

Superlatives – *the longest / the most enjoyable, etc.*

A

Study these examples:

- What is the **longest** river in the world?
- What is the **most enjoyable** vacation you've ever had?

Longest and most enjoyable are *superlative* forms.

B

The superlative form is **-est** or **most . . .** In general, we use **-est** for short words and **most . . .** for longer words. (The rules are the same as those for the *comparative* – see Unit 101.)

long → longest	hot → hottest	easy → easiest	hard → hardest
<i>but</i> most famous	most boring	most difficult	most expensive

These *adjectives* are irregular:

good → best	bad → worst	far → farthest/furthest
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For spelling, see Appendix 5.

C

We normally use **the** before a superlative (**the longest / the most famous, etc.**):

- Yesterday was **the hottest** day of the year.
- That movie was really boring. It was **the most boring** movie I've ever seen.
- She is a really nice person – one of **the nicest** people I know.
- Why does he always come to see me at **the worst** possible moment?

Compare:

- This hotel is **the cheapest** in town. (*superlative*)
- This hotel is **cheaper** than all the others in town. (*comparative*)

D

Oldest and eldest

The superlative of **old** is **oldest**:

- That church is **the oldest** building in the town. (*not* the eldest)

You can use **eldest** or **oldest** to talk about people in a family:

- My **eldest** son is 13 years old. (*or* My **oldest** son)
- Are you **the eldest** in your family? (*or* **the oldest**)

E

After superlatives we use **in** with places (towns, buildings, etc.):

- What is the longest river **in the world**? (*not* of the world)
- We had a great room. It was one of the nicest **in the hotel**. (*not* of the hotel)

We also use **in** for organizations and groups of people (a class, a company, etc.):

- Who is the best student **in the class**? (*not* of the class)

We normally use **of** for a period of time:

- What was the happiest day **of your life**?
- Yesterday was the hottest day **of the year**.

F

We often use the *present perfect* (I have done) after a superlative (see also Unit 8A):

- What's the best movie **you've ever seen**?
- That was the most delicious meal **I've had** in a long time.

Exercises

104.1 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (-est or most . . .) + a preposition.

1. It's a very nice room. It's the nicest room in the hotel.
2. It's a very cheap restaurant. It's _____ the town.
3. It was a very happy day. It was _____ my life.
4. She's a very intelligent student. She _____ the class.
5. It's a very valuable painting. It _____ the gallery.
6. Spring is a very busy time for me. It _____ the year.

In the following sentences use *one of* + a superlative + a preposition.

7. It's a very nice room. It is one of the nicest rooms in the hotel.
8. He's a very rich man. He's one _____ the world.
9. It's a very old house. It _____ our street.
10. It's a very good college. It _____ the state.
11. It was a very bad experience. It _____ my life.
12. He's a very dangerous criminal. He _____ the country.

104.2 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (-est or most . . .) or a comparative (-er or more . . .).

1. We stayed at the cheapest hotel in town. (cheap)
2. Our hotel was cheaper than all the others in the town. (cheap)
3. The United States is very large, but Canada is _____ . (large)
4. What's _____ river in the world? (long)
5. He was a little depressed yesterday, but he looks _____ today. (happy)
6. It was an awful day. It was _____ day of my life. (bad)
7. What is _____ sport in your country? (popular)
8. Everest is _____ mountain in the world. It is _____ than any other mountain. (high)
9. We had a great vacation. It was one of _____ vacations we've ever had. (enjoyable)
10. I prefer this chair to the other one. It's _____ . (comfortable)
11. What's _____ way of getting from here to the bus station? (quick)
12. Mr. and Mrs. Brown have three daughters. _____ is 14 years old. (old)

104.3 What do you say in these situations? Use a superlative + . . . ever . . . Use the words given in parentheses (in the correct form).

1. You've just been to the movies. The movie was extremely boring. You tell your friend: (boring / movie / see) That's the most boring movie I've ever seen.
2. Your friend has just told you a joke, which you think is very funny. You say: (funny / joke / hear) That's _____.
3. You're drinking coffee with a friend. It's really good coffee. You say: (good / coffee / taste) This _____.
4. You are talking to a friend about Mary. Mary is very patient. You tell your friend about her: (patient / person / meet) She _____.
5. You have just run ten miles. You've never run farther than this. You say to your friend: (far / run) That _____.
6. You decided to quit your job. Now you think this was a bad mistake. You say to your friend: (bad / mistake / make) It _____.
7. Your friend meets a lot of people, some of them famous. You ask your friend: (famous / person / meet) Who _____?