

Time to Compare

Using Degree in Adjectives and Adverbs

Reading and Discussion

Have you ever wanted to compare one thing to another? If so, adverbs and adjectives can help. We use three **degrees** when comparing one thing to another:

1. **positive**
2. **comparative**
3. **superlative**

Adjectives or adverbs can be compared either **up** or **down**. For example, a person can be taller (comparing up), or less tall (comparing down) than someone else.

To compare **adjectives** upwards there are a few simple rules to follow. When comparing in the **positive degree**, we are usually talking about the **quality** of one thing. Adjectives in **positive degree** use the root word. The adjective **big**, for example.

- What a **big** pumpkin!

When adjectives are used in **comparative degree**, we are comparing two people, things, places, or animals. The comparative degree is usually formed by adding **er** to the root form of the word. For instance, **bigger**.

- This is a **bigger** pumpkin than last year.

In this sentence, we are comparing this year's pumpkin to last year's pumpkin. If an adjective is one or two syllables and ends in **y**, change the **y** to **i** and add **er** for the comparative degree, and **est** for the superlative degree.

1. I have a **happy** kitten. Positive degree
2. My kitten is **happier** than Sarah's kitten. Comparative degree
3. My kitten is the **happiest** kitten in the world. Superlative degree

If a one-syllable or a two-syllable adjective already ends in **e**, just add **r** or **st**.

1. Jake is a **large** dog. Positive degree
2. Jake is a **larger** dog than Mr. Simmons' dog. Comparative degree
3. Jake is the **largest** dog in the neighborhood. Superlative degree

If an adjective is longer than two syllables, we must place the word **more** in front of it to form the comparative degree. For example, **more beautiful**. When using the superlative degree, we are comparing more than two things. The superlative degree is usually formed by adding **est** to the root word **if** the adjective is one or two syllables.

Name _____

Date _____

- That is the **biggest** pumpkin in the whole garden!

When using the **superlative degree** with words of more than two syllables, we must add the word **most** to form the superlative degree. For example, **most beautiful**. To compare adjectives downward, use the word **less** for the comparative and **least** for the superlative.

- Susan is **less talkative** than Amanda. Comparative degree.
- Susan is the **least talkative** girl in the class. Superlative degree.

Adverbs can also be compared just like adjectives.

1. Positive degree. Adverbs in this degree are used to modify a single verb, adjective or adverb. Like adjectives, they use the root form of the word.

- Jackson ran **fast** to win the three-mile dash.

2. Comparative degree. Adverbs in this degree are used to compare two people, places, or things. Some adverbs add **er** to form the comparative degree.

- Jackson ran **faster** than Bill and Brian to win the three-mile dash.

If an adverb has more than one syllable, use the word **more** in front of the adverb.

- Jackson ran **more quickly** than Bill to cross the finish line.

3. Superlative degree. Adverbs in this degree are used to compare more than two people, places or things. We must add **est** to adverbs of one syllable.

- Jackson ran **the quickest** of all the runners at the meet.

All adverbs are compared downward by using the word **less** for the comparative degree and **least** for the superlative degree.

- Jackson is less fast than James on the hundred-yard dash. Comparative.
- Of all the boys on the track team, Jackson is the least likely to lose. Superlative.

Like irregular verbs, some adverbs do not follow the same rules.

Name _____

Date _____

Activities

Activity A: Let's Review

1. Adjectives and adverbs are compared in three degrees. What are the three degrees?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

2. Change the following words into **comparative degree** by using a word to compare them **upward**. Write the words on the blank line after the adjective or adverb.

a) thoughtful _____

b) interesting _____

c) quickly _____

d) rapidly _____

3. Change the following words into **superlative degree** by using a word to compare them **downward**.

a) cooperative _____

b) likely _____

c) beautiful _____

Name _____

Date _____

Answer Key

Activity A

1. Adjectives and adverbs are compared in three degrees. What are the three degrees?
 - a) Positive
 - b) Comparative
 - c) Superlative
2. Change the following words into **comparative degree** by using a word to compare them **upward**. Write the word on the blank line before the adjective or adverb.
 - a) more thoughtful
 - b) more interesting
 - c) more quickly
 - d) more rapidly
3. Change the following words into **superlative degree** by using a word to compare them **downward**.
 - a) least cooperative
 - b) least likely
 - c) least beautiful