

# 21 Comparison of adjectives



## 1 Comparative and superlative forms

	COMPARATIVE (two things)	SUPERLATIVE (more than two things)
adjectives with one syllable <sup>1</sup>	add -(e)r : large → larger small → smaller young → younger fast → faster	add -(e)st: large → the largest small → the smallest young → the youngest fast → the fastest
adjectives with two or more syllables <sup>2</sup>	use more/less + adjective: useful → more/less useful expensive → more/less expensive interesting → more/less interesting	use the most/the least + adjective: useful → the most/least useful expensive → the most/least expensive interesting → the most/least interesting
irregular adjectives	bad → worse good → better far → farther/further well (= healthy) → better	bad → the worst good → the best far → the farthest/furthest

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the spelling changes: dry → drier/the driest, big → bigger/the biggest (see page 351)

<sup>2</sup> Adjectives with two syllables where the second syllable is unstressed (often ending in -y, -ly, -ow, or -l) can sometimes form the comparative and superlative in the same way as one-syllable adjectives: friendly → friendlier/the friendliest, gentle → gentler/the gentlest, funny → funnier/the funniest

## 2 Comparative adjectives

We use comparative adjectives to compare two things. When we use a comparative adjective in front of a noun we add *than*:

✗ *Humpback whales are larger killer whales.* ✗ *Humpback whales are larger of killer whales.*  
✓ *Humpback whales are larger than killer whales.*

We use object pronouns (*me, her, etc.*), not subject pronouns (*I, she, etc.*) after *than*:  
*Maria is taller than Anna.* ✗ *Maria is taller than she.* ✓ *Maria is taller than her.*

⚠ We don't use *more* or *less* with an adjective that is already comparative:  
✗ *Kevin is more taller than Sue.* ✗ *Sue is less taller than Kevin.*

We can use two comparatives to show that something is changing.  
*The weather is getting hotter and hotter.*  
*Food is becoming more and more expensive these days.*

🔊 **Pronunciation** ▶ 1.06

## 3 Superlative adjectives

We use superlative adjectives to compare more than two things. We use *the* or a possessive adjective (*my/your/his, etc.*) before the superlative form:

*Blue whales are the largest whales. What was your best subject at school?*

After superlatives we use *in* before singular nouns (i.e. the name of a place or group):  
*The blue whale is the largest creature in the world. Ben is the oldest player in the team.*

But we use *of* before plural nouns:

*The blue whale is the largest of the whales. Ben is the oldest of the players.*

Making comparisons stronger and weaker ▶ Unit 22.3