Comparing with comparatives

E2-L1 ESOL

Name _____ Date _____

What is a Comparative?

A comparative is a way to show the difference between two things. When we want to compare two things to see which one has more or less of a certain quality, we often use the "er" ending.

Two sisters - Hugh Whitaker, Getty Images.

One sister is older than the other.
One sister is younger than the other.

Which one is the older sister?
Which one is the younger sister?

Comparatives with "er"

How Does "er" Work?

We add "-er" to the end of an adjective (a word that describes something) to show that one thing has more of that quality than another.

For example:

- **tall → taller** ("John is taller than Sam.")
- **small → smaller** ("This apple is smaller than that one.")

Note: Although it is common to say an adjective describes something, you can also say it adds more information about something.

So, what are the rules?

*For exceptions, please read page 3

For most single syllable adjectives:

Simply add "-er".

- **fast → faster** ("A cheetah is faster than a rabbit.")
- **cold → colder** ("Today is colder than yesterday.")

Note: For short words ending in 'y' (for example, 'dry', 'easy') you replace the 'y' with 'i' before you add

Complete the short exercise below before moving on.

Exercise 1: Fill in the blanks with the correct comparative form.

1. My dog is _____ (small) than my cat.
2. This test is _____ (easy) than the last one.
3. Sarah is _____ (tall) than her sister.
4. It is getting _____ (hot) every day.
5. Your house is _____ (big) than mine.

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Adjectives ending in "e"

Just add "r".

- **nice → nicer** ("Your handwriting is nicer than mine.")
- **large → larger** ("My house is larger than yours.")

https://www.stefanoorazzini.com/photo-image-2/burano-square

One syllable **adjectives ending with one vowel + one consonant** (such as **'**big'):
Double the consonant and add "-er".

- **big → bigger** ("This cake is bigger than that one.")
- **hot → hotter** ("The sun is hotter in the afternoon.")

The yellow house is larger / bigger than the others.
It is taller.
Note: Don't use 'more' with these short adjectives.
For example, '~~more bigger~~' is incorrect.

Adjectives with two or more syllables (like 'careful')
Do not add "er". Instead, use "more" before the adjective.

- **careful → more careful** ("She is more careful than her brother.")
- **beautiful → more beautiful** ("This painting is more beautiful than the other one.")

Complete Exercise 2 before moving on.

Exercise 2: Choose the correct comparative.

1. My new car is (faster / fast) _____ than my old one.
2. Today is (colder / more cold) _____ than yesterday.
3. This movie is (more exciting / excitinger) _____ than the book.
4. My homework is (harder / more hard) _____ than yours.
5. The blue dress is (nicer / more nice) _____ than the red one.

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Exceptions

As always, there are some exceptions to understand.
Some words change completely:

- **good → better** ("This book is better than that one.")
- **bad → worse** ("My old phone is worse than my new one.")

Adjectives that are always comparative:

- Some adjectives imply a comparison and do not need an "-er" or "more."
- Examples: "superior," "inferior," "senior," "junior." You may notice these words already have an ‘er’ sounding end.

Complete this final exercise.

Exercise 3: Write sentences comparing these pairs.

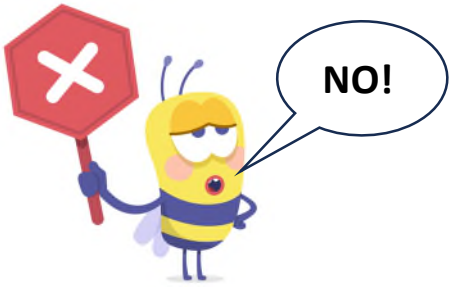
1. A mouse and an elephant

2. Winter and summer

3. A bicycle and a car

4. Two people in this room

5. Hands



Remember:
You do not use ‘more’ with the ‘er’ suffix.

“My dog is ~~more~~ bigger than yours”. **NO!**

This resource complements the *Super Superlatives** resource that is also available on Skillsworkshop. Use them together to complete your understanding about the way English is used to show and explain differences.
*Super Superlatives includes help with understanding syllables.