



Adverbs: degrees of comparison

Adverbs are often used to make **the meaning of a verb or other adverb stronger or weaker**. This is known as **'degrees of comparison'**.

Understanding degrees of comparison

There are three degrees of comparison:

- The **positive degree** is the simple form of the adverb: eg **slowly, early** ('He walked slowly.').
- The **comparative degree** is used to compare two actions: eg **slower, more slowly, earlier** ('Sarah walked more slowly than Ben.').
- The **superlative degree** is used to compare three or more: eg **slowest, earliest** ('We all take our time, but I walk the slowest of all.').

Making degrees of comparison

Adverbs of one syllable usually form the comparative by adding **-er** and form the superlative by adding **-est**.

hard (positive) - **harder** (comparative) - **hardest** (superlative)

Adverbs of two syllables or more generally form the comparative by adding **'more'** and the superlative by adding **'most'**.

quickly (positive) - **more** quickly (comparative) - **most** quickly (superlative)

Watch out! There are exceptions:

- **badly**: worse (comparative) - worst (superlative).
- **well**: better (comparative) - best (superlative).
- **far**: farther (comparative) - farthest (superlative).