

Comparison 1 (cheaper, more expensive etc.)

A

Study these examples:

How shall we travel? Shall we drive or go by train?

Let's drive. It's **cheaper**.

Don't go by train. It's **more expensive**.

Cheaper and **more expensive** are *comparative* forms.



After comparatives you can use **than** (see Unit 107):

- It's **cheaper** to drive **than** go by train.
- Going by train is **more expensive than** driving.

B

The comparative form is **-er** or **more** ...

We use **-er** for short words (one syllable):

cheap → cheaper **fast** → faster
large → larger **thin** → thinner

We also use **-er** for two-syllable words that end in **-y** (**-y** → **ier**):

lucky → luckier **early** → earlier
easy → easier **pretty** → prettier

For spelling, see Appendix 6.

We use **more** ... for longer words (two syllables or more):

more serious **more often**
more expensive **more comfortable**

We also use **more** ... for adverbs that end in **-ly**:

more slowly **more seriously**
more easily **more quietly**

Compare these examples:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> You're older than me. | <input type="checkbox"/> You're more patient than me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The exam was quite easy – easier than I expected. | <input type="checkbox"/> The exam was quite difficult – more difficult than I expected. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can you walk a bit faster ? | <input type="checkbox"/> Can you walk a bit more slowly ? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to have a bigger car. | <input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to have a more reliable car. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Last night I went to bed earlier than usual. | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't play tennis much these days. I used to play more often . |

You can use **-er** or **more** ... with some two-syllable adjectives, especially:

clever **narrow** **quiet** **shallow** **simple**

- It's too noisy here. Can we go somewhere **quieter** / **more quiet**?

C

A few adjectives and adverbs have irregular comparative forms:

good/well → **better**

- The garden looks **better** since you tidied it up.
- I know him **well** – probably **better** than anybody else knows him.

bad/badly → **worse**

- 'How's your headache? Better?' 'No, it's **worse**.'
- He did very badly in the exam – **worse** than expected.

far → **further** (or **farther**)

- It's a long walk from here to the park – **further** than I thought. (or **farther** than)

Further (*but not farther*) can also mean 'more' or 'additional':

- Let me know if you hear any **further** news. (= any more news)

Exercises

105.1 Complete the sentences using a comparative form (**older / more important** etc.).

- 1 It's too noisy here. Can we go somewhere *quieter* ?
- 2 This coffee is very weak. I like it
- 3 The hotel was surprisingly big. I expected it to be
- 4 The hotel was surprisingly cheap. I expected it to be
- 5 The weather is too cold here. I'd like to live somewhere
- 6 My job is a bit boring sometimes. I'd like to do something
- 7 It's a shame you live so far away. I wish you lived
- 8 I was surprised how easy it was to get a job. I thought it would be
- 9 Your work isn't very good. I'm sure you can do
- 10 Don't worry. The situation isn't so bad. It could be
- 11 I was surprised we got here so quickly. I expected the trip to take
- 12 You're talking very loudly. Can you speak ?
- 13 You hardly ever call me. Why don't you call me ?
- 14 You're standing too near the camera. Can you move a bit away?
- 15 You were a little depressed yesterday, but you look today.

105.2 Complete the sentences. Use the comparative forms of the words in the box. Use **than** where necessary.

big	crowded	early	easily	high	important
interested	peaceful	reliable	serious	simple	thin

- 1 I was feeling tired last night, so I went to bed *earlier than* usual.
- 2 I'd like to have a *more reliable* car. The one I have keeps breaking down.
- 3 Unfortunately her illness was we thought at first.
- 4 You look Have you lost weight?
- 5 I want a apartment. We don't have enough space here.
- 6 He doesn't study very hard. He's in having a good time.
- 7 Health and happiness are money.
- 8 The instructions were very complicated. They could have been
- 9 There were a lot of people on the bus. It was usual.
- 10 I like living in the country. It's living in a town.
- 11 You'll find your way around the town if you have a good map.
- 12 In some parts of the country, prices are in others.

105.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences. Use a comparative form (**-er** or **more ...**).

- 1 Yesterday the temperature was six degrees. Today it's only three degrees.
It's *colder today than* it was yesterday.
- 2 The journey takes four hours by car and five hours by train.
It takes by car.
- 3 Dan and I went for a run. I ran ten kilometres. Dan stopped after eight kilometres.
I ran Dan.
- 4 Chris and Joe both did badly in the test. Chris got 30%, but Joe only got 25%.
Joe did Chris in the test.
- 5 I expected my friends to arrive at about 4 o'clock. In fact they arrived at 2.30.
My friends I expected.
- 6 You can go by bus or by train. The buses run every 30 minutes. The trains run every hour.
The buses the trains.
- 7 We were very busy in the office today. We're not usually so busy.
We usual in the office today.

Comparison 2 (much better / any better /
better and better / the sooner the better)

A

Before comparatives you can use:

much **a lot** **far** (= a lot) **a bit** **a little** **slightly** (= a little)

- Let's go by car. It's **much cheaper**. (or a lot cheaper)
- 'How do you feel now?' '**Much better**, thanks.'
- Don't go by train. It's **a lot more expensive**. (or much more expensive)
- Could you speak **a bit more slowly**? (or a little more slowly)
- This bag is **slightly heavier** than the other one.
- Her illness was **far more serious** than we thought at first. (or much more serious / a lot more serious)

B

You can use **any** and **no** + comparative (**any longer** / **no bigger** etc.):

- I've waited long enough. I'm not waiting **any longer**. (= not even a little longer)
- We expected their apartment to be very big, but it's **no bigger** than ours. or ... it isn't **any bigger** than ours. (= not even a little bigger)
- How do you feel now? Do you feel **any better**?
- This hotel is better than the other one, and it's **no more expensive**.

C

Better and better / **more and more** etc.We repeat comparatives (**better and better** etc.) to say that something changes continuously:

- Your English is improving. It's getting **better and better**.
- The city has grown fast in recent years. It's got **bigger and bigger**.
- As I listened to his story, I became **more and more convinced** that he was lying.
- These days **more and more people** are learning English.

D

The ... the ...You can say **the** (sooner/bigger/more etc.) **the better**:

- 'What time shall we leave?' '**The sooner the better**.' (= as soon as possible)
- A: What sort of box do you want? A big one?
B: Yes, **the bigger the better**. (= as big as possible)
- When you're travelling, **the less luggage** you have **the better**.

We also use **the ... the ...** to say that one thing depends on another thing:

- The warmer** the weather, **the better** I feel. (= if the weather is warmer, I feel better)
- The sooner** we leave, **the earlier** we will arrive.
- The younger** you are, **the easier** it is to learn.
- The more expensive** the hotel, **the better** the service.
- The more** electricity you use, **the higher** your bill will be.
- The more** I thought about the plan, **the less** I liked it.

E

Older and elderThe comparative of **old** is **older**:

- David looks **older** than he really is.

You can use **elder** (or **older**) when you talk about people in a family. You can say (**my/your** etc.) **elder sister/brother/daughter/son**:

- My elder sister** is a TV producer. (or My **older** sister ...)

We say 'my **elder sister**', but we do not say that 'somebody is elder':

- My sister is **older** than me. (not elder than me)

Exercises

106.1 Use the words in brackets to complete the sentences. Use **much / a bit** etc. + a comparative form. Use **than** where necessary.

- Her illness was much more serious than we thought at first. (much / serious)
- This bag is too small. I need something (much / big)
- I liked the museum. It was I expected. (much / interesting)
- It was very hot yesterday. Today it's (a bit / cool)
- I'm afraid the problem is it seems. (far / complicated)
- You're driving too fast. Can you drive ? (a bit / slowly)
- It's to learn a language in a country where it is spoken. (a lot / easy)
- I thought she was younger than me, but in fact she's (slightly / old)

106.2 Complete the sentences using **any/no** + comparative. Use **than** where necessary.

- I've waited long enough. I'm not waiting any longer
- I'm sorry I'm a bit late, but I couldn't get here
- This shop isn't expensive. The prices are anywhere else.
- I need to stop for a rest. I can't walk
- The traffic isn't particularly bad today. It's usual.

106.3 Complete the sentences using the structure in Section C (... and ...).

- It's getting more and more difficult to find a job. (difficult)
- That hole in your sweater is getting (big)
- My bags seemed to get as I carried them. (heavy)
- As I waited for my interview, I became (nervous)
- As the day went on, the weather got (bad)
- Health care is becoming (expensive)
- Since Anna went to Canada, her English has got (good)
- As the conversation went on, Paul became (talkative)

106.4 Complete the sentences using the structure in Section D (the ... the ...).

- I like warm weather.
The warmer the weather, the better I feel .. (feel)
- I didn't really like him when we first met.
But the more I got to know him, (like)
- If you're in business, you want to make a profit.
The more goods you sell, (profit)
- It's hard to concentrate when you're tired.
The more tired you are, (hard)
- Kate had to wait a very long time.
The longer she had to wait, (impatient / become)

106.5 Use the words on the right to complete the sentences.

- I like to travel light. The less luggage, the better.
- The problem is getting and more serious.
- The more time I have, the it takes me to do things.
- I'm walking as fast as I can. I can't walk faster.
- The higher your income, more tax you have to pay.
- I'm surprised Anna is only 25. I thought she was
- Jane's sister is a nurse.
- I was a little late. The journey took longer than I expected.
- We have a lot to discuss. We need to start the meeting later than 9.30.
- Don't tell him anything. The he knows, the

any
better
elder
~~less~~
less
longer
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