

comparison: *as ... as*

1 CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE Which words can complete the sentence?

He's friendly as she is. A *as* B *so* C *not as* D *not so*

adverbs with *as ... as* We can use various adverbial expressions before *as ... as* and *not as/so ... as*.

just as happy *nearly as big* *not nearly as/so intelligent* *not quite as/so cheap*
nothing like as/so interesting *every bit as good* *almost as bad*
almost exactly as cold *half as wide* *twice as long* *three times as heavy*

2 Use adverbs with *as ... as* or *not so/as ... as* to compare these.

- ▶ Europe – big – Siberia *Europe is not nearly as big as Siberia.*
- 1 France – big – Texas
- 2 the United States – big – Canada
- 3 the Eiffel Tower – tall – the Petronas Twin Towers
- 4 a koala bear – dangerous – a grizzly bear
- 5 Mars – distant – Jupiter
- 6 Minus 40° Fahrenheit – cold – minus 40° Celsius

3 Use adverbs with *as ... as* to compare people or things that you know with each other, or with yourself.

- ▶ *My brother is not nearly as patient as me.*
-
-
-
-

dropping *as* The first *as* is sometimes dropped, especially in a poetic style.

*When thus he had spoken, the hot sun was setting,
The streets of Laredo grew cold as the clay.* (American folk song)

4 See if you can decide which adjectives go into these traditional Texan comparisons. (Note: no first *as*.)

big busy cold deaf fast happy pretty slow useless

- a baby's smile as a banker's heart as a fence post
- as small town gossip as grass growin' as ice trays in hell
- as ants at a picnic as a pig in a peach orchard as West Texas

NOTES

As much/many as can suggest a large amount or number.

His paintings can sell for as much as half a million dollars.

There are as many as 50 students in some of the classes.

Not so much as can be used when we say what is the real point.

It was not so much his appearance that I liked as his personality.

Not so much as can also be used critically in the sense of 'not even'.

She didn't so much as say 'Thank you'.

infinitives When we use *as ... as* with infinitives, we sometimes drop *to* from the second.

It's as easy to do it now as (to) leave it till tomorrow.

-er and -est or more and most?

Two-syllable adjectives ending in -y have comparatives and superlatives in -ier, -est.

happy – happier – happiest easy – easier – easiest

Some others can also have -er and -est, especially those ending with unstressed syllables.

narrow – narrower – narrowest simple – simpler – simplest
clever – cleverer – cleverest quiet – quieter – quietest

With adjectives ending in -ing, -ful, -ed and -less, and some others, the structure with *more* and *most* is the usual or only possibility.

tiring – more tiring – most tiring hopeful – more hopeful – most hopeful

To find the normal forms for a particular two-syllable adjective, check in a good dictionary.

longer adjectives with -er, -est Common adjectives like *unhappy*, *untidy* (the opposites of two-syllable adjectives ending in -y) can have forms in -er, -est.

She's looking **unhappier** / **more unhappy**. He's **the untidiest** / **most untidy** child!

Some compound adjectives can also have two forms.

more good-looking OR better-looking most well-known OR best-known

1 Put in the comparatives or superlatives of words in the boxes. Use a dictionary if necessary.

dim efficient imaginative infuriating peaceful smooth unhappy

- 1 You really are the person I know. You drive me mad!
- 2 This new production process is really much than the old one.
- 3 Artists are than other people – at least, they think so.
- 4 95% of users say our soap gives them a softer, skin.
- 5 Relations between the two countries are the for 20 years.
- 6 This has been the year of my life.
- 7 These new energy-efficient lights seem than the old ones.

clever dense discouraging lazy shocking silky useful

- 8 'I've bought an electric corkscrew.' 'I hope it's than the last one.'
- 9 Dream Caress Shampoo gives you the hair ever.
- 10 Darren is the person in the family – according to Darren.
- 11 Have you seen the front page? It's the report I've ever seen.
- 12 Nobody's than Jessica. She thinks work is a disease.
- 13 He's the teacher – nothing we do is right.
- 14 Sea water is than fresh water, so it's easy to float on it.

Note: One-syllable adjectives sometimes have *more* and *most*: for example, when a comparative is not followed directly by *than*.

The road's getting steadily steeper / more steep.

And when we say that one description is more accurate than another, we use *more*.

It's more red than orange. (NOT It's redder than orange.)

Most is sometimes used in a formal style with long or short adjectives to mean 'very'.

That's most kind of you.

Real, right, wrong and like always have *more* and *most*.

You couldn't be more right. He's more like his mother than his father.

Comparative **adverbs** normally have *more* and *most*, except for one-syllable adverbs like *fast*, *soon*, and *early*.

more slowly (NOT stowlier) BUT faster, sooner, earlier.

double comparative structures

more and more We can use **double comparatives** to say that something is changing.

*It's getting **darker and darker**.*

*She drove **more and more slowly**. (NOT ... *more slowly and more slowly*.)*

1 Put in double comparatives of the words in the box. More than one answer may be possible.

authoritarian quiet irresponsible polluted smelly strongly uncomfortable unpredictable

- 1 The seats got as the evening went on.
- 2 Rulers become as they continue in power.
- 3 The weather's getting
- 4 This cheese is getting
- 5 At the end of the piece the music gets
until it dies away completely.
- 6 The beaches are becoming
- 7 I'm afraid your brother is getting
- 8 The wind's blowing

the ... the We use this structure with comparatives to say that things change or vary together.

Note the word order (in both halves): **the + comparative + subject + verb**.

*The **older** I get, the **happier** I am. (NOT *Older I get ...*)*

*The **more dangerous** it is, the **more** I like it. (NOT *More it is dangerous ...*)*

*The **more** money he makes, the **more** he spends. The **more** I study, the **less** I learn.*

In longer sentences, **that** is sometimes put before the first verb.

*The **more** information **that** comes in, the **more** confused the picture is.*

2 Make chains with **the ... the**.

- ▶ they open factories – manufacture cars – make money

*The **more** factories they open, the **more** cars they manufacture. The **more** cars they
manufacture, the **more** money they make. The **more** money they make, the **more**
factories they open.*

- 1 he wins races – he gains confidence
.....
- 2 he loves her – she ignores him
.....
- 3 she works – she is successful – she gets responsibility
.....
.....
- 4 I cook – you eat
.....
- 5 I go to the gym – I take exercise – I get fit
.....
.....
- 6 (your example)
.....

more about comparatives

the cleverer students We sometimes use comparatives to mean 'relatively', 'more than the average'. Comparatives make a less clear and narrow selection than superlatives. Compare:

*We've started a special class for the **cleverer** students.*
*The **cleverest** students are two girls from York.*

This use is common in advertising to make things sound less definite or more subtle.

*Less **expensive** clothes for the **fuller** figure.* (nicer than 'cheap clothes for fat people')

the faster of the two When a group has only two members, we sometimes use a comparative with a superlative meaning.

*Both cars perform well, but the XG2SL is the **faster** of the two.*

Some people feel that a superlative is incorrect in this case.


1 Correct (✓) or not (X)?

- 1 These books are designed for younger readers. ...
- 2 Alice is by far the more sociable of the three girls. ...
- 3 Only the most determined students finished the course. ...
- 4 I'm right-handed, but my left arm is the stronger one. ...
- 5 This music probably won't appeal to oldest people. ...
- 6 Some of the newer fashions really make you look weird. ...
- 7 I'm going to try one of the easier exams. ...
- 8 The older woman in Cambridge is 103 today. ...
- 9 The harder instrument to learn is probably the violin. ...

2 Complete the texts with words from the box.

fuller older richer shorter slower smaller taller younger

1 Are men more desirable and successful?

2  Lingerie for the figure.
 Special offers, lower prices.

3 For the handsome man, 5'8" or under, a great fit and a great look.

4 Never allow the smarter child to laugh at the child.

5 It's now the people, like pop musicians or sports stars, who make fortunes and set the standards.

6 In these villages, researchers found in the 1950s that nearly all the people were still at work.

7 The people, who could afford it, built large houses surrounded by gardens.

8 His previous experience had been as assistant boss of one of the London museums.

Note: all the etc with comparatives In some fixed expressions, *all the* + comparative means 'even more because of that'.

'We can stay an extra three days.' 'All the better.'

'Susie isn't eating this evening.' 'Good. All the more for us.'

Any the, none the and *so much the* are used in similar ways.

I listened to everything he said, but ended up none the wiser.

'Jake doesn't want to go on holiday with us.' 'So much the worse for him.'

more about superlatives

superlatives without *the* We sometimes drop *the* when superlative adjectives and determiners are used without nouns, and before superlative adverbs.

Which of you three is (the) strongest? The person who eats (the) fastest gets (the) most.

And we don't use *the* when we are contrasting somebody or something with him/her/itself in other situations. Compare:

*He's **the nicest** of my three uncles. He's **nicest** when he's had a few drinks. (NOT ~~He's the nicest when ...~~)*
*England is **most beautiful** in spring.*

1 Correct (✓) or not (X)?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 John's is best plan. ... | 5 It's best if we go away this weekend. ... |
| 2 It's coldest here in January. ... | 6 That's most exciting suggestion I've heard all day. ... |
| 3 What's the earliest day you can manage? ... | 7 Jamie talked most, but Louise said most. ... |
| 4 The nights are the longest in December. ... | 8 You're least attractive when you laugh. ... |

Note the use of infinitives after superlatives.

*the **youngest** person **to climb** Everest the **first** man **to run** a mile in four minutes*

2 Can you find some examples of the first/oldest/youngest/etc people to do things?

- ▶ *Marconi was the first person to communicate by radio.*
-
-
-
-
-

3 GRAMMAR IN TEXTS Complete the texts with the infinitives of the verbs in the box.

complete eat graduate obtain swim

1 SOME PEOPLE feel they have to walk to the North Pole; others try to climb the world's highest mountains. Andy Hayler has fulfilled a much more pleasant ambition. He thinks he has become the first person in every three Michelin-star restaurant in the world.

3 A 36-year-old lawyer today set off in an attempt to become the first person the 203-mile length of the River Thames. But first, he had to run 19 miles in the summer heat before the river becomes deep enough to swim in, at Lechlade, Gloucestershire. In January he became the first person a long-distance swim in all five oceans.

2 The Australian Aboriginal leader Charlie Perkins was the first indigenous person from an Australian university in 1965, and went on to become a prominent indigenous leader who campaigned for civil rights reform.

4 A year ago Sally Cluley became the youngest person a British pilot's licence, which she did in just four weeks. After turning 17, she was allowed to fly herself and three passengers anywhere in Europe.

much, far etc with comparatives and superlatives

To say *how much better, older, bigger, more etc*, we can use for example *much, far, very much, any, no, rather, a little, even, a bit* (informal), *a lot* (informal), *lots*, (informal).

Jamie is **much/far older** than me. Greek is **very much more difficult** than Spanish.
We'll need **rather more** money than that. Can you speak **a bit more slowly**?
Today's **even hotter** than yesterday. This car uses **a lot less** petrol than the old one.
Is your mother **any better**? I'll be **no longer** than five minutes.
We've had **far fewer** accidents since they lowered the speed limit.

Before a plural noun, we use *many more*, not *much more*.

You'll have **many more opportunities** in the future.

1 Correct the mistakes or write 'Correct'.

- ▶ It's getting much darker. ... *Correct*
- ▶ I'm quite older than you. ... *much / far / a lot older*
- 1 Can you walk a bit faster, please?
- 2 She's very less shy than she used to be.
- 3 It'll be much hotter tomorrow.
- 4 The economy is growing far slowly than last year.
- 5 The trains are any cleaner than they used to be.
- 6 English is difficult, but Russian is even difficult.
- 7 His cooking is no better than it used to be.
- 8 I'm very much happier these days.
- 9 There are a lot fewer butterflies this year.
- 10 We sold much more tickets than we expected.

2 Compare two people you know, using *far / much / very much* with a comparative (2 sentences) and with *less* (2 sentences).

.....
.....
.....
.....

Before **superlatives**, we can use for example *much, by far, quite* (meaning 'absolutely'), *almost, practically, nearly* and *easily*.

This is **much the most expensive** of them all. She's **by far the youngest**.
He's **quite the most stupid** man I've ever met. I'm **nearly the oldest** in the firm.
This is **easily the worst** film I've seen in my life.

Note also **very + superlative**.

Their house is **the very nicest** in the street. 300g of **your very best** butter, please.

3 Write about people or things that you know, using these superlative structures.

- ▶ *My mother is by far the most interesting person I know.*
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

much in affirmative sentences?

***much* as quantifier** *Much* can be a quantifier before a noun (see page 165). In this case, *much* is **unusual** in **affirmative** sentences except in a formal style. Compare:

We haven't had ***much*** rain recently. Do you get ***much*** junk mail?
Much time has been spent discussing these questions. (formal)
BUT We've got **a lot of** milk to use up. (NOT ~~We've got *much* milk...~~)

However, *much* is normal in affirmative sentences after *so*, *too* and *as*.

She's caused ***so much*** trouble. Those kids get ***too much*** money.
You can take ***as much*** as you want.

***much* as adverb** As an adverb, *much* is also **unusual** in **affirmative** sentences. Compare:

I didn't enjoy the film ***much***. How ***much*** do you worry about the future?
We walked **a lot** when we were on holiday. (NOT ~~We walked *much*...~~)

However, ***very much*** is common in affirmative sentences, particularly when expressing personal reactions.

I ***very much*** like your new hairstyle. You've helped us ***very much***.
Thank you ***very much***. (BUT NOT ~~Thank you *much*.~~)

Note that *very much* never normally separates the **verb** from the **object**.

We ***very much*** appreciate your help. OR We appreciate your help ***very much***.
BUT NOT ~~We appreciate *very much* your help.~~

Before comparatives and superlatives, *much* is **normal** in **affirmative** sentences.

I'm feeling ***much*** better today. This is ***much the worst*** book I've read all year.

1 In three of sentences 1–8, *much* is unnatural. Correct them.

- ▶ She's got ~~much~~ money. *She's got a lot of / plenty of money.*
- ▶ He talks too ~~much~~. *OK.*
- 1 He talks ~~much~~.
- 2 We ~~very much~~ enjoyed the film.
- 3 People haven't talked ~~much~~ about what happened.
- 4 I feel ~~much~~ happier after our discussion.
- 5 I ~~much~~ like your new flat.
- 6 I've eaten as ~~much~~ as I want.
- 7 I get ~~much~~ less freedom in the new job.
- 8 There was ~~much~~ rain in the night.

For the use of *much* or *very* before past participles (e.g. *much* changed, *very* surprised), see page 176.

'Some people think that football is a matter of life and death. I can assure them that it is much more serious than that.'
(Bill Shankly)

'Too much of a good thing can be wonderful.'
(Mae West)

'Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.'
(Helen Keller)

'The researches of many commentators have already thrown much darkness on this subject, and it is probable that if they continue we shall soon know nothing at all about it.'
(Mark Twain)

'If you believe in what you are doing, then let nothing hold you up in your work. Much of the best work of the world has been done against seeming impossibilities. The thing is to get the work done.'
(Dale Carnegie)

'My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government.'
(Thomas Jefferson)

'The years teach much which the days never know.'
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

such and so

Such is used before (adjective +) noun. A/An comes after *such*.

such an idiot such a long way such good food such boring lectures

So is used before an adjective alone, an adverb or a quantifier.

They're so stupid. I'm glad you're doing so well. She's got so many shoes!

We can't put *such* or *so* after a determiner.

We stayed in their house, which is so beautiful. (NOT ... their such/so beautiful house.)

1 Correct the mistakes or write 'Correct!'

- ▶ It's so warm! *Correct*.....
- ▶ It's a so-warm day! *such a warm*.....
- 1 They're so kind people.
- 2 He's a such nice boy!
- 3 I've had so many problems!
.....
- 4 This is a so good hotel.
- 5 They're such careless.
- 6 She's such a professional.
- 7 Don't talk so nonsense!
- 8 Please don't drive so fast.

so long a wait etc In a formal style, we can use **so** before adjective + a/an + noun.

I was not expecting so long a wait. (Less formal: ... such a long wait.)

The same structure is possible with *as*, *too* and *how*.

They gave us as nice a time as they could. It was too difficult a question.

How big a budget does your department need?

This structure is only possible with noun phrases beginning *a/an*.

(NOT *so perfect performances* OR *too cold soup* OR *how regular support*)

2 Complete the sentences with **so**, **as**, **how** or **too** + adjective + a/an.

- ▶ We do not usually get *so good a result*..... (good result)
- 1 It was..... to be true. (good story)
- 2 I've never had..... as this one. (exciting year)
- 3..... do you need for the job? (big budget)
- 4 It was..... - I felt really embarrassed. (stupid mistake)
- 5 She's much..... to criticise you. (polite person)
- 6..... did you have to wait? (long time)
- 7 It was..... to disagree about. (small thing)
- 8 I will do..... as I can. (good job)



'He was such a lovely baby.'

like and as

similarity: like or as We can use both words to say that things are **similar**.

Like is a **preposition**, used before a **noun** or **pronoun**.

The whole experience was **like a dream**. They're not **like us**.

As is a **conjunction**, used before **subject** + verb or a **prepositional expression**.

They left **as they came**, without a word. In Britain, **as in many countries**, ...

Note the common expressions **as I said**, **as you know**, **as you see**, **as usual**, **as before**.

In informal speech (but less often in writing), many people use **like** as a conjunction.

Nobody knows him **like I do**. **Like I said**, everything's OK.

Also in informal speech, **like** is now commonly used to mean 'as if'.

She was eating fudge **like her life depended on it**.

jobs and functions: as We use **as**, not **like**, to talk about jobs, functions and roles.

I'm working **as a driver**. (NOT ... **like a driver**.) Don't use your plate **as an ashtray**.

Compare: **As your boss**, I must congratulate you. (I am your boss.)

Like your boss, I must congratulate you. (We both congratulate you.)

1 Like, as or both (in informal speech)?

- 1 My sister isn't very much me.
- 2 I said, I can't help you.
- 3 The journey was a nightmare.
- 4 He sleeps he eats, noisily.
- 5 Chairman, it was my job to open the meeting.
- 6 Your writing is your father's, unreadable.
- 7 The rain stopped it started, suddenly.
- 8 Molly's late, I expected.
- 9 I used my coat a pillow.
- 10 In Paris, in Rome, traffic is heavy.

2 Can you put the words into the right quotations?

a train car alarms flutter looks looks thoughts

- 1 'Scientists have proved that it's impossible to long-jump 30 feet, but I don't listen to that kind of talk.
..... like that have a way of sinking into your feet.'
(Carl Lewis, winner of 9 Olympic gold medals)
- 2 "What are you drawing?"
"God."
"But nobody knows what God like."
"They will in a minute."
(Conversation between English primary-school child and her teacher)
- 3 'My eyelids like the wings of a butterfly being born from its chrysalis.'
(From a poem by a truly terrible poet)
- 4 'My face like a wedding cake left out in the rain.' (W H Auden)
- 5 'She had a penetrating sort of laugh. Rather like going into a tunnel.'
(P G Wodehouse)
- 6 'Men are like – they both make a lot of noise no one listens to.' (Diane Jordan)