General English

Degrees Of Comparison

There are two ways of forming Degrees of Comparison.

I. By adding *er* and *est* to the positive.

This method is called Synthetic method.

II. By using *more* and *most* before the positive. This method is called Analytic method.

A detailed classification of the ways of forming Degrees of Comparison is given below.

1. Add *er* and *est* to the positive, if the adjectives of one syllable and a few adjectives of two syllables, do not end in *e*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>higher</td>
<td>highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tall</td>
<td>taller</td>
<td>tallest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young</td>
<td>younger</td>
<td>youngest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard</td>
<td>harder</td>
<td>hardest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soft</td>
<td>softer</td>
<td>softest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. When the positive ends in *e*, only *r* and *st* are added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wise</td>
<td>wiser</td>
<td>wisest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure</td>
<td>purer</td>
<td>purest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large</td>
<td>larger</td>
<td>largest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dense</td>
<td>denser</td>
<td>densest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wide</td>
<td>wider</td>
<td>widest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Double the final consonant before adding *er* and *est*, if the adjectives ending in a single consonant *(d, m, t, n, g)* preceded by a short vowel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>bigger</td>
<td>biggest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sad</td>
<td>sadder</td>
<td>saddest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hot</td>
<td>hotter</td>
<td>hottest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thin</td>
<td>thinner</td>
<td>thinnest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fat</td>
<td>fatter</td>
<td>fattest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If adjectives ending in ‘y*’ preceded by a consonant, change *y* into *i* before adding *er* and *est*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>silly</td>
<td>sillier</td>
<td>silliest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dry</td>
<td>drier</td>
<td>driest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lovely</td>
<td>lovelier</td>
<td>loveliest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If the *y* preceded by a vowel, it is not changed into *i*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gey</td>
<td>greyer</td>
<td>greyest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Adjectives of two syllables and more than two syllables take *more* and *most* before them to form the comparative and superlative degrees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wonderful</td>
<td>morewonderful</td>
<td>most wonderful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>more beautiful</td>
<td>most beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honest</td>
<td>more honest</td>
<td>most honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>more difficult</td>
<td>most difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irregular Comparison

Some adjectives have a superlative ending in *most*, and a comparative which is more or less irregular or no comparative at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>top</td>
<td>————</td>
<td>topmost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fore</td>
<td>former</td>
<td>foremost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td>inner</td>
<td>innermost/inmost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out</td>
<td>outer</td>
<td>outermost/outmost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>southern</td>
<td></td>
<td>southernmost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes irregularities are caused by certain sound changes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fore</td>
<td>further</td>
<td>furthest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
late  later / latter  latest, last
old  older/elder  oldest/eldest
near  nearer  nearest, next

[Where two forms have developed there is usually a differentiation in meaning]

A few adjectives have comparatives and superlatives of different roots:
bad  worse  worst
good  better  best
little  lesser  least
much  more  most

Note: Some Comparative Adjectives which are derived from Latin are followed by to and not than:
Inferior, Superior, Junior, Senior, Prior

Correct Use of Some Adjectives
1. Farther, Further
   Farther refers to distance
   The Earth is farther from the Sun than Mercury.
   They walked a little farther
   Further means additional, more ahead.
   He went further
   The problem requires further discussion.
2. Nearest, Next
   Nearest implies distance; next refers to position.
   The nearest theatre is 100 m. away
   My uncle lives in the next house
3. Later, Latter; latest, last
   Later and latest refer to time
   This is a later edition of the book than that.
   John is later than I expected
   What is the latest news from Iraq?
   This seems to be the latest fashion.
4. Less, Lesser
   Less: Smaller in quantity. Less is followed by than.
   There were less than twenty people present.
   I have less confidence in him than in you.
   Lesser: Not so great as the other one. It is never followed by than.
   It is lesser of the two evils.
5. Elder, older, eldest, oldest
   Elder and eldest are used only of persons, not of animals or things. Elder is never followed by than.
   He is the elder of the two brothers
   He is my eldest brother.
6. First, Foremost
   First: First in order
   Rakesh Sharma was the first Indian to go into space
   Foremost: Most eminent, Leading
   Einstein was the foremost scientist of his day
7. Outermost, Utmost
   Outermost 'means' farthest from the centre.
Scientists are trying to probe the outermost reaches of space.
The outermost wall of the camp was damaged by the terrorist.

**Utmost**: Extreme, in the highest degree
- It is a matter of utmost importance
- I will try my utmost to complete the work.

### PRACTICE TEST

**I. Fill in the blanks with the proper form (Comparative or Superlative) of the adjectives given in the brackets.**

1. Name the ________ river in the world. (large)
2. Gold is ________ than Silver. (light)
3. Thar is no animal ________ than the tiger. (Ferocious)
4. There is the ________ part of India. (Dry)
5. Which of these two pen is the ________. (Good)
6. He is the ________ boy of the two. (Bad)
7. Raju’s work is bad, Harish’s is ________, but Govind’s is the. (Bad)
8. Who is the ________ living poet? (Good)
9. How is your brother to-day? Is he ______? (Good)
10. Sathish is two years ________ than Rani. (Old)
11. Your knife is sharp, but mine is ________. (Sharp)
12. That is the ________ price I can take. (Little)
13. It was the ________ moment of his life. (Proud)
14. I think he requires a ________ diet. (Nutritious)
15. Iron is the ________ of all metals. (Useful)
16. Iron is ________ than any other metal. (Useful)
17. She is the ________ of the two. (Heavy)
18. He think he is ________ than his father. (Wise)
19. A live ass is ________ than a dead lion. (Strong)
20. Honour is ________ to him than life. (Dear)

**II. Direction: Use appropriate Comparative or Superlative to complete each of the following sentence.**

1. The pen is ________ the the sword.
2. Prevention is ________ than cure.
3. Who is the ________ boy in the class?
4. Panchathanthra’ is perhaps the ________ story book.
5. Wordsworth is a ________ poet than Cowper.
6. Ooty is ________ than Chennai.
7. He is one of the ________ speakers in Bengal.
8. This is the ________ that I can do.
9. This is the ________ of my two sons.
10. Of all countries, China has the ________ population in the world.
11. It is good to be clever, but it is ________ to be industrious.
12. The piano was knocked down to the ________ bidder.
13. Open rebuke is ________ than secret lover.
14. Of two evils choose the ________.
15. Clouds float in the sky because they are ________ than the air.
16. The Pacific is ________ than any other ocean.
17. Ajith is the ________ bowler in the team.
18. He writes a ________ hand than his sister.
19. He writes the ________ hand in his class.
20. The trade is in a ________ condition to-day than it was a years ago.

**III. Without changing the meaning of the sentence change the Degree of Comparison.**

1. Very few animals are as useful as the cow.
2. The pen is mightier than the sword.
3. A wise enemy is better than a foolish friend.
(4) No other man was as strong as Bhima.
(5) No other planet is so big as Jupiter.
(6) Latif is one of the most industrious boys.
(7) Iron is the most useful of all metals.
(8) Australia is larger than any other island in the world.
(9) India is the largest democracy in the world.
(10) It is not so easy to practice as to preach.
(11) Shakuntala is the best drama in Sanskrit.
(12) You do not know him better than I do.
(13) Some boys are at least as industrious as Suresh.
(14) Some poets are not less great than Tennyson.
(15) Some people have more money than brains.
(16) Ooty is one of the healthiest resorts in India.
(17) Very few Indian cities are as big as Kolkotta.
(18) He would sooner die than tell a lie.
(19) Very few Indian kings were so great as Samudra Gupta.
(20) The tiger is the most ferocious of all animals.

IV. Fill in the blanks with the correct word choosen from the brackets.

(1) No ______ reasons were given. (farther, further)
(2) The ______ bus stand is two miles from here. (Next, Nearest)
(3) Mr. Singh is the ______ teacher in the school. (oldest, eldest)
(4) We can decide it only after ______ investigation. (farther, further)
(5) I can’t walk any ______. (farther, further).
(6) The ______ part of the book shows signs of hurry. (later, latter)
(7) Is there no ______ news than last week’s ? (later, latter)
(8) We expect to get the ______ news in a few hour. (last, latest)
(9) To-day is the ______ day for receiving tender. (last, latest)
(10) Akshay is the ______ of my uncle’s five sons. (oldest, eldest)
(11) His ______brother is in the Indian Air Force. (older, Elder)
(12) Rama is ______ than Hari by two years. (older, elder).
(13) Mumbai is the seaport ______ to Europe. (Nearest, Next)
(14) This is the ______ temple in Kolkatta. (oldest, eldest)
(15) My Uncle lives in the ______ house. (Next, Nearest)
(16) The ______ chapter is carelessly written. (latter, last)
(17) He is ______ than I expected. (latter, later)
(18) Tom is my ______ Son. (elder, eldest)
(19) The soldiers ran to defend the ______ wall. (outer, utter)
(20) I prefer the ______ proposition to the former. (latter, later)

I. (1) largest (2) lighter
(3) more ferocious (4) driest
(5) better (6) worse
(7) worse, worst (8) greatest
(9) better (10) older
(11) sharper (12) least
(13) proudest (14) nutritious
(15) most useful (16) more Useful
(17) heavier (18) wiser
(19) stronger (20) dearer

II
(1) mightier (2) better
(3) cleverest (4) most interesting
(5) greater (6) cooler
III.
1. The cow is more useful than most other animals (Comparative)
   The cow is one of the most useful animals (Superlative)
2. The sword is not so mighty as the pen (Positive)
3. A foolish friend is not so good as a wise enemy (Positive)
4. Bhima was stronger than any other man (Comparative)
   Bhima was the strongest of all men (Superlative)
5. Jupiter is bigger than any other planet (Comparative)
   Jupiter is the biggest planet (Superlative)
6. Very few boys are as industrious as Lathif (positive)
   Latif is more industrious than most other boys (comparative)
7. No other metal is so useful as iron (Positive)
   Iron is more useful than all the other metals (Comparative)
8. No other island in the world is so large as Australia (Positive)
   Australia is the largest island in the world (Superlative)
9. India is larger than any other democracy in the world (Comparative)
   No other democracy in the world is so large as India (Positive)
10. It is easier to preach than to practise (Comparative)
11. No other drama in Sanskrit is so good as Shakuntala (Positive)
    Shakuntala is better than any other drama in Sanskrit (Comparative)
12. I do not know him as well as you do (Positive)
13. Suresh is not more industrious than some other boys (Comparative)
    Suresh is not the most industrious boy (Superlative)
14. Tennyson is not the greatest of all poets (Superlative)
    Some poets are at least as great as Tennyson (Positive)
    Tennyson is not greater than some other poets (Comparative)
15. Some people do not have as much brains as money (Positive)
16. Ooty is as healthy as any resort in India (Positive)
    No other resort in India is healthier than Ooty (Comparative)
17. Kolkatta is bigger than most other Indian cities (Comparative)
    Kolkatta is one of the biggest of Indian cities (Superlative)
18. He would not as soon tell a lie as die (Positive)
19. Samudra Gupta was greater than most other Indian Kings (Comparative)
    Samudra Gupta was one of the greatest of Indian Kings (Superlative)
20. No other animal is so ferocious as the tiger (positive)
    The tiger is more ferocious than any other (comparative)

IV.
(1) further (2) nearest
(3) oldest (4) further
(5) farther (6) latter
(7) later (8) latest
(9) last (10) eldest
(11) elder (12) older
(13) nearest (14) oldest
(15) next (16) last
(17) later  (18) eldest
(19) outer  (20) latter