

# Comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs

## A Starting activities

### 1 A look at the system

Comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs

- 1 Work as a class. Put these comparative and superlative adjectives into two groups. In what way are the two groups different? Add one or two examples of your own to each group.

- a cheaper, the cheapest
- b more reliable, the most reliable
- c newer, the newest
- d more valuable, the most valuable
- e more tired, the most tired
- f easier, the easiest

- 2 Which words are missing?

- a This dictionary is bigger \_\_\_\_\_ yours.
- b This suitcase is just as big \_\_\_\_\_ the one I have at home.
- c Having no money is \_\_\_\_\_ biggest problem he has at the moment.

- 3 What are the comparative and superlative forms of these words?

- a often
- b early
- c smoothly
- d long
- e hard

When you have finished, look at Activity note 35 on page 146.

### 2 Comparative adverb building

Comparison of adverbs

- 1 Work as a class. List pairs of fictional or real people to talk about (for example, Indiana Jones and James Bond). In a separate column list verbs that you could use to compare them. In a third column list adverbs (not comparative adverbs). Example:

|                          |              |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| <i>Indiana Jones and</i> | <i>drive</i> | <i>dangerously</i> |
| <i>James Bond</i>        | <i>live</i>  | <i>fast</i>        |

- 2 Work in pairs. Make sentences using the verbs and adverbs from your list (or any others that you like) comparing the two people. Change the adverbs to comparative adverbs. Example: *Indiana Jones lives more dangerously than James Bond.*

### 3 Mine is just as good

Comparison of adjectives and adverbs

Work in pairs, A and B. Take turns to be A and B.

**Person A:** Choose one thing that you own. Try to sell it to B.

**Person B:** You do not want to buy whatever A is selling because you already have one which is just as good as or better than A's. For example, if it is a CD player yours is just as modern, if it is a watch yours keeps better time, if it is a car yours goes faster. Use as many comparatives as you can.

## B Grammar guide

- 1 **Comparative and superlative adjectives**
- For one-syllable adjectives (like *rich*) the comparative is *-er than* and the superlative is *the -est*.  
*Buying the video is cheaper than paying for seats to see the film at the cinema.*  
*This was **the cheapest** box of chocolates in the shop.*  
One-syllable adjectives with one vowel followed by one consonant (like *big* or *sad*) double the consonant in the comparative and the superlative.  
*big → bigger → the biggest sad → sadder → the saddest*
  - Two- and three-syllable adjectives and adjectives ending in *-ed* have their comparative made with *more* and their superlative with *most*.  
*I was more tired after the holiday than I was before it. (-ed adjective, comparative)*  
*She's the most intelligent person I know. (three-syllable adjective, superlative)*
  - These one-syllable adjectives have irregular comparatives and superlatives:  
*good → better than → the best bad → worse than → the worst*  
*far → further than (or farther than) → the furthest (or the farthest).*
  - These two-syllable adjectives ending in *y* have the comparative *-ier than* and the superlative *the -iest*: *angry (angrier, angriest), busy, dirty, early, easy, friendly, funny, happy, lucky, pretty, silly, ugly.*
  - These two-syllable adjectives have the comparative *-er than* and the superlative *the -est*: *narrow (narrower, narrowest), clever, simple, quiet.*
  - Sometimes it is clear, or understood, what you are comparing something with, and then you do not need to use *than*.  
*This flat is bigger than that one, and it has **nicer** furniture.*
  - Use *as . . . as* to compare things that are equal.  
*My English is as good as his.*  
To emphasize the equality, use *just as . . . as*.  
*My suitcase is just as big as Derek's, so why are we using his?*
  - To say that there is not much difference between things use *a bit* or *a little*.  
*Your car was a bit cheaper than mine.*  
Make the difference even smaller with *only a bit* or *only a little*.
  - To say there is a big difference use *far* or *much* or *a lot*.  
*Your car was far/much cheaper than mine, and it's a lot faster.*  
To make the difference even bigger use *very much* but NOT *very far*.
  - Use *the more . . . the -er* or *the more . . . the more* for two things happening together.  
*The more you eat, the fuller you get. The more I try, the less successful I am.*
  - And for the idea of something that goes on and on use two comparatives.  
*He's getting fatter and fatter. She's getting more and more dissatisfied.*

2 **Comparative and superlative adverbs**

- For the comparative and superlative of adverbs use *more* and *most*.  
*She comes here **more often than** I do.*  
*The engine runs **most smoothly** at speeds over sixty kilometres an hour.*  
A few adverbs have the comparative *-er* and the superlative *-est*: *early (earlier, earliest), fast, hard, late, long, near* and *soon*. Other irregular adverbs are:  
*badly → worse → worst; little → less → least; much → more → most.*

# C Activities

## 1 A better job

Comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs

- 1 Work in pairs or small groups. Write down five jobs (for example, accountant, bricklayer) you would like to do and five jobs you would not like to do.
- 2 Work in the same pairs or small groups. A friend of yours wants to change from one of the jobs on your list to one of the others. Say how your friend's life would be changed by comparing the jobs in terms of: salary, conditions, time to spend with the family, job satisfaction, job security, value to society. Keep comparing jobs until you have compared five pairs of jobs. Use as many comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs as you naturally can. Examples: *The salary will be higher. You will be away from home more often.*
- 3 Work as a class. Tell the other people in the class about the jobs you compared. List sentences comparing the jobs that people in the class used.

## 2 Dinner with the famous

Comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs

- 1 Work on your own. You have decided to invite a lot of famous people to a party. Write down the names of the five famous people you would most like to invite.
- 2 Work in pairs or small groups. Persuade your partner or the other people in the group to invite the people on your list, not the people on his/her/their lists, by comparing the people on the two lists. Use as many comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs as you naturally can. Use *far* or *much* for emphasis. Example: *Woody Allen is far more interesting than Queen Elizabeth.*

- 3 Work as a class. List sentences comparing the people that the class used and try to think of more ways of comparing the people. Decide, as a class, which five people in the world you would most like to invite for dinner.

## 3 World records

Superlative adjectives

- 1 Work in pairs or small groups. Guess what the world records below are for. You can make your guesses as wild and improbable as you like. Example: (a) *The biggest carrot ever grown.*

World records

- a 8 feet  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches (263.5 cm)
  - b 200 lb (91 kg) in 9 days
  - c 69
  - d 4
  - e None for 182 days.
  - f Papua New Guinea.
  - g *I Believe* by Frankie Lane
  - h 1.2 inches
  - i 104 per 100,000 of the population, or 370 per day
  - j 1.6 billion
- 2 Work as a class. Compare your wild guesses with those of other people in the class. List the funniest or wildest or most interesting wild guesses. (The real answers are in Activity note 66 on page 158.)

## D Accuracy practice

### 1 Put in the comparative of the adjectives and adverbs in brackets, and *than*, where necessary.

- 1 This oven heats up \_\_\_\_\_ the one I'm used to. (slowly)
- 2 Flying is \_\_\_\_\_ going by train. (cheap)
- 3 It's strange that this blue dress is \_\_\_\_\_ that one because it is made of far \_\_\_\_\_ material. (expensive, bad)
- 4 At the moment, getting over your illness is \_\_\_\_\_ finishing your work. (important)
- 5 There's no time limit, so try not to write \_\_\_\_\_ you have to. (fast)
- 6 Sometimes I think he comes \_\_\_\_\_ everyone else does just to annoy me. (late)
- 7 He comes here a lot \_\_\_\_\_ he used to. (often)
- 8 Shane is quite a lot \_\_\_\_\_ he was when he was young. (friendly)

### 2 Finish the sentences using *as . . . as*, *the more . . . the -er*, or *the more . . . the more/less*.

- 1 John and Mary are equally good guitarists.  
John plays the guitar \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 If your salary goes up, the amount you pay in tax also goes up.  
The more your salary goes up, \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 You cannot say that one of them is cleverer than the other. They get the same exam results.  
They are \_\_\_\_\_ each other.
- 4 If you do a lot of work now, you will feel happier about the examination.  
The more work you do now, \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 If a lot of people help now, we will have less to do later.  
The more people help now, \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Complete the questions using the superlative of the adjectives and adverbs in brackets.

- 1 Of the people in the class, who is \_\_\_\_\_ (interesting)?
- 2 In which continent is \_\_\_\_\_ (long) river in the world?
- 3 Who is \_\_\_\_\_ (fast) runner in the world, at the moment?
- 4 Which opera singer sings \_\_\_\_\_ (beautiful), do you think?
- 5 In which museum, in which city, is \_\_\_\_\_ (big) diamond in the world?

### 4 Put in the most appropriate comparative or superlative adjective or adverb.

- 1 She's only been doing the job for a month. Of all the staff she has \_\_\_\_\_ experience.
- 2 That was a terrible meal. I think it was one of \_\_\_\_\_ meals I've ever eaten.
- 3 We have been walking for an hour already. It's \_\_\_\_\_ I thought to the next village.
- 4 I have to start work \_\_\_\_\_ you do. You don't start until eight but sometimes I start before seven in the morning.
- 5 He's so noisy. It's a lot \_\_\_\_\_ when he isn't here.