

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

Making comparisons is a basic part of language. We make judgments about who has *more* money, and is thus *wealthier*, or who mixes *better* with people, and is consequently *more sociable*.

On this subject, you probably think first of comparative adjectives and 'than'.

However, remember that we also make comparisons with 'as' ... 'as'. These are often in a negative form: *'The local market isn't as busy as it used to be.'*

Try to recognize when you need to use a superlative rather than a comparative, and to see the difference between 'more' and 'the most', 'less' and 'the least', 'better' and 'the best', 'worse' and 'the worst' etc.

Finally, remember that many comparisons do not use adjectives; they can use adverbs or verbs.

COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE FORMS

Short adjectives:

cheap	cheaper	cheapest
safe	safer	safest
big	bigger	biggest
dry	drier	driest

Long adjectives:

interesting	more interesting	most interesting
-------------	------------------	------------------

Some two-syllable adjectives, such as *quiet*, *happy*, *narrow*, follow the rules for short adjectives. Most two-syllable adjectives follow the rules for long adjectives. If you are not sure, follow the rules for long adjectives.

Irregular adjectives:

good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest

One-syllable adverbs, such as *hard*, *near*, *fast*, follow the same rules as short adjectives. Two-syllable and longer adverbs, *slowly*, *carefully* etc, follow the same rules as long adjectives.

Irregular adverbs:

well	better	best
badly	worse	worst
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest

COMPARISON STRUCTURES

Comparisons can be made:

- with a comparative form and **than**

*It's sunnier **than** yesterday.*

*You can try harder **than** that.*

*The film is more comprehensible **than** his first one.*

- with an adjective or adverb and **as as**

*It isn't **as** sunny **as** yesterday.*

*I'm just **as** ready to compromise **as** you are.*

*I don't see the dentist **as** regularly **as** I should.*

Comparisons can also be made with **less** instead of **more**, or **least** instead of **most**:

*She's **less** talented than you.*

*He spoke **less** convincingly than the other candidates.*

*Mali is the **least** urbanized of the three countries.*

Comparisons can be intensified by adverbs and quantifiers:

*His story was **slightly** more credible than the earlier version.*

*He's not **nearly** as smart as he thinks he is.*

*We need to be **a lot** less dependent on oil.*

CONTRAST WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

Contrasts can be expressed in a number of ways. Here are a few of the more common ones:

***Compared to** you, I'm a genius.*

*He's a sports fan, **unlike** his father.*

***Contrary to** popular belief, most sharks are harmless.*

*People think all sharks are dangerous, **whereas** many are harmless.*

Exercise 1

Choose the correct words to complete each sentence.

1. We were here just as early you.
a) that
b) as
2. Good health is the important thing in life.
a) more
b) most
3. We didn't have as many customers today yesterday.
a) than
b) as
4. I'm nearly as tall as you.
a) twice
b) two times

5. Clothes are less expensive in America.

- a) much
- b) very

6 It's warmer than it was yesterday.

- a) slightly
- b) greatly

7. you, I take care of my money.

- a) Unlike
- b) Contrary to

8. Those hills are further away than they appear to be.

- a) a lot
- b) a lot more

9. Between the two of us, we can finish the job more

- a) fast
- b) quickly

10. She spends less time on the computer than on the phone.

- a) many
- b) a lot

Exercise 2

Choose the comparative or superlative form to complete the sentences correctly.

1. Support for the project is getting day by day.

- a) stronger
- b) strongest

2. The bridge is the impressive piece the architects have ever designed.

- a) more
- b) most

3. Throughout the world, people have a life expectancy than they did 50 years ago.

- a) higher
- b) highest

4. We should aim to draw our suppliers into partnerships.

- a) firmer
- b) firmest

5. Many people have left the area, and have gone to other parts of the city.

- a) wealthier
- b) wealthiest

6 The state has suffered the summer since records began.

- a) drier
- b) driest

7. Mrs Lomax is the founder of the city's charitable foundation.
a) larger
b) largest
8. We arrived at the conference early, and took the seats we could find.
a) better
b) best
9. Negotiations are proceeding as a result of our change of strategy.
a) faster
b) fastest
10. Above all, people want to provide their families with schools and opportunities.
a) better / greater
b) best / greatest

Exercise 3

Complete the sentences with the correct words or expressions.

1. The conference was better attended than last year.
a) very
b) much
c) highly
2. There were twice as many office employees here in the 1990s there are today.
a) that
b) than
c) as
3. The new line of products is as successful as the old one.
a) quite
b) slightly
c) nearly
4. There are more vacant business premises in the city occupied ones.
a) as
b) than
c) that
5. From next month, the store is planning to stay open later at weekends.
a) much
b) more
c) very
6. the site used to provide a lot of jobs, robots now do all the work.
a) Although
b) Whereas
c) Compared to

7. The redesigned waterfront area is proving more popular with visitors we had expected.

- a) as
- b) than
- c) that

8. Salaries in this sector are more than twice as high they were 20 years ago.

- a) as
- b) than
- c) that

9. to 1950, when it was built, the plant is today almost deserted.

- a) Compared
- b) Contrary
- c) Unlike

10. Temperatures tomorrow will be colder than today, with a low of 5°.

- a) considered
- b) considerable
- c) considerably