

Language of comparison

Comparatives and superlatives are used to express degrees of comparison

Comparatives are used to show the difference between two things:

*Auckland is **better than** Wellington*

Superlatives are used to show the greatest degree of a quality or quantity among three or more things.

*It is **the most exciting** city in NZ.*

Comparatives are formed by adding the suffix “**er**” or the preceding word “**more.**”

Superlatives are formed by adding the suffix “**est**” or the preceding word “**most.**”

The correct comparative and superlative forms of an adjective depend on the number of syllables in the adjective

	comparative	superlative
Adjectives of one syllable: cheap, fast, large, weak	... er than cheaper, faster, larger, weaker	(the) ...est cheapest, fastest, largest, weakest
Adjectives of three or more syllables: convenient, efficient, suitable	more ... than less ... than more suitable than,	(the) most (the) least the least suitable
Adjectives that have two syllables follow one or other of the above rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those ending with “<i>ful</i>” or “<i>re</i>” • Those ending with “<i>y</i>”, “<i>er</i>”, “<i>le</i>” or “<i>ow</i>”: heavy, clever, simple narrow, gentle, 	more doubtful more obscure heavier, cleverer, simpler, narrower, gentler	most doubtful most obscure heaviest, cleverest, simplest, narrowest, gentlest
Irregular forms: good bad far far little	better worse farther further less	(the) best (the) worst (the) farthest (the) furthest (the) least

There are 3 types of comparison

- 1 **to a higher degree** (comparative form + **than**)
 - The investors are **more concerned** about economic issues **than** environmental ones.
 - This strategy is **better than** the previous one.

- 2 **to the same degree** (**as.....as** in the affirmative; **not as as** in the negative)
 - The price is **as good as** the original quote.
 - This week's results are **not as** relevant **as** the ones from last week.

- 3 **to a lower degree** (**less + than** and **the least**)
 - It was far **less** of an issue **than** the original problem.
 - It was **the least** difficult question to answer.

Balancing contrasting points

however, while, whereas

These expressions are used to balance two facts or ideas that contrast

- Upfront costs are relatively low; **however**, long-term maintenance and replacement costs need to be considered.
- **While/whereas** limestone and schist are readily available in most parts of New Zealand, the availability of imported products is limited.

Emphasising a contrast

Despite, in spite of +noun

- **Despite/in spite of** the galvanisation process of steel, steel framing can rust if it is exposed to moisture.
- Steel framing is galvanised to increase rust resistance. **In spite of this**, moisture can get through and cause rust.