

## MODULE 9: Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

### COMPARATIVES

The comparative form of an adjective is used to compare two people, places, or things—and only two. With most *one-syllable adjectives*, simply add *-er*.

#### Examples:

Mary is tall.

Mary is taller than John.

That mouse is very small

A mouse is smaller than an elephant.

That small house is cheap.

That old, rundown house is cheaper.

If the adjective ends in *-e*, add only *-r*.

#### Examples:

Jupiter is a large planet.

Jupiter is larger than Earth.

To form the comparative of an adjective that ends in a consonant + *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add *-er*.

#### Examples:

This week's test was easy.

Last month's test was easier.

This box is heavy

That box is a lot heavier than this one.

That book is big.

The other book is bigger.

If an adjective has three syllables or more, don't add anything to the word. Put the word *more* or *less* in front of the adjective.

#### Examples:

The diamond ring is more expensive than the pearl necklace.

The pearl necklace is less expensive than the diamond ring.

With some two-syllable adjectives, you can either add *-er* or use the words *more* or *less*. A few of these words are **quiet**, **simple**, **clever**.

A few adjectives don't follow any of these rules but have *irregular* comparative forms:

Good/better:

The Thai restaurant is better than the Spanish restaurant.

Bad/worse:

I felt bad yesterday, but I feel much worse today.

### **CLASS ACTIVITY: COMPARATIVES**

Go to the white board and use a red marker to draw a simple house. Then, with a blue marker, draw a smaller house.

Teacher: "Which house is bigger?"

Student 1: "The red house is bigger."

Teacher: "Which house is smaller?"

Student 2: "The blue house is smaller."

Have a few more students ask these questions to a few other students, making sure everyone has a turn.

On the red house, draw two dollar signs: \$\$\$. On the blue house, draw one dollar sign: \$.

Teacher to Student 3: "Which house is cheaper?"

Student 3: "The blue house is cheaper."

Teacher to Student 4: "Which house is more expensive?"

Student 4: "The red house is more expensive."

Ask one student to ask a question of the next student. Continue around the room with all students asking questions and answering them.

### **CLASS ACTIVITY: COMPARATIVES**

Move away from the white board and ask questions without using a drawing, such as Who is taller, you or your sister?

Who is prettier, you or your mother?

Is your father more handsome than you are?

The lesson can often end in laughter and even some embarrassment as the students ask each other personal questions.

## **SUPERLATIVES**

The superlative form of an adjective is used to compare three or more people, places, or things. With most *one-syllable adjectives*, add the word *the* before the adjective and *-est* to the end.

### **Examples:**

That is the hardest test I've ever taken.  
He is the strongest student in the class.  
This is the smallest pencil in the package.

To form the superlative of two-syllable adjectives that end in *y*, add the word *the* before the adjective, drop the *y*, and add *-iest*.

### **Examples:**

He is funny, but she is funniest person in our class.  
The penguin is the funniest bird.  
Most primates are hairy, but I think the gorilla is the hairiest animal.

If an adjective has three syllables or more, put the phrase *the most* or *the least* before the adjective.

### **Examples:**

Those shoes are the most comfortable in the store.  
Robert's condominium is the most expensive one in the city.  
That red dress is the least attractive one in the fashion show.

The same adjectives that use irregular comparative forms use *irregular superlative forms*

### **Examples:**

The Thai restaurant is the best on the street.  
She wrote the best report in the class.  
No one had fun at the party, but he had the worst time of all.

## **CLASS ACTIVITY: COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES**

Draw—or have an artistic student draw—three cars on the white board: an old car in black, a standard car in green, and a sports car in red. Put one \$ on the black car, two \$\$ on the green car, and three \$\$\$ on the red car. Begin asking questions comparing two of the three cars.

Is the red car faster than the black car?

Is the black car cheaper than the red car?  
 Is the black car more expensive than the red car?  
 Is the green car slower than the red car?  
 ...and so on.

Then ask questions using the superlative form.

Which car is fastest?  
 Which car is cheapest?  
 Is the red car the cheapest?  
 Is the red car the fastest?  
 Is the green car the least expensive of the three?  
 Which car is slowest?  
 ...and so on.

Ask a student to be the teacher and ask the questions, using both forms. Or have each student ask the next a question.

If your students are comfortable together, you can have them ask more personal questions of each other.

Who is the most intelligent student in our class?  
 Who is the tallest?  
 Who has the darkest hair?  
 Who is the strongest?  
 Who has the nicest car?

When the students are comfortable with both comparative and superlative, you can mix up the questions—some using superlative, some using comparative—and practice until everyone’s got it. It takes time and patience to master the forms. You can return to these exercises later in the week for reinforcement.

**CLASS ACTIVITY: WRITTEN PRACTICE**

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
Quick	Quicker	Quickest
Cheap		
Short		
Long		
Slow		

Big	
Difficult	
Expensive	
Exciting	
Important	
Funny	
Interesting	
Popular	
Easy	
Fast	
Friendly	
Bad	