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Grammar Reference

1. Grammar Reference: Comparatives and Superlatives

Comparative adjectives

Comparative adjectives are used to *compare differences between the two objects they modify (larger, smaller, faster, and higher)*. They are used in sentences where two nouns are compared.

Noun + verb + comparative adjective + *than* + noun

The second item of comparison can be omitted if it is clear from the context (see the final example below).

Example: My house is **larger** than hers.
This box is **smaller** than the one I lost.
Your dog runs **faster** than Jim's dog.
The rock flew **higher** than the roof.
Jim and Jack are both my friends, but I like Jack **better**.

Superlative adjectives

Superlative adjectives are used to *describe an object which is at the upper or lower limit of a quality (the tallest, the smallest, the fastest, and the highest)*. They are used in sentences where a subject is compared to a group of objects.

Noun + verb + *the* + superlative adjective + noun

The group that is being compared with can be omitted if it is clear from the context (see the final example below).

Example: My house is the **largest** one in our neighborhood.
This is the **smallest** box I've ever seen.
Your dog ran the **fastest** of any dog in the race.
We all threw our rocks at the same time. My rock flew the **highest**. ("of all the rocks" is understood)

Forming regular comparatives and superlatives

Forming *comparatives* and *superlatives* is easy. The form depends on the number of syllables in the original adjective.

One syllable adjectives

To form the comparative with one-syllable adjectives, we add *-er*.

Example:

Adjective	Comparative
tall	taller
cheap	cheaper
strong	stronger

To form the superlative with one-syllable adjectives, we add *-est*.

Example:

Adjective	Superlative
tall	the tallest
cheap	the cheapest
strong	the strongest

If an adjective ends in *a vowel and a consonant*, we double the consonant:

Example:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
fat	fatter	the fattest
big	bigger	the biggest
sad	sadder	the saddest

Two syllables

With most *two-syllable adjectives*, we form the comparative with *more* and the superlative with *most*.

Adjectives	Comparative	Superlative
peaceful	more peaceful	the most peaceful
pleasant	more pleasant	the most pleasant
careful	more careful	the most careful
thoughtful	more thoughtful	the most thoughtful

Example:

If the two-syllable adjectives ends with *-y*, we change the *y* to *i* and add *-er* or *-est*.

Example:

Adjectives	Comparative	Superlative
happy	happier	the happiest
angry	angrier	the angriest
busy	busier	the busiest

However, with these common two-syllable adjectives, you can either add *-er/-r* and *-est/-st* or use *more* and *most*:

Example:

Adjectives	Comparative	Superlative
narrow	narrower / more narrow	the narrowest / the most narrow
gentle	gentler / more gentle	the gentlest / the most gentle
common	commoner / more common	the commonest / the most common
cruel	crueler / more cruel	the cruelest / the most cruel
polite	politer / more polite	the politest / the most polite
simple	simpler / more simple	the simplest / the most simple
stupid	stupider / more stupid	the stupidest / the most stupid

Three or more syllables

Adjectives with *three or more syllables* form the comparative by putting *more* in front of the adjective, and the superlative by putting *most* in front.

Example:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
important	more important	the most important
expensive	more expensive	the most expensive

Irregular comparatives and superlatives

These very common adjectives have completely irregular comparative and superlative forms.

Example:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	the best
bad	worse	the worst
little	less	the least
much	more	the most
far	further / farther	the furthest / farthest

2. Grammar Reference: Reporting commands and advice

An order is when somebody tells you to do something and you have no choice. "**Command**" is a form of reported speech.

Direct order	Reported order
She said: " Stop! "	She told him to stop .

We usually introduce reported orders with the verb "**tell**". The structure is very simple:

tell	+	noun pronoun	+	(not) to infinitive
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Example: We **told the man not to smoke**.
The policeman **told us to follow** him.

Because we use the infinitive there is no need to worry about tense. But as with reported statements and reported requests, we may need to change **pronouns** as well as **time** and **place** in reported orders.

Here are some examples:

Direct order	Reported order
She said, "Eat your food now!"	She told the boy to eat his food right then.
The policeman said: "Get out of your car!"	The policeman instructed us to get out of our car.
She said, "You must make	She told her husband to

the bed before you go to work!"	make the bed before he went to work.
The doctor said: "Don't smoke in here!"	The doctor told them not to smoke in there.

Note: we report a negative order by using **not**.

The most common verb for reporting an order is "**tell**", but we can also use other verbs such as: *order, command, instruct, remind, advise, and warn*.

Example: The sergeant **commanded his men to stand** straight.
Our teacher **reminded us not to forget** a group presentation.

Note: Time and place must often change when going from direct to reported speech.

<i>Phrase in direct speech</i>	<i>Equivalent in reported speech</i>
today Example: "I saw him today ", she said.	that day Example: She said that she had seen him that day .
the day before yesterday Example: "I met her the day before yesterday ", he said.	two days before Example: He said that he had met her two days before .
yesterday Example: "I saw him yesterday ", she said.	the day before Example: She said that she had seen him the day before .
tomorrow Example: "I'll see you tomorrow ", he said.	the next / following day Example: He said that he would see me the next day .
last week / month / year Example: "I was on holiday last week ", he told us.	the previous week / month / year Example: He told us that he had been on holiday the previous week .
ago Example: "I saw her a week ago ", she said.	before Example:

<p><i>this</i> Example: "I'm getting a new car <i>this</i> week", she said.</p>	<p><i>that</i> Example: She said she was getting a new car <i>that</i> week.</p>
<p><i>here</i> Example: He said, "I live <i>here</i>".</p>	<p><i>there</i> Example: He told me he lived <i>there</i>.</p>