



Comparatives and Superlatives

Introduction

Comparatives and *Superlatives* are special forms of adjectives. They are used to compare two or more things. Generally, comparatives are formed using **-er** and superlatives are formed using **-est**. This page will explain the rules for forming regular comparatives and superlatives, and also show some basic ways of using them.

1. Forming comparatives and superlatives

How these forms are created depends on how many **syllables** there are in the adjective. **Syllables** are like “sound beats”. For instance, “sing” contains one syllable, but “singing” contains two — *sing* and *ing*. Here are the rules:

Adjective form	Comparative	Superlative
Only one syllable, ending in E. Examples: wide, fine, cute	Add -r : wider, finer, cuter	Add -st : widest, finest, cutest
Only one syllable, with one vowel and one consonant at the end. Examples: hot, big, fat	Double the consonant, and add -er : hotter, bigger, fatter	Double the consonant, and add -est : hottest, biggest, fattest
Only one syllable, with more than one vowel or more than one consonant at the end. Examples: light, neat, fast	Add -er : lighter, neater, faster	Add -est : lightest, neatest, fastest
Two syllables, ending in Y. Examples: happy, silly,	Change y to i , then add -er : happier,	Change y to i , then add -est : happiest,

Adjective form	Comparative	Superlative
lonely	sillier, lonelier	silliest, loneliest
Two syllables or more, not ending in Y. Examples: modern, interesting, beautiful	Use “ more ” before the adjective: more modern, more interesting, more beautiful	Use “ most ” before the adjective: most modern, most interesting, most beautiful

2. How to use comparatives and superlatives

Comparatives	<p>Comparatives are used to compare two things. You can use sentences with “than”, or you can use a conjunction like “but”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jiro is taller than Yukio. • Yukio is tall, but Jiro is taller.
Superlatives	<p>Superlatives are used to compare more than two things. Superlative sentences usually use “the”, because there is only one superlative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masami is the tallest in the class. • Yukio is tall, and Jiro is taller, but Masami is the tallest.