

Comparison of adjectives

I. Comparatives and superlatives

II. Ways of expressing comparison

I. Comparatives and superlatives

1. Basic form + -er, -est

a) One-syllable adjectives

fast, faster, fastest

Note: *thin, thinner, thinnest* (the consonant is doubled after a single-vowel letter)

nice, nicer, nicest (only -r or -st is added if the basic form ends in -e)

b) Two-syllable adjectives ending in -y

busy, busier, busiest (-y changes into -ie after a consonant)

But: *grey, greyer, greyest*

2. More/less, most/least + basic form

Longer adjectives (two or more syllables)

difficult, more difficult, most difficult

less difficult, least difficult

Some two-syllable adjectives can form comparatives and superlatives with both -er, -est and more, most, e.g. *able, clever, common, narrow, simple*.

3. Irregular comparatives and superlatives

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

In very formal English distinction is made between **farther** and **further**.

Farther refers to **distance**: *The desk stood at the farther end of the room.*

Further means **additional** or **more**: *Are there any further questions?*

In less formal English "further" is used in both meanings.

Notes:

- Superlatives are usually preceded by "the", the possessive form of a noun or a possessive pronoun.

*This is **the** best result we could expect.*

***The research centre's** best results were achieved last year.*

***Our** best results were achieved using the second variant.*

- Note the difference between

*That was **the most interesting** paper. (= nejzajímavější)*

*That was **a most interesting** paper. (= velmi zajímavý)*

II. Ways of expressing comparison

1. as + basic form + as

*Our report is **as** good **as** theirs.*

not as/so + basic form + as

*Our report is **not as/so** good **as** theirs.*

2. comparative + than

*Their report is better **than** ours.*

See also A Remedial Course in English Grammar: Clauses (Clauses of contrast, concession and comparison).

3. a) the same as

*The output signal is **the same as** the input signal.*

b) twice/three times/half as + basic form (+ as)

*This device has the same features but is only **half as expensive**.*

twice/three times/half + the amount/size/number of

*Our new lab is **twice the size of** the old one.*

two/three times + comparative + than

*Our new lab is **two/three times larger than** the old one.*

Wrong: *twice larger*

Right: *two times larger* or *twice the size*

c) the + comparative + the + comparative

***The earlier** you detect a problem, **the easier** it is to cope with it.*

Common mistakes:

- Wrong: *The number is less **then** 5.*

Right: *The number is less **than** 5. (= než)*

But: *First read carefully the instructions, **then** start the machine. (= pak)*

- Wrong: *This year the price is **much more higher** than last year.*

Right: *This year the price is **much higher** than last year.*

- Wrong: *This is **the same** case **like** the one I told you about last year.*

Right: *This is **the same** case **as** the one I told you about last year.*

- Wrong: *The graphs of speed, torque, and current are **similar as** those obtained from the previous measurement.*

Right: *The graphs of speed, torque, and current are **similar to** those obtained from the previous measurement.*

- Wrong word order in the “**the – the**” structure.

Wrong: *The earlier you detect a problem, the easier **is it** to cope with it.*

Right: *The earlier you detect a problem, the easier **it is** to cope with it.*

But: *The more experience you have, the better (are) your prospects of a lucrative career.*

It is usual to leave out the verb or invert the word order if the subject is very

long.

EXERCISES

I. Complete the sentences with comparatives and superlatives of the adjectives in brackets.

1. The task was much (difficult) than we expected.
2. Our new car is a little (economical) but (comfortable).
3. This is the (simple) question I've ever been asked.
4. Sometimes it's (helpful) to discuss your problems with your friends than with your parents.
5. What are the (late) developments in your field?
6. The traffic is much (bad) after 3 o'clock.
7. Visit our website for (far) details.
8. The first week of the semester is always the (busy).
9. It's the (good) we can do in the circumstances.
10. This is the (common) application of our research.

II. Translate.

1. Čím dříve skončíš tuto práci, tím dříve můžeš jít domů.
.....
2. Dělal tuhle práci jako muži, ale byla placena méně.
.....
3. Má zkušenost je podobná jako vaše.
.....
4. To letadlo může letět dvakrát tak velkou rychlostí jako zvuk/dvakrát rychleji než zvuk.
.....
5. Náš kurz matematiky je podobný jako na Brunelově univerzitě.
.....
6. Čím víc o tom plánu přemýšlím, tím víc mám pochyb.
.....
7. Stále máme stejné auto, jako jsme měli dříve.
.....
8. Čím více jazyků znáš, tím lepší jsou tvé šance na dobře placenou práci.
.....
9. Univerzita má třikrát tolik studentů jako v roce, kdy byla založena.
.....
10. Tato stará pračka spotřebuje dvakrát víc elektřiny než nejnovější model.
.....