Section 16  comparison

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possible further activities

Finding more examples Before or after studying some of the following pages, invite students to find more advertisements with comparatives and superlatives. You could make it a competition: who can find the most superlatives?

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language notes

Beginners may make mistakes with one-word adjectives, often under the influence of the mother tongue.

*Today is more cold than yesterday.

Two-syllable adjectives vary. Some have comparatives and superlatives with -er, -est, some have more and most, some have both. At this level, if students use more and most except for the ones ending in -y, they will usually be right.

Doubling consonants may cause problems. (It does for many native speakers.)

*Tomorrow will be hoter.

*The days are getting shortter.

possible further activities

Which form? Say one-syllable and three-syllable words, mixed up, along with some two-syllable words ending in -y. Students say the comparative.

Practising spelling Say words from the lesson, mixed up. Students tell you how to make the comparative, like this:
‘old’ – ‘e r’
‘hot’ – ‘t e r’
‘late’ – ‘r’
‘high’ – ‘e r’
‘happy’ – ‘i e r’
‘beautiful’ – ‘more’

pages 223–226

language notes

Students may use comparatives instead of superlatives, especially if their language uses the same form for both meanings:

*I’m the younger in my family.

Some languages may have one word corresponding to than and that, or than and as, or than and of:

*Maths is more interesting that/as/of English.

Students may confuse the use of in and of after superlatives (see page 226):

*This is the most beautiful place of the world.

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form or use.  ➔ Section 16 continues
possible further activities

**Personalisation: comparatives**  If physical comparison is not a sensitive area, put students in groups of three. Each student has to find one way in which he/she is different from one of the others, using comparatives.

‘I’m taller than Nadia.’  ‘I’m older than Abbas.’

**Personalisation: superlatives**  As before, but now each student has to find one way in which he/she is ‘superlative’ in the group.

‘I’m the tallest person in the group.’  ‘I’ve got the longest hair.’

‘My handbag is the biggest.’

**Miming comparatives**  Students work in pairs, and do exaggerated mimes to show that one is much more … than the other. The class say what is being demonstrated.

‘Jean is much colder than George.’ (Jean is shivering as hard as he can.)

**Comparing places**  Give students the names of three places. They write sentences about them with comparatives and superlatives.

‘Texas is bigger than France.’  ‘Scotland is colder than Texas.’

‘Scotland/Texas/France is the most interesting.’  ‘Texas is the hottest.’

**Students’ favourite places**  Ask students to write a few sentences about their favourite places, comparing them with others. They should try to use both comparatives and superlatives.

**Wishes**  Ask students to complete one or more of these sentences:

I’d like to be …-er.  I’d like to be more …

I wouldn’t like to be …-er  I wouldn’t like to be more …

**Quiz**  Students work in groups preparing quizzes for the class, using questions with superlatives beginning ‘Who/Which is …?’ (They can get the information from the internet if necessary.) Examples of possible questions:

‘Which is the longest river in Africa?’

‘Which is the highest mountain in Japan?’

‘Who is the fastest sprinter in the world?’

‘Which is the biggest animal in Europe?’

‘Which is the coldest place in the world?’

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**language notes**

Students sometimes make mistakes with comparative adverbs ending in -y:

*She speaks even slowlier than me.*

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**possible further activities**

**Wishes**  Students write sentences saying ‘I wish I could … more …’ or ‘I wish I could …-er’, using comparative adverbs. For example:

‘I wish I could write more easily.’  ‘I wish I could think faster.’
language notes

The as … as structure is difficult for some students:

*You aren't so old like me.
*Her hand was cold like ice.

Older grammars often say that so … as is normally used after not. In fact, in modern English not as … as is also common and correct.

The first as is often dropped in speech, especially in American English.

possible further activities

Colourful comparisons Many languages have colourful traditional comparisons. Tell the students a few English ones (for example as happy as a dog with two tails, as quick as lightning, as old as the hills). Warn them, though, that a lot of these (especially the ones found in books) are old-fashioned. If you speak their language(s), help them to translate a few of their native-language comparisons into English. (A couple from French: ‘as friendly as rain’; ‘as stupid as a broom’.)
