

# THE ADJECTIVE

*The Adjective* is a word expressing a quality of a substance. In English Adjectives are divided into

*qualitative* and *relative*

(denote the quality, i.e. size,  
shape, colour, state of the thing)

E.g. good/high/round/black

(denote the material, place, etc.)

E.g. golden/ wooden/  
Russian/Italian/silver/ gold(en)/iron

Qualitative Adjectives have

## I. Three degrees of comparison:

1. positive (expresses a quality without comparison)
2. comparative (denotes a higher degree of quality)
3. superlative (denotes the highest degree)

Mind the use of articles with the nouns modified by them:

**a** tall girl

**a** taller girl

**the** tallest girl (in the group)

**an** interesting book

**a** more interesting book

**the** most interesting book (I've ever read)

## II. Formation of Degrees of Comparison:

1. All adjectives of one syllable form their degrees of comparison by adding the suffix “-er” in the comparative degree and the suffix “-est” in the superlative (synthetical way).

E.g. long – longer – longest

Here belong also adjectives of 2 syllables:

- a) adjectives in “-y, -er, -ow, -ble”

E.g. busy – busier – busiest  
clever – cleverer – cleverest  
yellow – yellower – yellowest  
able – abler – ablest

- b) adjectives with the final stressed syllable:

E.g. com'plete – completer – completest  
se'vere – severer – severest

NB: All adjectives of two syllables may form their degrees of comparison by adding “more” and “most” as well.

happier – happiest  
E.g. happy <  
more happy – most happy

2. All other adjectives of two and more syllables add the word “**more**” in the comparative degree and “**most**” in the superlative (analytical way)

E.g. expensive – more expensive – most expensive

3. Some adjectives form their degrees of comparison in a special way:

- a) the following adjectives have suppletive forms of comparison:

good – better – best  
bad – worse – worst  
many } – more – most  
much }  
little – less – least

- b) the following adjectives have parallel forms of comparison, which differ in meaning:

farther – farthest (are used for distance only)  
far <  
further – furthest (are used both for distance and time)

E.g. It’s a long walk from here to the station – farther (also: “further”) than I thought.  
Let me know if you hear any further (~~farther~~) news.  
I think any further (~~farther~~) discussion is useless.

nearest (refers to space and time)  
near – nearer <  
next (means “the following”, “coming immediately after”)

E.g. What are your plans for the nearest future?  
Where is the nearest post-office?  
Read the next (=“the following”) sentence.

later – latest (refer to time)  
late <  
latter – last (refer to order)

E.g. I’d rather take a later bus.  
What’s the latest news?  
They have a son and a daughter. The latter is a schoolgirl. (2 objects)  
She has a parrot, a cat and a dog. The last is 2 years old. (3 and more objects)  
The last sentence was too long.

older – oldest (mean age)  
old <  
elder – eldest (refer to age in the same family)  
(used only  
attributively)

E.g. Tom looks older (~~elder~~) than he really is.  
 The church is the oldest (~~eldest~~) building in the town.  
 Mary and Ann are sisters. Mary is older (~~elder~~) than Ann.  
 My elder (also: "older" ) brother is a pilot.  
 Are you the eldest (also: "the oldest" ) in your family?

### III. Patterns Often Used

#### 1. with the positive degree of adjectives

- a) Nelly is as young as I am.  
 Nelly is not so young as I am.  
 Nelly is not as young as I am.

(There are a lot of idioms in English like that: as cool as a cucumber,  
 as dead as a doornail,  
 as fresh as a daisy,  
 as clear as a bell, etc.)

- b) Their house is twice as big as ours.  
 (three times)
- c) She is neither young nor old.
- d) Is she young or old? – Neither. / Either.

#### 2. with the comparative degree of adjectives

- a) Nelly is (a bit, a little, much, a lot, far, still, even, 2 years, etc.) younger than Jane.
- b) Nelly is (much, a lot, far, a little, etc.) more/less beautiful than me.
- c) the more ... the better.  
 sooner          sooner  
 less              more
- d) It's getting darker and darker.  
more and more interesting.  
 Nelly is getting fatter and fatter.

**NB:** The **Present Continuous** Tense is used to show the process.

#### 3. with the superlative degree (mind **the!**)

- a) After superlatives we use "in" with places, for organizations and groups of people.

E.g. What's the longest river in the world?  
 We had a lovely room. It was one of the nicest rooms in the hotel.  
 Who is the best student in the class? (group, team, company, etc.)

b) We normally use “**of**” for a period of time.

E.g. What is the happiest day of your life?  
 Yesterday was the hottest day of the year.

c) We often use the **Present Perfect** Tense after a superlative.

E.g. What’s the best film you’ve ever seen?  
 That’s the most delicious meal I’ve had for a long time.

d) Sometimes we use “most + adjective” to mean “**very**”

E.g. The book you lent me was most interesting. (=very interesting)

#### IV. Adjectives: Word Order

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Deter- miner	Opinion	Size	Age	Shape	Colour	Present Participle	Origin	Past Participle	Mate- rial	Purpose or Use	Noun
two	lovely				black				leather	riding	boots
their		huge		circular						swimming	pool
my							Swe- dish		wooden	salad	bowl
						quick- selling	Chi- nese	hand-made	cotton	summer	shirts
a	beau- tiful		old		brown				teak		cup- board

NB: a) Numbers **11** and **12** are in fact compound nouns, they are never separated.

b) General qualities (subjective adjectives) go before particular qualities (fact adjectives).  
 The more particular the quality, the closer the adjective is to the noun.