

# LESSON 153

## 856 Comparatives: big and small differences

As we know, comparative forms are used to communicate that there is a difference between two people or things. For example, when we say to somebody "John is taller than David", they understand there is a difference in height. However, they do not know how big the difference is. If we want to communicate this information, we need to put other words before the comparative.

To communicate that the difference is very big, we can put words such as "much", "far" or "a lot" before the comparative, and say, for example, "John is far taller than David". To communicate that the difference is very small, we can use words such as "slightly", "a little" or "a bit", and say, for example, "John is slightly taller than David".

When we're using a comparative form, how can we communicate that the difference between two people or things is very big?

When we're using .., we can ..  
by putting words such as "much",  
"far" or "a lot" before the comparative

Give me an example, please.

My new phone is a lot better than  
my last one

And how can we communicate that the difference between two people or things is very small?

We can .. by using words  
such as "slightly", "a little" or "a bit"

Give me an example, please.

The weather today is slightly  
colder than yesterday

Is China slightly bigger than England?

No, China isn't ...; it's far  
bigger than England

Are you a lot older than you were two weeks ago?

No, I'm not ...; I'm  
a little older ..

857 Is travelling by taxi much more expensive than travelling by bus?

Yes, travelling ..

If a hairdresser cut your hair slightly shorter than you wanted, would you complain?

Yes, if a hairdresser ... I'd complain

~ No, if a hairdresser ..., I wouldn't complain

If we want to emphasize a superlative, we can use the words "by far". For example, "She is by far the tallest member of her family".

Is Russia by far the biggest country in Europe?

Yes, Russia's

by far ...

## sorrow

## tragedy

Do people feel great sorrow when a tragedy occurs?

Yes, people feel ...

## fond of

Are you fond of children?

Yes, I'm fond of children ~ No, I'm not fond of children

Are you fond of travelling?

Yes, I'm fond of travelling ~ No, I'm not fond of travelling

## carpet

## rug

## mat

The difference between a carpet and a rug is that a carpet is large, usually covering the whole floor of a room, whereas a rug is smaller, and only covers part of the floor. A mat is something we put in front of a door for people to wipe their feet on before entering a house.

What's the difference between a carpet and a rug?

The difference between a carpet and a rug is that ...

868 What's a mat?

A mat is something we put ...

## ripe

## unripe

## overripe

## sour

## peel

What happens to milk if we leave it for too long before using it?

If we leave milk for too long before using it, it goes sour (or turns sour)

If an apple is unripe, how does it taste?

If an apple is unripe, it tastes sour

How can we tell if a banana is ripe or overripe without peeling it?

We can tell ... without peeling it by looking at the skin. The skin of a ripe banana is yellow with only a few dark spots, whereas the skin of an overripe banana is brown, or has many dark spots on it.

## appoint

## position

Would you like to be appointed to a top government position?

Yes, I'd like to be ... ~ No, I wouldn't like to be ...

## surf

Is it possible to go surfing if the sea is totally calm?

No, it isn't possible to...

If you were a company boss, would you allow your employees to use their work computers to surf the internet?

Yes, if I were ..., I'd allow ...  
~ No, if I were ..., I wouldn't allow ...

## 869 deaf

Do people normally become a little deaf in their old age?

Yes, people normally ...

## blame

In road accidents, who or what do you think is to blame more than anything else?

In road accidents, I think ...

## court

## rectangle

## rectangular

## net

Describe a tennis court, please.

A tennis court is a flat, rectangular piece of ground with white lines painted on it, and a net stretched across the middle from one side to the other.

## tame

What's the contrary of a wild animal?

The contrary of ... is a tame animal.

## wax

What do we use for making candles?

We use wax for making candles

## bank

What do we call the sides of a river?

We call the sides of a river the banks

870

## at last

## in the end

## outcome

When we are talking about positive outcomes, we can use either "at last" or "in the end". For example, "At last, I managed to open the window", or "In the end, I managed to open the window". However, when we are talking about negative outcomes, we can only use "in the end", and not "at last". For example, "In the end, I didn't manage to open the window".

Can we use the expression "at last" for negative outcomes?

No, we can't use the expression "at last" for negative outcomes

What do we use instead?

We use "in the end" instead

Make a sentence using the words "at last", please.

After searching all day, at last we found the keys

Make a sentence with the words "in the end".

We searched all day but, in the end, we realized we were never going to find the keys

## left

About how many pages of this book are there left for us to study?

There are about ... pages of this book left ...

## spare

## puncture

What would I mean if I said "He can't spare the money to buy himself a new suit"?

If you said ..., you'd mean that he has some money, but needs to use it for other things and has none available to buy himself a new suit

What do you do in your spare time?

I ... in my spare time

871 **Why do we carry a spare wheel in a car?**

We carry ...  
so that, if we get a puncture,  
we can change the wheel immediately

**What do we mean by a spare room in a house?**

By a spare ..., we  
mean an extra room  
which we keep empty for guests



### Dictation 106

Although it was freezing cold/ outside the hut,/ inside we were all sweating with  
the heat./ We found that we could grind the corn/ with reasonable ease/ between  
two stones/ and produce enough flour/ for several loaves of bread/ which, when  
they had been baked,/ we piled neatly one on top of the other./ It was clear that  
they were rivals/ for one could see that,/ beneath their politeness to each other,/  
they suffered from a bitter jealousy/ and envy./ I was given my pint of beer/ in a  
thick glass,/ which felt as heavy as lead/ and had a large handle./ The path turned  
at an angle/ of ninety degrees/ and passed between rows of flowers/ which gave  
off a strong scent.