is at least as big as yours. (Use 'not bigger than')
- 3) The Taj Mahal is at least as famous as the Statue of Liberty. (Use 'not more famous than')
- 4) Sanjeev is not fatter than Veeru. (Use 'as fat as')
- 5) This tree is as old as that tree. (Use 'not older than')

Exercise V:

- 1) Tennyson is not greater than some other poets. (Use 'not the greatest')
- 2) Some boys are at least as industrious as Suresh (use 'not more industrious than')
- 3) This is not the best college in the city. (use 'as good as')
- 4) Rohan is not the dullest boy in the class. (Use 'not duller than')
- 5) Some students are at least as clever as Rani. (Use 'not the cleverest')

Answers

Exercise I:

- 1) Mount Everest is higher than any other peak in the world.
- 2) No other drama in Sanskrit is as good as Shakunthala.
- 3) Malacca is the oldest town in Malaysia.
- 4) No other animal is as ferocious as the lion.
- 5) He is the richest man in the village.

Exercise II:

- 1) The cow is one of the most useful animals.
- 2) Very few boys are as hard working as Latif.
- 3) Ashoka was more powerful than many other emperors.
- 4) India is one of the hottest countries.
- 5) Keats is greater than many other poets.

Exercise III:

- 1) Gold is more precious than silver.
- 2) The sword is not as mighty as the pen.
- 3) A horse doesn't run as fast as a deer.
- 4) My knife is sharper than yours.
- 5) A wise enemy is better than a foolish friend.

Exercise IV:

- 1) Dileep Kumar is not as great as Sharukh Khan.
- 2) Your house is not bigger than mine.
- 3) The Statue of Liberty is not more famous than the Taj Mahal.
- 4) Veeru is as fat as Sanjeev.
- 5) That tree is not older than this tree.

Exercise V:

- 1) Tennyson is not the greatest poet.
- 2) Suresh is not more industrious than some other boys.
- 3) Some colleges in the city are at least as good as this.
- 4) Rohan is not duller than some other boys in the class.
- 5) Rani is not the cleverest student.