Comparative adjectives

1. We often use **than** with comparative adjectives:
   - **Scotland is wetter than England.**
   - but it’s **noisier than** the hotel, but it’s **better fun.**

2. The words **cheaper, more interesting, noisier** and **better** are **comparative adjectives.** To form them:
   - For short adjectives (one syllable), add **-er**:
     - small → smaller  short → shorter
     - tall → taller  old → older
     - new → newer  slow → slower

   or, if the adjective ends in **-e**, add **-r**:
     - nice → nicer  wide → wider  late → later

3. These short adjectives are irregular:
   - good → better  bad → worse  far → farther

4. For most long adjectives (two syllables or more), we put **more** first:
   - important → more important  expensive → more expensive

5. For long adjectives ending in **-y**, we use **-ier**:
   - happy → happier  early → earlier

### Grammar in action

1. We use **comparative adjectives** to compare things that we buy, and services that we use:
   - I like this jumper **better**, but it’s **more expensive.**
   - Don’t drive. It’s **faster** by train.

2. We use **comparative adjectives** to compare places:
   - Her new flat is **nicer** than her old one. It’s **much bigger.**
   - Spain will be **sunnier** than France at Easter.

3. We use **comparative adjectives** to compare people.
   - We might talk about how a friend has changed:
     - Tom is **much friendlier** than he **was when we were at school.** He **looks different too:** he’s **taller** than **me now,** his hair is **longer** and he **seems happier.**

### Comparing things we buy and services we use

Fareed is buying a new laptop. Change the underlined words into comparative adjectives.

**WOMAN** These two, the Helix 400 and the VKC 28, are very popular at the moment, sir. The VKC 28 is a little **new** 6, but the Helix is **cheap** 1.

**FAREED** Can I touch them? Which one is **heavy** 2?

**WOMAN** The VKC is **light** 3 than the Helix, but it’s also **wide** 4.

**FAREED** Yes, you’re right. The VKC is **big** 5, but much **thin** 6. And I suppose it’s **powerful** 7 too, if it’s newer.
B Comparing places

‘Visit England’ is a magazine in English for Polish students. In this article, the writer is comparing study holidays in Liverpool, a big city in Lancashire, and in Beverley, a small town in Yorkshire. Circle the correct comparative adjectives.

Of course, Liverpool is much bigger than Beverley. It’s also famouser/more famous, much noisier/noisyer, and, when I was there, wetter/wetter. I spent two weeks in the Lancashire city last March, and I loved it. I stayed in the more old/older, busier/busyer part of the city, near the river Mersey. I went on the Beatles tour, and I watched Liverpool FC play against Newcastle. (Newcastle won.) It was a good game, but football matches in England are much more expensive than/as in Poland – I had to pay £45 for a ticket. Then I spent a week in Beverley at a smaller/more small language school. Beverley is beautifuller/more beautiful than Liverpool, and the people were more friendlier/friendlier to me. It’s a richer/more rich and cleaner/cleanner place too, – but perhaps Liverpool is more interesting/interestinger in the end.

C Comparing people

Dan is having breakfast with his 10 year-old daughter Amy and his 4 year-old son, Josh. Use the words in brackets to make phrases with comparative adjectives. Use short forms of the verb be.

DAN You’re earlier for breakfast today, Amy. Is it a normal day for you?
AMY No. Mr Brown is teaching us today and tomorrow. (He/be/bad/than) Mr Samson, (He/be/fat), too.
DAN I’m sure Mr Brown isn’t fat, Amy.
AMY (Mr Samson/be/nice and funny), and (he/be/intelligent).
DAN All your teachers are intelligent, Amy. I’m sure it’s a very difficult job for Mr Brown, with a class of 10 year-old kids.
JOSH (Be/it/difficult/than) your job, Daddy?
DAN I don’t know. (I think/I/be/lucky), because I can work at home.
AMY Daddy, (be/I/pretty/than) the girl on ‘Top TV’?
JOSH (You/be/silly/than) her!
DAN You’re both pretty, Amy. Are you ready for school?
JOSH Yes, but I want some more toast, please.
DAN (You/be/hungry/than) usual this morning, Amy.
AMY Because (it/be/cold) today. Daddy, do you think Mr Brown eats a lot because he’s cold?
Comparatives and superlatives

Superlative adjectives

5 Look at this example:
‘Paulo’s’ is the best restaurant in town. Their pizzas are the biggest and the most delicious!

6 The best, the biggest and the most delicious are superlative forms. To make superlative adjectives:
   - For short adjectives and long adjectives ending in -y, take away the final r of the comparative form, and add -st:
     small → smaller → the smallest
     nice → nicer → the nicest
     big → bigger → the biggest
     happy → happier → the happiest
   - For long adjectives, change more to most:
     important → more important → the most important
   - Irregular forms:
     good → better → the best
     bad → worse → the worst
     far → farther → the farthest

7 Before superlative adjectives, we usually use the:
   Picasso is the most famous Spanish painter.

After superlative adjectives, we sometimes use of:
   Sunday is the best day of the week!
   It’s the smallest of the three hotels.

but we use in for places and groups of people:
   She’s the richest woman in Britain. (not of Britain)
   Dave is the funniest student in the class.

8 We use superlatives when we’re comparing more than two things:
   There are four countries in the UK. England is the biggest.

   We sometimes use the present perfect with ever after the superlative form:
   What is the worst meal you’ve ever eaten?
   This is the most beautiful park I’ve ever seen!

Grammar in action

We use superlatives to talk about the best, worst or most interesting places, people and things:
   Heathrow is the busiest airport in Europe.
   This is the most comfortable room in the house.
   It’s the fastest family car in the UK.
   It’s the saddest film we’ve ever seen.

D Talking about the best things about the Seychelles

Look at the home page of the website for ‘Seychelles Holidays’. Change the underlined words into superlative adjectives.

Seychelles Facts (and Opinions!):

- The Republic of Seychelles is the smallest African country, and it’s the good place in the world for your holiday!
- The big of the hundred and fifty five islands is Mahé, with an international airport.
- The Seychelles Islands have the beautiful beaches you’ve ever seen, and the warm seas.
- The sunny times of year are December and January (but they’re also the expensive times to visit).
- The peaceful island is La Digue - it’s like a journey into the past!
- The nice restaurant in the Seychelles is ‘André’s’ in Anse Lazio.
   (Another free meal, please, André!)
- The best Creole music is by the famous Seychelles musician, the wonderful Jean-Marc Volcy!
E Choosing a flat in London

We use comparatives to compare things we buy; services we use; places; and people. We use superlatives to talk about the best, worst or most interesting places, people and things. Sean and Thierry want to share a flat in London. They’ve looked at three flats, and now they’re in a café. Add these words to the conversation:

ever in most of the than dirtier expensive friendlier nearer

SEAN What did you think about the two flats in Camden?
THIERRY The first one was bigger, but it was dirtier too.
SEAN You can clean a flat though, can’t you?
THIERRY Sure, but the second one was nicer, and the landlord was friendlier.
SEAN Perhaps, but it was also noisier than the first one, because it was nearer to the road.
SEAN They weren’t the best flats we’ve seen, were they? What about the one in Crouch End?
THIERRY It was the most comfortable of the three flats.
SEAN I agree. But it was also the most expensive. We haven’t got enough money, have we?
THIERRY Shall we have another coffee? They make the best cappuccino north London here. We can look at some more flats this afternoon.

F Choosing a singer for a musical

Desmond and Jilly are trying to find a singer for a new musical. They saw three singers this morning. Change the underlined adjectives into comparatives or superlatives.

Hi Desmond,
What did you think about the guys this morning? Charlie was the loudest singer I’ve ever heard! My ears are still hurting. He’s probably got the strongest voice in London. I liked him, but Luke was a good dancer than him, and his voice was good too. But Luke hasn’t sung in a big show before. Matt, the tall guy today, looked great, but his voice was weak than Charlie’s. We’ve got to decide soon, but we could see them again tomorrow. What do you think?
Jilly

Hi Jilly,
It was difficult today with the guys than yesterday with the girls. Luke is the youngest, isn’t he? He was also the good dancer this morning, but I don’t think he’s ready. It’s hard to sing every night for six weeks, isn’t it? Matt is old than Luke, and he’s got the right face, but he’s also got the bad voice of the three, I’m afraid. In my view, Charlie is the good of the guys. We can teach him to dance later!
Desmond
### Answers: 
**Oxford Living Grammar Elementary**

### 26 Comparative and superlative adjectives

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### Answers:

- **A**: cheaper, heavier, lighter, wider, bigger
- **B**: more famous, noisier, wetter, older, busier, than
- **C**: He's worse than, He's fatter, Mr Samson's / Mr Samson is nicer and funnier, he's more intelligent, Is it more difficult than, I think I'm luckier, am I prettier than, You're sillier than, You're hungrier than, it's colder
- **D**: best, biggest, most beautiful, warmest, sunniest
- **E**: thinner, more powerful, faster, more expensive, better, cleaner
- **F**: strongest, better, tallest, weaker, more difficult

### Further Examples:

- **E**: 1 friendlier, 2 than, 3 nearer, 4 ever, 5 most, 6 of, 7 expensive, 8 the, 9 in
- **F**: 1 strongest, 2 better, 3 tallest, 4 weaker, 5 more difficult
- **D**: best, biggest, most beautiful, warmest, sunniest

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