

# 45 Comparison of adjectives

## A Sample sentences

Working in a factory is more dangerous than working in a chemical laboratory.  
 There is a higher risk of accidents in a factory than in a chemical laboratory.  
 Flammable materials have a lower flash point and must be handled with more care.  
 A bipolar transistor is the most common form of transistor.  
 A bit is the smallest unit of binary data.

## B Form

Many *adjectives* have three forms: positive, comparative and superlative.

*Manson's factory is **noisy**.* (positive adjective)

*Burton's factory is **noisier than** Manson's.* (comparative adjective)

*Denham's factory is **the noisiest**.* (superlative adjective)

- 1 If the positive adjective has one syllable, we form the comparative by adding *-er* and the superlative by adding *-est*:

<i>positive</i>	<i>comparative</i>	<i>superlative</i>
safe	safer	safest
clean	cleaner	cleanest

If we compare two objects, we use *than* in the comparison:

*Burton's factory is noisier **than** Manson's.*

If we compare more than two objects, we use *the* in the superlative.

*Denham's factory is **the noisiest**.*

- 2 If the positive adjective has two syllables and ends in *-y*, *-ow* or *-le*, we form the comparative by adding *-er* and the superlative by adding *-est*:

<i>positive</i>	<i>comparative</i>	<i>superlative</i>
healthy	healthier*	healthiest*
narrow	narrower	narrowest
simple	simpler	simplest

\*in two syllable adjectives ending in *-y*, the *-y* changes to *-i* in the comparative and the superlative

- 3 For other adjectives with two syllables or more, we form the comparative with *more* and the superlative with *most*:

<i>positive</i>	<i>comparative</i>	<i>superlative</i>
dangerous	more dangerous	most dangerous
flammable	more flammable	most flammable

- 4 There is a small group of adjectives with irregular comparative and superlative forms:

<i>positive</i>	good	bad	little	much	far
<i>comparative</i>	better	worse	less	more	farther/furthest
<i>superlative</i>	best	worst	least	most	farthest/furthest

## C Uses

- 1 If we compare two objects, we use *than* in the comparison:  
*TV's today are smaller than ever before.*
- 2 If we compare more than two objects, we use *the* in the superlative:  
*Today we have the cheapest and the most reliable electronic appliances.*

**1** Complete the table.

adjective	comparative	superlative
accurate	<i>more accurate</i>	<i>the most accurate</i>
pure		
stable		
hard		
heavy		
thin		
far		
impractical		
bad		

**2** Five of the sentences below contain a mistake. Find the mistake and correct it.

- This silk fabric is the best quality we produce.
- Following the fire, many more people have been affected by smoke as we had originally thought.
- Pollution of the ground is most serious in area A than in area B.
- Please wear ear protection because it's noisier here than in the other areas.
- The locked cabinet contains some of most poisonous chemicals there are.
- That was the loudest explosion I've ever heard.
- These chemicals should be kept in good containers than these.
- Sending the goods by air is certainly the most quick but it's also the most expensive.

**3** Use the information from the table to complete the sentences below.

Bridge	Type of bridge	Length of span	
		in metres	Built
Humber Bridge, England	suspension	1410	1981
Golden Gate Bridge, USA	suspension	1280	1937
Verrazano Narrows, USA	suspension	1298	1964
Quebec Bridge, Canada	cantilever	549	1917
Firth of Forth Railway Bridge, Scotland	cantilever	521	1890
Commodore John Barry, USA	cantilever	501	1974
New River Gorge, USA	steel arch	518	1981
Sydney Harbour Bridge, Australia	steel arch	509	1932

The Humber Bridge is the (a) \_\_\_\_\_ (long) bridge listed in the table above. It is (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (long) than the Golden Gate Bridge in the USA but it isn't as (c) \_\_\_\_\_ (old). The Verrazano Narrows Bridge in the USA is (d) \_\_\_\_\_ (new) than the Golden Gate Bridge but (e) \_\_\_\_\_ (old) than the Humber Bridge. The (f) \_\_\_\_\_ (long) cantilever bridge is the Quebec Bridge in Canada. It is 28 metres (g) \_\_\_\_\_ (long) than the Firth of Forth Railway Bridge in Scotland which is over 110 years (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (old). The (i) \_\_\_\_\_ (new) cantilever bridge is the Commodore John Barry which is also the (j) \_\_\_\_\_ (short). The Sydney Harbour Bridge is (k) \_\_\_\_\_ (short) and (l) \_\_\_\_\_ (old) than the New River Gorge.