

Comparison (1) – cheaper, more expensive, etc.

A

Look at these examples:

Should I drive or take the train?

You should drive. It's **cheaper**.

Don't take the train. It's **more expensive**.

Cheaper and **more expensive** are *comparative forms*.

After comparatives you can use **than** (see also Unit 103):

- It's **cheaper** to drive **than** to take the train.
- Taking the train is **more expensive than** driving.

B

The comparative form is **-er** or **more . . .** :

We use **-er** for short words (one syllable):

cheap → cheaper fast → faster
large → larger thin → thinner

We also use **-er** for two-syllable words that end in **-y** (-y → **-ier**):

lucky → luckier early → earlier
easy → easier pretty → prettier

For spelling, see Appendix 5.

- You're **older** than me.
- The exam was easy – **easier** than we expected.
- Can you walk a little **faster**?
- I'd like to have a **bigger** car.
- Last night I went to bed **earlier** than usual.

We use **more . . .** for longer words (two syllables or more):

more serious more often
more expensive more comfortable

We use **more . . .** for *adverbs* that end in **-ly**:

more slowly more seriously
more quietly more carefully

- You're **more patient** than me.
- The exam was difficult – **more difficult** than we expected.
- Can you walk a little **more slowly**?
- I'd like to have a **more reliable** car.
- I don't play tennis much these days. I used to play **more often**.

You can use **-er** or **more . . .** with some *two-syllable adjectives*, especially:

quiet clever narrow shallow simple

- It's too noisy here. Can we go somewhere **quieter** / **more quiet**?

C

These adjectives and adverbs have irregular comparative forms:

good/well → **better**:

- The yard looks **better** since you cleaned it up.
- I know him **well** – probably **better** than anybody else does.

bad/badly → **worse**:

- "Is your headache **better**?" "No, it's **worse**."
- He did very **badly** on the exam – **worse** than expected.

far → **farther** or **further**:

- It's a long walk from here to the station – **farther** than I thought. (*or further than . . .*)

Exercises

101.1 Complete the sentences using a comparative form (older / more important, etc.).

1. It's too noisy here. Can we go somewhere quieter OR more quiet ?
2. This coffee is very weak. I like it a little _____.
3. The hotel was surprisingly big. I expected it to be _____.
4. The hotel was surprisingly cheap. I expected it to be _____.
5. My job is kind of boring sometimes. I'd like to do something _____.
6. I was surprised how easy it was to use the computer. I thought it would be _____.
7. Your work isn't very good. I'm sure you can do _____.
8. Don't worry. The situation isn't so bad. It could be _____.
9. You're talking very loudly. Can you speak _____ ?
10. You hardly ever call me. Why don't you call me _____ ?
11. You're standing too close to the camera. Can you move a little _____ away?
12. You were a little depressed yesterday, but you look _____ today.

101.2 Complete the sentences using the comparative form of one of the following words. Use *than* where necessary.

big crowded ~~early~~ easily high important
interested peaceful ~~reliable~~ serious simple thin

1. I was feeling tired last night, so I went to bed earlier than _____ usual.
2. I'd like to have a more reliable _____ car. Mine keeps breaking down.
3. Unfortunately, her illness was _____ we thought at first.
4. You look _____ . Have you lost weight?
5. I want a _____ apartment. We don't have enough space here.
6. He doesn't study very hard. He's _____ in having a good time.
7. Health and happiness are _____ money.
8. The instructions were very complicated. They could have been _____.
9. There were a lot of people on the bus. It was _____ usual.
10. I like living in the country. It's _____ living in a city.
11. You'll find your way around the city _____ if you have a good map.
12. In some parts of the country, prices are _____ in others.

101.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences. Use a comparative form (-er or more ...).

1. Yesterday the temperature was 28 degrees. Today it's only 20 degrees.
It's colder today than it was yesterday _____.
2. The trip takes four hours by car and five hours by train.
It takes _____.
3. Dave and I went for a run. I ran five miles. Dave stopped after three miles.
I ran _____.
4. Chris and Joe both did poorly on the exam. Chris got a C, and Joe got only a C-.
Joe did _____.
5. I expected my friends to arrive at about 4:00. Instead they arrived at 2:30.
My friends _____.
6. You can go by bus or by train. The buses run every 30 minutes. The trains run every hour.
The buses _____.
7. We were very busy at work today. We're not usually as busy as that.
We _____.