

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are the describing words used for a noun and add to the meaning of a noun (or pronoun). In other words, words used with a noun to describe it (kind, place, number, etc) are called adjectives. The word 'adjective' means 'added to'. Adjectives are one of the main parts of speech of the English language.

Kinds of Adjectives

Adjectives are of five kinds.

1. Descriptive or Quality Adjectives

These words show the kind of quality of a person or thing.

For example: *clever* girl, *big* house, *kind* man, *red* apples.

2. Possessive adjectives

These are words which show or hint at a sense of belonging

For example: *my* pen, *our* country, *your* name, *his* book, *her* dog, *their* house.

3. Demonstrative adjectives

These are the words which 'point out' at something or someone (like demonstrative pronouns)

For example: *this* book, *these* pens, *that* man, *those* trees

4. Interrogative adjectives

These are words which ask about the noun

For example: Which umbrella is yours?, Whose pencil is this?, What book are you reading?

5. Adjectives of quantity

These are words which describe quantity. It includes all the numerals.

For example: *four* chairs, *all* men, *every* boy, *both* houses, *many* flowers, *enough* money

Comparison Of Adjectives or Degrees Of Adjectives

(a) Read these sentences:

1. My dress is good.
2. Your dress is better than mine.
3. Ram's dress is the best of all.

In *sentence 1*, the adjective 'good' merely tells us that my dress has the quality of goodness without telling how much of this quality it has.

In *sentence 2*, the adjective 'better' tells us that 'your dress' compared to 'mine' has more of that quality of goodness.

In *sentence 3*, the adjective 'best' tells us that Ram's dress has the great-est amount of that quality of goodness.

Thus it is clear that an Adjective undergoes a change of form to show comparison.

The Adjective 'good' is said to be in **Positive Degree**.

The Adjective 'better' is said to be in **Comparative Degree**.

The Adjective 'best' is said to be in **Superlative Degree**.

Note: 'Superlative Degree' generally has the definite article 'the' before it.

However, the Superlative with *most* is sometimes used without any idea of comparison. In that sense the speaker wants to indicate the possession of a quality in a very high degree. In such case 'the' is not used.

It is most unfortunate.

He made a most eloquent speech.

His style is most original.

This usage is called 'Superlative of Eminence or the 'Absolute Superlative'.

Formation of Comparative and Superlative

(a) Most adjectives of one syllable and some of more than one, form the comparative by adding 'er' and the superlative by adding 'est' to the positive.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Deep	deeper	deepest
High	higher	highest
Hard	harder	hardest
Kind	kinder	kindest
Poor	poorer	poorest

(b) When the Positive ends in 'e' only 'er' & 'st' are added.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Able	abler	ablest
Brave	braver	bravest
Fine	finer	finest
Large	larger	largest
Noble	nobler	noblest

(c) When the Positive ends in 'y', preceded by a consonant, 'y' is changed into 'i' before adding 'er' or 'est'.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Dirty	dirtier	dirtiest
Early	earlier	earliest
Easy	easier	easiest
Happy	happier	happiest
Heavy	heavier	heaviest

(d) When the positive is a word of one syllable and ends in a single consonant preceded by a 'ing', 'er' or 'est' short vowel, this consonant is doubled before add-

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Big	bigger	biggest
Fat	fatter	fattest
Hot	hotter	hottest
Red	redder	reddest
Sad	sadder	saddest

(e) Adjectives of more than two syllables form the comparative and superlative by putting more and most before the positive.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
Courageous	more courageous	most courageous
Difficult	more difficult	most difficult
Industrious	more industrious	most industrious

(f) The following Adjectives can take either er and est or more and most

polite	simple	feeble	gentle	narrow
cruel	common	handsome	pleasant	stupid

He is the most cruel person

or

He is the cruellest person.

Similarly

Question no. 2 is simpler than question no. 1.

or

Question no. 2 is more simple than question no. 1.

(g) The comparative is not used when we compare two qualities in the same person or thing.

He is more kind than rich.

Not

He is kinder than rich.

Irregular Comparison

In the case of some adjectives, the Comparative and Superlative **are** not formed from the positive.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Good, well	better	best
Bad, evil, ill	worse	worst
Little	less, lesser	least
Much, many	more	most
Late	later, latter	latest, last
Old	older	oldest
Far	farther	farthest