

Comparisons and Superlatives

Making an Adjective Stronger or Weaker

Review the following chart:

not at all < not very < a little < somewhat < rather < pretty < very < extremely

not at all = The adjective mentioned does not describe the noun.

The tickets are **not at all** cheap.

not very = The noun does not have much of the quality of the adjective.

That area is **not very** safe.

a little = The noun has only a little bit of the quality of the adjective.

The car is **a little** expensive.

somewhat = The noun has some of the quality of the adjective.

The food is **somewhat** spicy.

rather = The noun has quite a few aspects of the quality of the adjective.

It's a **rather** large class.

pretty = The noun has a lot of the quality of the adjective.

It's a **pretty** long trip.

very = The noun is a good example of the quality of the adjective.

They're **very** good books.

extremely = The noun is a superior example of the quality of the adjective.

It's an **extremely** hard course.

exercise	9-1
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Fill in the blanks with the word from the previous list that best completes each sentence.

1. My sister's job is to feed the neighbor's cats. Her job is _____ easy.
2. My friend bought a car for \$100. His car was _____ expensive.
3. Our neighbor has a dog that barks all night. Our neighbor's dog is
_____ noisy.
4. Their house is near the metro station and the bus stop. Their house is in a
_____ convenient location.
5. She invited about fifty people to her house for a celebration. She had a
_____ large party.

exercise	9-2
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Now complete the following sentences with the same types of expressions.

1. My job is _____ easy.
2. My shoes were _____ expensive.
3. My neighbor's dog is _____ friendly.
4. My house is in a _____ convenient location.
5. My dinner last night was _____ salty.

Expressing Negative Effects

The word *too* before an adjective indicates that the adjective is so strong that it has a negative effect:

That car is **too expensive**. (I can't buy it.)

He is **too rich**. (He values money over people.)

They were **too tired**. (They couldn't work.)

The party was **too noisy**. (The police came and sent everybody home.)

exercise

9-3

After each sentence with *too*, write a possible negative effect.

1. The food was too cold. _____
2. It was too rainy. _____
3. I ate too much cake. _____
4. She was driving too fast. _____
5. The shoes are too small. _____

exercise

9-4

Write five sentences that describe yourself or people you know. Use five of these expressions: not at all, a little, somewhat, rather, pretty, very, extremely, too.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Making Comparisons with Adjectives

Nouns are compared with other nouns by the strength of their adjectives. An adjective made stronger is followed by the word *than* in a comparison.

One-Syllable Adjectives

Adjectives that have only one syllable are made stronger by adding the suffix *-er*:

She is **taller than** her sister.

He is **faster than** the other runner.

These tickets were **cheaper than** those.

It is **colder** in the north **than** in the south.

exercise

9-5

Write the stronger form of each of the following adjectives.

1. bright _____
2. cheap _____
3. clean _____
4. cold _____
5. cool _____
6. damp _____
7. dark _____
8. fast _____
9. fresh _____
10. high _____
11. light _____
12. long _____
13. neat _____
14. new _____
15. old _____
16. plain _____
17. poor _____
18. rich _____
19. short _____
20. sick _____
21. slow _____
22. small _____
23. smart _____

24. sweet _____
25. tall _____
26. young _____

Adjectives that have one syllable and that end in *-e* are made stronger by adding *-r*:

He is **nicer** than his brother.

They are **cuter** than they were before.

exercise

9-6

Write the stronger form of each of the following adjectives.

1. cute _____
2. fine _____
3. lame _____
4. loose _____
5. nice _____
6. pale _____
7. rude _____
8. tame _____
9. wide _____

A few one-syllable adjectives end in *-w*, *-x*, or *-y*. These are made stronger by adding *-er*:

low	lower
new	newer
slow	slower
lax	laxer
gray	grayer

Other adjectives of one syllable that end in a consonant-vowel-consonant are made stronger by repeating the final consonant and adding *-er*:

She is **bigger** than he is.

I think she's **thinner** than she was before.

exercise

9-7

Write the stronger form of each of the following adjectives.

1. big _____
2. fat _____
3. fit _____
4. hot _____
5. mad _____
6. red _____
7. sad _____
8. thin _____

The comparative (stronger) forms of *good* and *bad* are irregular:

That was a **good** movie, but this one is **better**.

She had **bad** luck, and now it is **worse**.

exercise

9-8

Use *good*, *bad*, *better*, or *worse* to complete the sentences.

1. Today's weather is _____. Yesterday's was _____.
2. The job I have is _____. It is _____ than the one I had before.
3. The condition of my room is _____. It is _____ than it was last week.
4. Today I feel _____. I feel _____ than I did yesterday.

Two-Syllable Adjectives

A lot of adjectives have two syllables and end in *-y*. They are made stronger by changing the *y* to *i* and adding *-er*:

He is **happier** now.

I hope it will be **sunnier** tomorrow.

That movie is **funnier** than the last one we saw.

exercise

9-9

Write the stronger form of each of the following adjectives.

1. angry _____
2. bossy _____
3. busy _____
4. cloudy _____
5. cozy _____
6. crazy _____
7. dirty _____
8. easy _____
9. friendly _____
10. funny _____
11. happy _____
12. lazy _____
13. lonely _____
14. lovely _____
15. lucky _____
16. noisy _____
17. pretty _____
18. rainy _____
19. silly _____
20. sunny _____
21. tasty _____
22. ugly _____

A few adjectives that have two syllables are made stronger by adding *-r* (if they end in *-e*) or *-er*:

cruel	crueler
gentle	gentler
little	littler
narrow	narrower
quiet	quieter
simple	simpler

This street is **narrower** than that one.

This exercise is **simpler** than the other one.

exercise
9-10

Fill in each blank with the comparative form of the best adjective from the previous list.

1. It was noisy last night, but now it is _____.
2. The last problem was complicated. This one is _____.
3. The streets in that town are _____ than the avenues in the city.
4. At first he was too rough with the puppy, but now he is _____.
5. The first king was cruel, and this one is _____.
6. This little girl has a baby sister who is _____ than she is.

Most adjectives that have two or more syllables are made stronger by placing the word *more* before them:

more modern	more wonderful	more responsible
more famous	more dangerous	more imaginative

exercise
9-11

Write the comparative form of each adjective. Some will end in *-er*; others will have *more* before them.

1. athletic _____
2. boring _____
3. civil _____
4. civilized _____
5. clean _____
6. comfortable _____

7. considerate _____
8. cool _____
9. delicious _____
10. dirty _____
11. fresh _____
12. friendly _____
13. gentle _____
14. gullible _____
15. healthy _____
16. hot _____
17. open _____
18. patient _____
19. persuasive _____
20. pleasant _____
21. proper _____
22. proud _____
23. quiet _____
24. rude _____
25. sad _____
26. serious _____
27. sick _____
28. silly _____
29. sincere _____
30. slow _____
31. small _____
32. stingy _____

33. successful _____
34. sweet _____
35. tiny _____
36. unfriendly _____
37. upset _____
38. useful _____
39. wide _____
40. worried _____

Making Adjectives Weaker

All adjectives can be made weaker by placing the words *not as* before them:

This apple is **not as** good as the other one.

Those dresses are **not as** pretty as these.

These shoes are **not as** comfortable as my old ones.

In a comparison a stronger adjective is followed by *than*; a weaker adjective is followed by *as*:

This desk is **sturdier than** that one.

That chair is **not as comfortable as** this one.

exercise

9-12

In each blank, make the adjective in parentheses stronger or weaker, as appropriate.

- I bought this dress because it was (pretty) _____ the others in the shop.
- He took the shoes back to the store because they were (comfortable) _____ his old ones.
- I didn't go back to that restaurant because the food was (good) _____ I had expected.
- We stayed a long time at the party, because it was (good) _____ the last one.
- The new car is nice, but it's (big) _____ the old one.

Expressing Superlatives

Superlative adjectives indicate that a noun has more of the adjective's quality than two or more other nouns:

John is five feet ten inches tall.
John is tall.

James is six feet tall.
James is taller than John.

Bill is six feet two inches tall.
Bill is taller than John and James.
Bill is the **tallest** in the class.

Adjectives that end in *-er* in the comparative form end in *-est* in the superlative form:

bigger	biggest
cooler	coolest
nicer	nicest
quieter	quietest
sillier	silliest
simpler	simplest

The superlative forms of *good* and *bad* are irregular:

good	best
bad	worst

exercise

9-13

Write the superlative form of each adjective.

- bad _____
- clean _____
- cold _____
- crazy _____
- cute _____
- friendly _____
- gentle _____
- good _____
- hot _____
- silly _____
- lucky _____
- mad _____

13. neat _____
14. nice _____
15. rude _____
16. sad _____

exercise**9-14**

Choose five of the superlatives in the answers to Exercise 9-13 to describe five people you know.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Adjectives that are preceded by *more* in their comparative form are preceded by *most* in their superlative form:

more appreciative
more difficult
more modern
more responsible

most appreciative
most difficult
most modern
most responsible

exercise**9-15**

Write the superlative form of each adjective.

1. active _____
2. bad _____
3. cold _____
4. comfortable _____
5. fast _____
6. flexible _____
7. generous _____

8. happy _____
9. large _____
10. little _____
11. new _____
12. noisy _____
13. serious _____
14. ugly _____
15. uninteresting _____
16. useless _____

exercise**9-16**

Choose five of the superlatives in the answers to Exercise 9-15 to describe five people you know or things you have.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

8. happy _____
9. large _____
10. little _____
11. new _____
12. noisy _____
13. serious _____
14. ugly _____
15. uninteresting _____
16. useless _____

exercise**9-16**

Choose five of the superlatives in the answers to Exercise 9-15 to describe five people you know or things you have.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____