

Comparison (2)

A

Before *comparatives* you can use:

much **a lot** **a little** **slightly** (= a little) **far** (= a lot)

- Let's drive. It's **much cheaper**. (or It's a lot cheaper.)
- The train is a lot **more expensive**. (or **much more expensive**)
- Could you speak a **little more slowly**?
- This bag is **slightly heavier** than the other one.
- Her illness was **far more serious** than we thought at first. (or **much more serious** or **a lot more serious**)

B

You can use **any** or **no** + a comparative (**any longer** / **no bigger**, etc.):

- I've waited long enough. I'm not waiting **any longer**. (= not even a little longer)
- We expected their house to be very big, but it's **no bigger** than ours. (or **it isn't any bigger** than ours)
- Yesterday you said you felt sick. Do you feel **any better** today?
- This hotel is better than the other one, and it's **no more expensive**.

C

Harder and harder / **more and more** / **more and more difficult**, etc.

We repeat comparatives like this (. . . and . . .) to say that something is changing continuously:

- It's becoming **harder and harder** to find a job.
- It's becoming **more and more difficult** to find a job.
- Your English is improving. It's getting **better and better**.
- **More and more** people are learning English these days.

D

The . . . the better

Study these examples:

- "What time should we leave?" "The **sooner the better**." (= as soon as possible)
- "What size box do you want?" "The **bigger the better**." (= as big as possible)
- When you're traveling, **the less luggage you have to carry the better**. (= It is best to have as little luggage as possible.)

We also use the . . . the . . . (with two comparatives) to say that one thing depends on another thing:

- **The warmer the weather, the better I feel**. (= If the weather is warmer, I feel better.)
- **The sooner we leave, the sooner we will get there**.
- **The younger you are, the easier it is to learn**.
- **The more expensive the hotel, the better the service**.
- **The more electricity you use, the higher your bill will be**.
- **The more I thought about the plan, the less I liked it**.

E

Older and elder

The comparative of old is **older**:

- Tom looks **older** than he really is.

You can use **elder** (or **older**) when you talk about people in a family:

- My **elder** sister is a doctor. (or My **older** sister . . .)

We say "elder sister," but we do not say that somebody is elder:

- My sister is **older** than I am. (*not elder* than I am)

Exercises

102.1 Use the words in parentheses to complete the sentences. Use *much / a bit*, etc. + a comparative form. Use *than* where necessary.

1. Her illness was *much more serious than* _____ we thought at first. (much / serious)
2. This bag is too small. I need something _____. (much / big)
3. I'm afraid the problem is _____ it seems. (much / complicated)
4. You looked depressed this morning, but you look _____ now. (a little / happy)
5. I enjoyed our visit to the museum. It was _____ I expected. (far / interesting)
6. You're driving too fast. Could you drive _____? (a little / slowly)
7. It's _____ to learn a foreign language in the country where it is spoken. (a lot / easy)
8. I thought she was younger than I am, but in fact she's _____. (slightly / old)

102.2 Complete the sentences using *any/no* + a comparative. Use *than* where necessary.

1. I'm tired of waiting. I'm not waiting *any longer* _____.
2. I'm sorry I'm late, but I couldn't get here _____.
3. This store isn't expensive. The prices are _____ anywhere else.
4. I need to stop for a rest. I can't walk _____.
5. The traffic isn't particularly bad today. It's _____ usual.

102.3 Complete the sentences using the structure in Section C.

1. It's becoming *harder and harder* _____ to find a job. (hard)
2. That hole in your sweater is getting _____ . (big)
3. My bags seemed to get _____ as I carried them. (heavy)
4. As I waited for my interview, I became _____ . (nervous)
5. As the day went on, the weather got _____ . (bad)
6. Health care is becoming _____ . (expensive)
7. Since she has been in Canada, her English has gotten _____ . (good)
8. As the conversation went on, he became _____ . (talkative)

102.4 These sentences are like those in Section D. Use the words in parentheses (in the correct form) to complete the sentences.

1. I like warm weather. The warmer the weather, *the better I feel* _____ . (feel)
2. I didn't really like him when we first met.
But the more I got to know him, _____ . (like)
3. If you're in business, you want to make a profit.
The more goods you sell, _____ . (profit)
4. It's hard to concentrate when you're tired.
The more tired you are, _____ . (hard)
5. She had to wait a very long time.
The longer she waited, _____ . (impatient / become)

102.5 Which is correct, *older* or *elder*? Or both of them?

1. My older / elder sister is a doctor. (*older* and *elder* are both correct)
2. I'm surprised Diane is only 25. I thought she was older / elder.
3. Ann's younger brother is still in school. Her older / elder brother is a pilot.
4. Martin is older / elder than his brother.