

Grammar snacks: Comparative and superlative adjectives



Remember to watch the video first! Then read the conversation between Sophie and Giovanni, a student she met on her trip to Rome. Sophie's an expert on English grammar and Giovanni has an exam on comparatives and superlatives next week!



**Grammar
Snacks**

When we want to compare two or more things, we can change the form of adjectives by adding **-er** or **-est**. We can also use extra words like **more** or **most** and expressions like **not as ... as**.

Here are some examples:

*I think you're **taller** than me. (tall)*

*She's the **tallest** in the group. (tall)*

*The pizzas in La Bella Napoli are **better** than the ones in Pietro's. (good)*

*It was the **best** pizza I've ever had! (good)*

*People say Bioshock is a **more exciting** game than Skyrim. (exciting)*

*Grand Theft Auto is the **most exciting** video game. (exciting)*



Sophie



Giovanni

Mmm, I don't quite see what the rule is here.

With most one-syllable adjectives, we add **-er** or **-est**, and with most adjectives with two syllables or more, we add **more** or **(the) most**. In comparatives, we also use **than** before the second thing which is compared, if it is mentioned.

*La Bella Napoli is **nearer** than Pietro's. (near)*

*It's not **the cheapest** restaurant though. (cheap)*

With one-syllable adjectives ending in vowel + consonant, remember to double the final consonant before **-er/-est**.

big** → **bigger** → **biggest

If the adjective ends in **-e**, just add **-r** or **-st**.

large** → **larger** → **largest



So what are the exceptions, apart from *good* → *better* → *best*?

Other exceptions are *bad* → *worse* → *worst* and *far* → *further/farther* → *furthest/farthest*.

*They use **the worst** cheese.*



What about adjectives ending in **-y**, like *crazy*? *My brother is crazier than me.*

Yes, that's correct. With adjectives ending in *y*, you change the *y* to *i* and add *er/ est*.

lucky → *luckier* → *luckiest*
happy → *happier* → *happiest*
 They've got **the friendliest** waiters!

With most adjectives with typical adjective endings, and with two or more syllables, you use *more/most + adjective*.

They do **the most disgusting** pasta I've ever tasted.



What other ways of comparing things are there?

We often use *not as ... as*.

I'm **not as tall as** you. (= I'm smaller than you)
 Maybe the pizza at La Bella Napoli **isn't as good as** I remember.



And what about *less* and *least*?

Yes, *less* and *least* are also ways of comparing things. They are used more in writing.

It is **less** cold in the north of the country **than** in the south. (the north is warmer, but both north and south are cold)
 Of the four participants, Bill is **the least** experienced. (the other three have more experience)



OK. This isn't as hard as I thought. I think I've got it, more or less.

Watch the video here: <http://bit.ly/PTniPC>

