

# UNIT 9 Using adjectives

## Comparative and superlative adjectives

Adjectives take different forms when two or more things are being compared.

- 1 The **comparative** form is used when two things are being compared.
  - The comparative form of most short adjectives is made by adding **-er**.  
I am **taller** than my sister.
  - The comparative form of most adjectives of two or more syllables is formed by adding **more** before the adjective.  
I am **more energetic** than my father.
- 2 The **superlative** form is used when more than two things are being compared.
  - The superlative form of most short adjectives is made by adding **-est**.  
I am the **tallest** of the three children in our family.
  - The superlative form of most adjectives of two or more syllables is formed by adding **most** before the adjective.  
Jill is the **most creative** of the three sisters.

Some adjectives are irregular and take a different form in the comparative and superlative.

He is **good** at sport. I am **better** at basketball.  
She is **best** at cricket.  
A cold is **bad**. Flu is **worse**. Pneumonia is the **worst**.

### Punctuating adjectives

When using adjectives in your writing, be careful to punctuate them correctly. Use commas

between adjectives in a list that precede a noun, but not after the last one.

We were served **dry, tasteless, stale** bread.

### Choosing adjectives

- Use specific and interesting adjectives rather than general ones.  
specific: **adventure** book, **bedside** lamp, **oak** tree, **skiing** holiday  
general: **new** book, **old** lamp, **large** tree, **interesting** holiday
- When choosing an adjective, look at the range possible.  
**blue, pale blue, sky blue, aquamarine, cobalt**
- Do not overuse adjectives. It is possible to write well using no adjectives at all.  
They **saw me** climbing the fence and charged in my direction. I knew that animals can sense fear and that I should just ignore them.

Some adjectives do not have a superlative or comparative form because they describe things that cannot be compared.

**unique, dead, right, equal, empty, perfect, square**

## Practice

- 1 Choose the correct form of the adjective in brackets to complete each sentence.

- a This is the \_\_\_\_\_ cake I have ever eaten. (**tasty, tastier, tastiest**)
- b Freya's top was the \_\_\_\_\_ of them all. (**dirty, dirtier, dirtiest**)
- c Miffy is the \_\_\_\_\_ of our two cats. (**thin, thinner, thinnest**)
- d Mr Brown is the \_\_\_\_\_ teacher at our school. (**kind, kinder, kindest**)

- 2 Use the correct form of the adjective to complete each sentence.

- a My bike is \_\_\_\_\_ than yours (**good, better, best**)
- b Jacob's was the \_\_\_\_\_ of all the class projects. (**bad, worse, worst**)

- c Marg has the \_\_\_\_\_ behaviour of the three friends. (good, better, best)
- d My drawing is \_\_\_\_\_ than my brother's. (bad, worse, worst)

- 3** Complete the chart with the comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives in the first column.

Positive form	Comparative form	Superlative form
<i>Examples:</i> hot water a dangerous job	hotter water a more dangerous job	hottest water the most dangerous job
a sad news		
b aggressive crowds		
c a puzzling sight		
d a long conversation		
e strong muscles		
f a brilliant idea		

- 4** Work in small groups to put these adjectives in the order suggested.

- a From the quietest to the noisiest:

noisy, lively, loud, uproarious, thundering, piercing, rowdy, quiet, silent

\_\_\_\_\_

- b From the smallest to the largest:

minute, colossal, huge, tiny, small, big, microscopic, undersized, gigantic, massive

\_\_\_\_\_

- c From the weakest to the strongest:

forceful, delicate, mighty, frail, powerful, feeble, weak

\_\_\_\_\_

- d From the least to the most pleasant:

delightful, adorable, attractive, beautiful, charming, enchanting, lovely, nice

\_\_\_\_\_

- 5** Use as many adjectives as possible to complete this dossier. You might like to present it as a poster about one of your friends.

**Wanted:** (list the person's name)

**Height and build:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hair:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Eyes:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Skin:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Clothing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other details:** \_\_\_\_\_