

10 Comparison of adjectives

Adjectives are often used to compare people or things. The three degrees of comparison are known as positive, comparative and superlative:

positive	comparative	superlative
schön (<i>nice</i>)	schöner (<i>nicer</i>)	der schönste (<i>the nicest</i>)
schnell (<i>fast</i>)	schneller (<i>faster</i>)	der schnellste (<i>the fastest</i>)

10.1 The positive

The positive form is used in comparisons of the type **so ... wie** (*as ... as*), **genauso/ebenso ... wie** (*just as ... as*) and **nicht so ... wie** (*not as ... as*):

Ein Bild ist so schön wie das andere.	<i>One picture is as beautiful as the next.</i>
Das Kleid ist nicht so eng wie das andere.	<i>This dress is not as tight as the other one.</i>

10.2 The comparative

The comparative is formed by adding **-er** to the positive form (e.g. **schnell + er**). The word **als** is usually used for *than*:

Dieser Anzug ist bequemer als der schwarze.	<i>This suit is more comfortable than the black one.</i>
Der Zug ist schneller als das Auto.	<i>The train is faster than the car.</i>

Less than is expressed by the comparative form of **wenig** (**weniger**) plus the positive form of the adjective and **als**:

Sie ist weniger dogmatisch als er.	<i>She is less dogmatic than he is.</i>
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The comparative is also used in the following expressions:
Du wirst **immer** größer. *You're getting taller and taller.*

Je größer du wirst,
desto/umso schöner
bist du.

*The taller you get, the more
beautiful you are.*

When the adjective immediately precedes a noun, the appropriate adjective ending (9.2) is added to the comparative:

Dieser Zug ist schneller. *This train is faster.*
Ist das der schnellere Zug? *Is that the faster train?*
Gibt es einen schnelleren Zug? *Is there a faster train?*

10.3 The superlative

The superlative is formed by adding **-st** plus the appropriate adjective ending (9.2) to the positive form:

Das ist die schnellste Verbindung. *That's the fastest connection.*
Meinen schönsten Urlaub habe ich im Schwarzwald verbracht. *I spent my best holiday in the Black Forest.*

If the adjective is separated from the noun, **der**, **die**, **das** is generally used with superlatives plus the appropriate ending:

Klaus ist **der** schnellste (Läufer *understood*). *Klaus is the fastest.*
Katarina ist **die** fleißigste (Studentin *understood*). *Katarina is the most hard-working.*

But where no following noun is understood, especially where something is being compared with itself, **am** is used and the ending **-en** is added:

Hier ist die Mosel **am** tiefsten. *The Mosel is deepest here.*
Das Wetter war gestern **am** schönsten. *We had the nicest weather yesterday.*

This form is the same as the superlative of adverbs (12.3).