

Comparatives and superlatives

English A2

What this topic teaches

Comparing things: Chinese uses – . English changes the adjective itself: **taller** *than*. And for the winner of the whole group, the **superlative** : *the tallest*.

- **Comparative** : comparing two: *My bag is heavier than yours*.
- **Superlative**: the top of the group: *He is the tallest in the class*.
- Memory hook: the comparative is a fight between two; the superlative is a trophy ceremony.
- *good* → *better* → *best*: the only ladder where every step is proud of itself.

Comparatives: -er or more

Adjective	The rule	Example
short (one syllable)	add -er	tall → taller, fast → faster
ends in -y	y → ier	happy → happier, easy → easier
short vowel + consonant	double the consonant	big → bigger, hot → hotter
long (two+ syllables)	more + adjective	more beautiful, more expensive

- Then **than**: *I am taller **than** my brother*. The fight needs an opponent.
- The same panic-doubling you know from *running* and *stopped*: short verbs and adjectives double; long ones stay calm.
- △ Never both: “*more taller*” ×. One marker per adjective; the fight doesn’t need two referees .

Superlatives: the trophy ceremony

Adjective	The rule	Example
short	the + -est	the tallest, the fastest
-y	the + y → iest	the happiest, the easiest
long	the most + adjective	the most beautiful

- Superlatives always wear **the**: *the tallest*, never “*tallest*”. The trophy comes with a ceremony; the ceremony is *the*.
- The group follows with *in* or *of*: *the tallest **in** the class*, *the best student **of** the year*.
- Irregulars: *good* → *better* → *the best*; *bad* → *worse* → *the worst*; *far* → *further* → *the furthest*. Three rebels, one trophy each.

much, a little, far: strength words

- Strengthen a comparative with *much* or *far*: **much** taller, **far** better.
- Soften it with *a little* or *a bit*: **a little** older.
- Δ *very* cannot touch a comparative: “*very taller*” $\times$. *very* is for plain adjectives only: *very tall* $\checkmark$. *very* and *-er* are in different weight classes.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- Δ **Don’t double-mark.** *Bǐ* already means comparison, so “*more taller than*” sneaks in. English marks once: *taller than*. One referee.
- Δ **than is not optional.** “*I am taller my brother*” $\times$ – the fight needs its referee word: *taller **than** my brother*.
- Δ **the is not optional either.** “*He is tallest in class*” drops the ceremony. *He is **the** tallest in the class*.
- Δ **Bǐ-sentences put the comparison early; English puts it late.** (I, compared-with brother, tall) $\rightarrow$ *I am taller than my brother*. The order flips, the meaning survives.

Say it aloud

Compare your life, honestly.

- My phone is older than yours, and slower, and somehow more expensive to repair.
- Monday is the longest day of the week. Science cannot prove it, but everyone knows.
- The best noodles in this city are near the school. This is not an opinion. This is a superlative.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. *My bag is _____ (heavy) than yours.* – **heavier**. -y dances to -ier, then *than*.
2. *She is _____ (beautiful) girl in the class.* – **the most beautiful**. Long adjective, trophy ceremony.
3. “*more faster*” – $\times \rightarrow$ **faster**. One referee per fight.
4. *This test was _____ (bad) than the last one.* – **worse**. A rebel: good–better–best, bad–worse–worst.
5. *Wǒ bǐ wǒ gēge gāo.* – **I am taller than my brother**. The comparison moves to the end; the meaning survives.