

Comparatives, Superlatives, Diminutives

Finally in this lesson we are going to look at *Comparatives*, i.e. how you compare one thing with **an other**; *Superlatives*, how you say something is the most; and *Diminutives* how you say something is the least.

Comparatives (a) Adjectives

There are three types of Comparatives:

- a) those with *more* + *the adjective*; e.g. more beautiful than; more hard working than;
- b) those with *as* + *adjective* + *as*: e.g. as good as gold; as plain as a pikestaff!
- c) *The adjective* + *er* + *than*: e.g. this exercise is harder than I thought; Paul is taller than Andrew

(b) Adverbs

We have not looked so far at another Part of Speech, Adverbs.

These are somewhat similar to Adjectives in that they describe or more accurately modify; but instead of referring to nouns they refer to **verbs**; and are recognized by **how**, **when**, and **where**...

- i) **how**: Paul comes to town **quickly**
- ii) **where**: Where are you? I am **here**
- iii) **when**: the train arrived **early**

You can also have what are called adverbial phrases, groups of words also saying **how**, **when**, and **where**:

e.g. I am in the classroom, includes an adverbial phrase, as it says where someone is. We will look at these briefly in the next Module.

However it must be recognized that this necessarily brief look at English as an aid to improving your knowledge and understanding cannot include everything.

If you wish to have more information, you will have to go to your library and get more advanced language and grammar books: the librarian will be able to recommend suitable material.

One excellent book, though old fashioned is:

English on the Anvil by J.N.Britton (John Murray)

This is almost certainly out of print but your library could either get hold of a copy for you, or recommend a more modern alternative. There are plenty of good English grammars in the bigger bookshops or public libraries.

Comparison of Adverbs

Adverbs usually end in **ly** e.g. quickly, slowly, and so on, and so are not too difficult to identify; they will also be closely linked with a verb: e.g. John works quickly.

But if an adverb is being compared, it is more difficult to recognize, as it will often end in **er** or **est**, and so look exactly like an adjective. You have to see what it is actually doing to see if it is an adjective or adverb.

Examples

- a) This boy works much **harder** than the others
(Answering **how** he works)
- b) The train arrived **earlier** than I expected
(Answering **when** it arrived)
- c) The sea was much **nearer** than John told me.
(Answering **where** the sea was)

Superlatives

We have not looked at the Diminutives of Adjectives but will do so shortly: before that we will finish our quick look at the Superlatives of Adverbs:

- 1) He worked the **hardest** of all the team (how)
- 2) This bus leaves town **earliest** (when)
- 3) I was **nearest** to the door (where)

Diminutives of Adjectives

- 1) This was the **smallest** of all the ships.

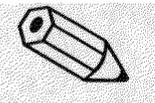
- 2) Money is the **least** of my problems (from less)

Irregular Adjectives and Adverbs

Here is a table of the most common Irregular Adjectives and Adverbs; the Comparatives and Superlatives will be the same whether Adjective or Adverb, but see above for differences in use:

ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
good		better	best
bad	well	worse	worst
less	badly	lesser	least
	less		

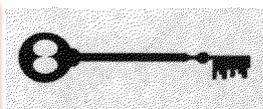
As usual the last Activity practises the previous topic, here the Comparison of Adjectives and Adverbs, as well as the others, the Simple Past Tense and the Present Perfect. Answer the following questions: you have the Key after this Lesson:

Activity 3	1 Put these sentences into the Simple Past Tense
	<p>a) We do not abandon our friends</p> <p>b) I see the man drive through a red traffic light</p> <p>c) The ball breaks the window</p> <p>d) Can you please leave at once?</p> <p>2 Put the following sentences into the Present Tense; (there may be more than one answer)</p> <p>a) Have you visited what I have described?</p> <p>b) The maid has brought in the tea</p> <p>c) We have not seen that beautiful lake</p> <p>d) Today we have gone shopping</p> <p>3 Complete these sentences with the correct comparative or superlative:</p> <p>a) This is the (nasty) accident I have seen in years!</p>

	<p>b) I have ____ good a chance ____ anyone else</p> <p>c) This problem is (big) than both of us!</p> <p>d) Which is the (good) way of solving this?</p> <p>e) (Less) said soonest mended !</p> <p>f) Mary was the (hard) working student in her class</p> <p>g) On Fridays we go home (early) than on the other days</p> <p>h) The river is (far) than the station</p>
--	---

KEY

ABAHE



Activity One

- a) We often sought, but less often found
- b) The best people did not boast of their achievements (Even the Simple Past needs **did** in negatives)
- c) Was he able to do this exercise? No, he could not
- d) The farmer did not sow seed in stony ground; he preferred fertile land.
- e) Did you know what this meant? Yes, I knew it very well
- f) Philip only spoke when he was spoken to
- g) I had £5 left; how much had you got? (did you have?)
- h) Mary cut the paper with her little scissors
- i) You told me the truth and I found it unpleasant

Activity Two

- a) Have you been able to come here a moment? (**Could you come** better, but this is practice of Present Perfect...)
- b) The girl has cut her finger with a kitchen knife
- c) What have you done these days?
- d) In Treasure Island the pirates have hidden treasure
- e) The patient has not wanted to eat today
- f) The parents have given their children attractive gifts
- g) Where have you left our coats? We have left them in the cloakroom
- h) With my new glasses I have been able to see more clearly
- i) Those who have hidden have been able to find!
- j) They have not written many letters

Activity Three

1

- a) We did not abandon our friends
- b) I saw the man drive through a red traffic light
- c) The ball broke the window
- d) Could you please leave at once?

2

- a) Are you visiting (do you intend to visit)* what I am describing? (continuous form is best...)
- b) The maid brings (or is bringing) in the tea (continuous more vivid)
- c) We are not seeing that beautiful lake
- d) Today we are going shopping

*This is a common use of the continuous

3

- a) This is the nastiest accident I have seen in years!
- b) I have as good a chance as anyone else
- c) This problem is bigger than both of us
- d) Which is the best way of solving this?
- e) Least said soonest mended
- f) Mary was the hardest working student in her class
- g) On Fridays we go home earlier than on other days
- h) The river is farther (further) than the station

All Rights Reserved © [Arab British Academy for Higher Education](http://www.abahe.co.uk)