Too or Enough

Meaning

1. *Too* is used to mean more than sufficient or more/less than necessary.
    - It's **too late** to stop him.
    - Jerry was **too young** to watch the movie.
    - There are **too many people** on this train, there's nowhere to sit.
    - You have **too much money**, give some to me.
    - You've eaten **too many of those** cakes.
2. *Enough* is used to mean sufficient
    - Your clothes are **big enough** to fit me.
    - You've done **enough work**. You can stop now.
    - Have you got **enough money** to buy me a drink?
3. *Enough* is used in negative sentences to mean less than sufficient or less than necessary.
    - You're **not** working **fast enough**, you won't finish on time.
    - Sorry, I have**n't** got **enough food** for everyone.
    - Not **enough of my** friends are coming to the party.

Additional points

1. *Enough* can be used without a noun if the meaning is clear.
    - There's a lot of food but not **enough** for everyone.
2. *Enough* can be replaced with *the* before a noun.
    - I don't have **the money** to go on holiday.
    - His company doesn't have **the resources** to do the job.
3. *Time* or *room* can be used alone to mean enough time or enough room.
    - Is there **room** in your car for one more person?
    - Do we have **time** for a coffee?

Underline the correct form.

1. I can't go. I don't have enough money / money enough.
2. My computer is old enough / too old and I have to buy a new one.
3. The music is playing too fast / fast enough — there must be something wrong with the CD.
4. Brian isn't really enough clever / clever enough to go to university.
5. I want some new trainers but they are too expensive / expensive enough.
6. This classroom is too small / small enough for 30 students — they won't all fit in.
7. My dad says he doesn't earn enough / enough earn to buy a yacht.
8. Her parents say their house is big enough / too small and they want to move.
9. We wanted to see more of Paris but there was too little / too few time.
10. Have we got enough food / too much food for everyone or do I need to go to the shops?

Active and Passive voices

Active voice means that a sentence has a subject that acts upon its verb. **Passive voice** means that a subject is a recipient of a verb's action. You may have learned that the passive voice is weak and incorrect, but it isn't that simple. When used correctly and in moderation, the passive voice is fine.

In English grammar, verbs have five properties: voice, mood, tense, person, and number; here, we are concerned with voice. The two grammatical voices are **active and passive**.

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What's the difference between active and passive voice?

Active voice

When the subject of a sentence performs the verb's action, we say that the sentence is in the *active voice*. Sentences in the active voice have a strong, direct, and clear tone. Here are some short and straightforward examples of active voice.

Active voice examples

Monkeys adore bananas.

The cashier counted the money.

The dog chased the squirrel.

All three sentences have a basic active voice construction: subject, verb, and object. The subject *monkey* performs the action described by *adore*. The subject *the cashier* performs the action described by *counted*. The subject *the dog* performs the action described by *chased*. The subjects are doing, doing, doing—they *take action* in their sentences. The active voice reminds us of the popular Nike slogan, "Just Do It."

Passive voice

A sentence is in the passive voice, on the other hand, when the subject is acted on by the verb. The passive voice is always constructed with a conjugated form of *to be* plus the verb's past

participle. Doing this usually generates a preposition as well. That sounds much more complicated than it is—passive voice is actually quite easy to detect. For these examples of passive voice, we will transform the three active sentences above to illustrate the difference.

Passive voice examples

Bananas are adored by monkeys.

The money was counted by the cashier.

The squirrel was chased by the dog.

Let's take a closer look at the first pair of sentences, "Monkeys adore bananas" and "Bananas are adored by monkeys." The active sentence consists of *monkeys* (subject) + *adore* (verb) + *bananas* (object). The passive sentence consists of *bananas* (object) + *are adored* (a form of *to be* plus the past participle *adored*) + *by* (preposition) + *monkeys* (subject). Making the sentence passive flipped the structure and necessitated the preposition *by*. In fact, all three of the transformed sentences above required the addition of *by*.

When to use active and passive voice

Using the active voice conveys a strong, clear tone and the passive voice is subtler and weaker. Here's some good advice: don't use the passive voice just because you think it sounds a bit fancier than the active voice.

That said, there are times the passive voice is useful and called for. Take "The squirrel was chased by the dog," for example. That sentence construction would be helpful if the squirrel were the focus of your writing and not the dog.

A good rule of thumb is to try to put the majority of your sentences in the active voice, unless you truly can't write your sentence in any other way.

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How to change a sentence in passive voice to active voice

Here is an example of a business communication that could be strengthened by abandoning the passive voice.

An error has occurred with your account, but every attempt was made to remedy it.

That sentence is not incorrect, but it does sound a bit stiff and dishonest. It sounds less trustworthy than it could—almost evasive. Who wants to do business with a company that avoids taking full responsibility by slipping into formal passive voice territory? Face the responsibility head on instead. Own it.

We made an error with your account, but we have made every attempt to remedy it.

To make that sentence active rather than passive, I identified the subject: *we*. It was "our company" that was responsible.

If there are any questions, I can be reached at the number below.

Here's a tip: What to remember: to change a sentence from passive voice into active voice, identify the subject.

The structure of this sentence is weak because it doesn't identify the subjects in either clause. Let's unveil them. Who might have questions to ask? The person being addressed: *you*. Who will be doing the reaching (by calling the number below)? It is still the communication's recipient.

The Zero Conditional

We can make a zero conditional sentence with two present simple verbs (one in the 'if clause' and one in the 'main clause'):

- If + present simple, ... present simple.

This conditional is used when the result will always happen. So, if water reaches 100 degrees, it always boils. It's a fact. I'm talking in general, not about one particular situation. The result of the 'if clause' is always the main clause.

The 'if' in this conditional can usually be replaced by 'when' without changing the meaning.

For example: If water **reaches** 100 degrees, it **boils**. (It is always true, there can't be a different result sometimes). If I **eat** peanuts, I **am** sick. (This is true only for me, maybe, not for everyone, but it's still true that I'm sick every time I eat peanuts)

Here are some more examples:

- If people **eat** too much, they **get** fat.
- If you **touch** a fire, you **get** burned.
- People **die** if they **don't eat**.
- You **get** water if you **mix** hydrogen and oxygen.

- Snakes **bite** if they **are** scared
- If babies **are** hungry, they **cry**

See this page about the first conditional to learn about the difference between the first and the zero conditionals. The first conditional is about a specific situation, but the zero is talking in general

Conditional Sentences

a. "Real" Conditionals (Zero Conditional)

Real conditionals (also called zero conditionals) are sentences expressing the real conditions for things that happen, not hypothetical things (see Imagined Conditionals). They share true statements about things that will happen or do happen in certain conditions or circumstances.

Zero conditional sentences can come in many forms. But since they are based in fact, they only share past and present situations, NOT possible future situations. So, we write them using a combination of past and present tenses.

Present Tense

In many zero conditional sentences, both clauses are in the present simple tense, like this:

- If you are happy, I am happy.
- If there is snow, we make snowmen.
- He cleans if I cook.
- f you don't mind, I need a glass of water.

But we also write them using other present tenses, like this:

Present continuous + Present simple

- If it is snowing, we don't drive.
- I eat at home if Jane is cooking dinner.

Present continuous + Present continuous

- If he is staying, I am going.
- If the plant is dying, you are not watering it.

All of these examples express that every time A happens, B happens or we do B.

Zero conditionals can also reflect situation that already happened, like this:

Past simple + Past simple

- If it snowed, we never drove.
- If we had chocolate chips, we made cookies.

Past simple + Past continuous

- We always made snowmen if it was snowing.
- If Jane was cooking, I ate at home.

b. "Imagined" Conditionals

We use imagined conditional sentences to talk about hypothetical or "imagined" conditions that are possible, likely, or even impossible. Based on the level of possibility, there are three conditionals: first, second, and third.

First Conditional

The first conditional shares the result of situation in the future that we think is pretty likely to happen. Its form uses a conditional clause in the present simple, and the main clause in the future tense. The main clause will use a modal, like *would*, *should*, *could*, *will*, *may*, *might*, or *can*. Here are some examples:

- If I sleep now, I will be up all night.
- If I do well on my SATs, I could go to Harvard.
- If you take the highway, you might hit traffic.
- If he likes cookies, you should bake some for him.

Of all the conditionals, the first conditional expresses things that are most possible or likely to happen. As we will explain, with the second and third conditionals, things become less likely or even completely imagined.

Second Conditional

The second conditional shows possible outcomes that could occur in the present or future, if specific conditions exist. To put it simply, second conditionals reflect ideas of "if you did this, this can happen." BUT, the "did" hasn't actually happened yet, it's just possible.

The second conditional's form uses a conditional clause in the past simple, and the main clause in the future tense, also using modals. Here are some examples:

- If you slept until 3pm, you shouldn't be tired.
- If you did well on the SATs, you will get accepted.
- If you wanted to avoid traffic, you could take the highway.
- If he ate all the cookies, you would have to bake more.

On a special note, the English language lets us use the past tense to reflect hypothetical situations that aren't based in reality. So, even though the second conditional uses the past tense in the conditional clause, it's expressing what could happen "if," not what did already happen. It still expresses the present and future because the ideas are only possibilities. It also helps us use more polite language like this:

- If you wanted, I could help you study.
- If you needed me to, I could pick up your dry cleaning.
- If you wouldn't mind, I could use some help.

Third Conditional

The third conditional lets us contemplate what could have happened if things went differently in the past. It lets us reflect upon things in the way of "if this had happened, this could have happened."

Its form uses the past perfect for the conditional statement, and the conditional perfect tense (*would have* + verb) for the main clause (you can also use other modals instead of *would*). Here are some examples:

- If you had gone to bed earlier, you would have been well rested.
- If you had done well on the SATs, you would have been accepted.
- If you had taken the highway, you could have avoided traffic.
- If you had made more cookies, we might have had enough.

As you can see, these sentences only reflect what possibly could have happened—not what still can or might happen.

c. Other Forms

There are several other special forms of conditions, like mixed conditionals and conditional sentences using *will* or *would*.

Mixed Conditionals

Sometimes we can mix the tenses to express conditions. Mixed conditionals reflect things that did or did not happen in the past that are still relevant now and in the future. We form a mixed conditional with the past perfect tense in the conditional statement and using *would* in the main clause of the sentence. Here are some examples:

- If I hadn't slept, I would be very tired.
- If I had made more cookies, he would be eating them.
- If there had not been traffic, I would be on time.
- If I had failed the SATs, I would not be at Harvard.

Conditionals Using Will *or* Would

In English, will and would can refer to either the present or the future. That's because we use *will* and *would* to express willingness to do something. Here are some examples:

- If you will cook, I will clean.
- If he would pick up the cookies, that would be great.
- If you would show me the way, I will be very grateful.
- If you would just stop crying, I will try to help you.

5. How to Write a Conditional Sentence

In a way, conditional sentences are some of the easiest to write because they always include certain things—particularly a conditional clause beginning with "if." We can use them for both real and imagined scenarios, and to express all kinds of possibilities and hypothetical situations. What's more, conditional sentences let us do these things by mixing together the past, present and future tenses without many restrictions.

When you want to use conditional sentences, you can just stick by these guidelines:

1. You always need 2 clauses:

- a conditional clause beginning with "if"
- a main clause

2. Present pieces of information that rely on each other:

- the goal is to show that if one thing happens, another thing will happen.

3. Choose your tenses based on 2 things:

- whether the situation is "real" or "imagined"
- if it reflects past, present or future possibilities
- Finally, here's a chart to help you see the differences between the conditionals. It's a lot to remember!

Zero (True)	First (Likely)	Second (Less Likely)	Third (Impossible)	Mixed (Possible)	Would/W (Probable
If he makes cupcakes, we eat them.	If he makes cupcakes, we will eat them.	If he made cupcakes, we would eat them.	If he had made cupcakes, we would have eaten them	If he had made cupcakes, we could be eating them.	If he wou cookies, them.

Tenses

1. The Present Tense:

(a) Simple Present Tense

(b) Present Continuous Tense

(c) Present Perfect Tense

(d) Present Perfect Continuous Tense

2. The Past Tense:

(a) Simple Past Tense

(b) Past Continuous Tense

(c) Past Perfect Tense

(d) Past Perfect Continuous Tense

3. The Future Tense:

(a) Simple Future Tense

(b) Future Continuous Tense

(c) Future Perfect Tense

(d) Future Perfect Continuous Tense

Present Tense:

Simple Present Tense is used:-

1. To express a habitual action as

I get up at 5 AM every day.

He takes exercise every morning.

2. To express a universal truth or fact e.g.

Honey is sweet.

Fortune favours the brave.

3. To express an action taking place in the immediate present.

Here comes the bus.

There she goes.

4. To indicate the present period.

He works in this office.

He has a big garden

5. To express a future fixed action.

The train starts at 5 pm.

We go to the bank next week.

6. In a vivid narrative as a substitute for a simple past.

Ram rushes forward and kicks the ball.

7. In time clauses, when it is introduced by conjunction of time such as when, while, until, till, after, as soon as, no sooner, then etc.

I shall wait till you come.

When you reach home I shall meet you.

8. In Conditional Clauses

If it rains we shall get wet.

Unless he studies, he will not pass.

We will wait, until she comes back.

9. To introduce a quotation

Shakespeare says “frailty thy name is women”

10. In exclamatory sentences beginning with here, there.

Here comes Sohan!

Present Continuous Tense is used:

1. For an action going on at the time of speaking.

The boys are playing football.

2. For a temporary solution which may not actually be happening at the time of speaking.

I am reading Tom Sawyer. (Not reading at the movement).

He is teaching English in Delhi University, (may not be teaching at the moment of speaking)

3. For an action planned in the near future.

I am going to the circus tonight.

She is being married next week.

4. For a repeated or habitual action used with an adverb like always, continually, constantly, very etc.

He is always helping the weak.

He is always coming late to office.

Present Perfect Tense is used:

1. To express an action that has just been completed; as

He has just returned from office.

The Sun has set.

2. To express past action whose time is not defined.

Have you read this book?

Mr. Ram has been to USA.

3. To express a past action the effect of which still continues

I have cut my finger.

I have finished my work.

I have lived in Delhi for ten years. (Implying that he is still living in Delhi)

4. To denote an action beginning at sometime in the past and continuing up to the present movement.

I have known him for a long time.

We have lived here for 10 years.

Also used with since and for. ‘Since’ means from that point, to the time of speaking. While ‘for’ is used for a period of time.

He has been ill since last week.

I have lived here for two years.

Present Perfect Continuous Tense is used:

1. For an action which began at sometime in the past and still continue.

They have been playing since 4 o’ clock.

2. For an unfinished action

We have been building the house

I have been working for ten years.

3. For drawing conclusions

Her eyes are red, she has been crying.

The room stinks. Someone has been frying fish here.

Past Tense:

Simple Past Tense is used in the past:

1. To indicate an action completed, often occurring with an adverb of time.

I read the letter yesterday

or Without an adverb of time. The time being implied

I didn’t sleep well.

Who left the door open?

2. For past habits or repeated actions.

He always carries a bag.

He took a long walk every morning.

3. To denote an action which continue for sometime in the past?

We studied chemistry for two years.

Past Continuous Tense is used:-

1. To denote an action going on, sometime in the past

He was listening to the radio all day.

She was weeping bitterly

2. With an adverb ‘all’ emphasizing continuity or with ‘still’ emphasizing duration

It was raining all night.

It was still raining when I woke up

3. For persistent habits in the past used with always, continually

He was always grumbling

4. Used in making polite enquiries

I was wondering if you could help me.

Past Perfect Tense is used:-

1. To describe an action completed in the past.

Mahatma Gandhi died on 30 Jan 1948.

2. However if two actions happened in the past it may be necessary to show which happened earlier. The simple past is used in one clause and the past perfect in the other.

The patient had died when the doctor arrived. (The patient was already dead when the doctor arrived)

I had written the letter before he arrived.

3. With verb to show unfulfilled hopes and wishes. Thus verbs like expect, hope, suppose, thinks, wants etc. is used to describe things we hoped to do but could not do.

I had thought to send him a letter but could not send it.

Past Perfect Continuous is used:

1. For an action that began before a certain time in the past and continued up to that time as

At that time he had been editing the newspaper for two years.

The children had been practicing for two hours till I called them out.

2. Can be used for drawing conclusions.

Her eyes were red it was obvious she had been crying all day.

Future Tense:

Simple Future Tense is used:-

1. For an action that has still to take place.

I shall see him tomorrow.

The price of goods will rise by year end.

2. Other ways of expressing the future:-

Using simple present tense for official programmes and time table.

The college opens on 10th July.

Using present continuous tense when we talk of something that we plan to do in the near future.

He is arriving this evening.

I am going to Delhi tomorrow.

Using ‘will’, ‘shall’, ‘be going to’

I will see him tomorrow.

I shall see him tomorrow.

I am going to see him tomorrow.

3. By using ‘going to’ and ‘ be about to’ to describe the speaker’s intention to do something in fairly immediate future.

I am going to think about it.

He is going to be a Doctor when he grows up.

Future Continuous Tense is used:

1. To represent an action as going on at some time in the future as

The guests will be arriving anytime from now.

2. For future events that are planned

He will be meeting us next month.

I shall be seeing the President tonight.

3. In the interrogative form this tense is used to ask a polite question.

Will you be doing it in our absence?

Future Perfect Tense:

Future Perfect Tense is used to indicate the completion of an action in a certain time in the future.

I will have returned by the year 2010.

Before you come, he will have slept.

Future Perfect Continuous Tense is used to indicate an action that is in progress over a period of time and will end in the future as

By next June we shall have been living here for four years.

Collocation

Definition

What is a collocation? learn collocation definition with useful examples.

Collocation definition: A **collocation** is **two or more words** that often **go together**. Some collocation examples are "*pay attention", "fast food", "make an effort", and "powerful engine".*

Collocations make it easier to avoid overused or ambiguous words like "very", "nice", or "beautiful", by using a pair of words that fits the context better and has a more precise meaning. Using collocations will help your English sound naturally like a native speaker.

Collocation Examples

Examples of collocations with take, get, do, make, go…

- *He had intended to **take a holiday** in New York.*
- *He wanted to see if he could **get a job** with us.*
- *I might **take a lesson** from you.*
- *My goals were to go back to school and **get a degree**.*
- *I'll **take a look** at the website and let you know what I think.*
- *He was beginning to **get angry**.*

- *Couldn't you **do a favour** and leave me alone?*
- *She should **make a** right **choice**.*
- *Could you **do a report** for me?*
- *We are to **make a contract** for a supply of raw silk with the company.*
- *I like to **do homework**.*
- *We need to **make a deal** for this project.*
- *The company is about to **go bankrupt**.*

Examples of different **types of collocations** made from combinations of verb, noun, adjective,…

- **Adverb + Adjective:** *Fully aware, Happily married, Highly controversial, Highly effective, Highly probable, Highly profitable…*
- **Adverb + Adverb:** *Only just, Pretty well, Quite a lot, Quite enough, Quite often, Right away…*
- **Adverb + Verb:** *Badly damage, Deeply rooted (in), Never knew, Quite agree…*
- **Adjective + Noun:** *Internal injury, Internal organ, Irreparable damage, Joint account, Just cause, Key issue, Key role…*
- **Adjective + Preposition:** *Comfortable with, Concerned with, Nasty of, Nervous of, Nice of, Furious about, Guilty about…*
- **Noun + Noun:** *Core values, Corporate finance, Cottage industry, Creation science, Credit bureau, Credit union…*
- **Verb + Noun:** *Go on a date, Go on a picnic, Go on foot, Have a fight, Have a fit, Have a game, Keep quiet, Keep records…*
- **Verb + Preposition:** *Allow for, Apologize for, Ask for, Object to, Pray to, Prefer to …*
- **Verb + Adverb:** *Go far, Go first, Go upstairs, Guess correctly, Hit hard, Judge harshly, Know well…*
- **Noun + Preposition:** *Date with, Dealings with, Difficulty with, Debate on, Information on, Hold on…*
- …

Examples of collocations with prepositions at, in , on, to, with ….

- *He's **brilliant at** football.*
- *They are **excellent at** planning fun parties.*
- *The teacher was **surprised at** the student's question.*
- *She has lost her **belief in** God.*
- *There was no **change in** the patient's condition overnight.*
- *I need some **lessons in** how to set up a website.*
- *I **congratulate** you **on** your new job!*
- *I **insist on** Peter's studying every day for two hours.*
- *Can we **rely on** this old car to get us there?*
- *I feel very **proud to** be a part of the team.*
- *People are **scared to** use the buses late at night.*
- *It's **nice to** know you.*
- *You are **blessed with** many talents.*
- *Don't be **careless with** your ATM card.*
- *The fall in retail sales is directly **connected with** the decline in employment.*

Verb collocation examples in sentences.

- *He **asked** her **out** to dinner.*
- *You **get wet** in the rain.*
- *I **get tired** of educating people.*
- *It's important to **get sleep** so don't stay up too long.*
- *He always **give a hand** to anyone in difficulty.*
- *I've got to get into town. Can you **give** me **a ride**?*
- *He **gave an idea** for new project so he got a promotion.*
- *It's easy to **make a mistake**.*
- *We can't undertake that you will **make a profit**.*
- *My mom always **makes** me **a sandwich** to school*
- *We need to **make an effort** to do well in this competition.*
- *The commitee has **made** serious **objections** to that plan.*
- *The old man is going to **go crazy**.*
- *As for myself I doubt I'll ever **go on a date**.*
- *I'll just **go online** and look up her address.*
- *I want to **go sailing**.*
- *I wanted to **take a break** and work on some things.*
- *We will **take a chance** to have the party outdoor.*
- *He had intended to **take a holiday** in New York.*
- *I might **take a lesson** from you.*
- *I'll **take a look** at the website and let you know what I think.*
- ***Take a rest** from your hard work.*
- ***Take a seat** while I get you something to drink.*
- *I **take a step** into the center of the circle.*
- *We don't have to **take advice** from him.*
- ***Take medicine** when you get gripes.*
- *Her mental scars will **take time** to heal.*
- *Whatever you do, slow down and **take your time**.*
- *We came to **say hello** as we were passing through.*
- *Why should I **say sorry** when it's not my fault?*
- *Can I trust you to **keep a secret**?*
- *My mother likes to **keep control** of everything.*
- *Please, **keep quite** when I'm on the phone.*
- *We have to **keep scoring** the points in the fourth quarter.*
- *You must learn to **keep your balance** in skating.*
- *"You and me, today we're going to **break a record**, " he said.*
- *Luckily, a bush **broke his fall.***
- *His son could **catch a ball** coming toward his left or right.*
- *I **caught her eye** and smiled.*
- *See you again. **Catch you later.***

Using 'Since' and "for'

The use of FOR

We use **For** when we measure the duration – when we say how long something lasts.

For + a period of time
To measure a period of time up to the present, we use the present perfect tense and not the present tense.

- I **have known** her for a long time. (Correct)
  I **know** her for a long time. (Incorrect)
- I **have lived** here for ten years. (Correct)
  I **live** here for ten years. (Incorrect)

The present tense with **For** refers to a period of time that extends into the future.

- How long are you here for? (Until when)
- How long have you been here for? (Since when)

In reality, we can use all verb tenses with **For**.

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For vs. Since

Knowing when to use **FOR** and when to use **SINCE** is important. Therefore it is useful to look at a summary of the contrast between **FOR** and **SINCE**.

FOR to mention a specific period (or duration) of time.	**SINCE to mention the starting point of a period of time (continues to now).**
I have been a doctor for fifteen years.	I have been a doctor since 1992. (starting point = 1992)

(duration = 15 years)

She has been a mother for six months.	She has been pregnant since her first child was born.
My sister has lived in Frankfurt for nine months.	My sister has lived in Frankfurt since the beginning of March.

Both **For** and **Since** are most commonly used with the perfect tense - we don't use these expressions in the present tense.

Correct	**Incorrect**
I have learnt Russian for three years.	I learn Russian for three years.
They have taught geography since last year.	They teach geography since last year.
He has owned his dog since his cat died.	He owns his dog since his cat dies.

While we can use **For** in the simple past tense we can't use **Since** in the simple past tense. **Since** can only be used in the perfect tense.

Correct	**Incorrect**
She went to Japan for three years.	She went to Japan since 2003.
I studied in New Zealand for one month.	I studied in New Zealand since one month.
He walked his dog for four hours.	He walked his cat since four hours.

It should be remembered that both **For** and **Since** have other meanings in English that are not associated with time.

- This is for you.
- Is this the train for London?
- Since you asked, I'll say yes.
- Since he didn't study he didn't pass the exam.

Comparative and superlative adjectives

Comparative adjectives

Comparative adjectives compare one person or thing with another and enable us to say whether a person or thing has more or less of a particular quality:

Josh is taller than his sister.

I'm more interested in music than sport.

Big cars that use a lot of petrol are less popular now than twenty years ago.

Superlative adjectives

Superlative adjectives describe one person or thing as having more of a quality than all other people or things in a group:

The 'Silver Arrow' will be the fastest train in the world when it is built.

The most frightening film I've ever seen was Alfred Hitchcock's 'Psycho'.

What is the least expensive way of travelling in Japan?

Comparative or superlative?

A comparative compares a person or thing with another person or thing. A superlative compares a person or thing with the whole group of which that person or thing is a member:

Joe's older than Mike. (comparing one person with another)

Sheila is the youngest girl in the family. (comparing one person with the whole group she belongs to)

When there are just two members in a group, traditionally, we use the comparative. However, in informal situations people often use the superlative:

Who is younger, Rowan or Tony? (traditional usage)

Jan and Barbara are both tall, but Jan's the tallest. (more informal)

Comparative and superlative adjectives: form

One-syllable adjectives (*big, cold, hot, long, nice, old, tall*)

To form the comparative, we use the *-er* suffix with adjectives of one syllable:

It's colder today than yesterday.

It was a longer holiday than the one we had last year.

Sasha is older than Mark.

To form the superlative, we use the *-est* suffix with adjectives of one syllable. We normally use *the* before a superlative adjective:

I think that's the biggest apple I've ever seen!

At one time, the Empire State building in New York was the tallest building in the world.

They have three boys. Richard is the oldest and Simon is the youngest.

Spelling of comparatives and superlatives with one-syllable adjectives

type of adjective	comparative	superlative
most adjectives	add *-er*: *cheaper, richer, smaller, younger*	add *-est*: *cheapest, richest, smallest, youngest*
adjectives ending in *-e*	add *-r*: *finer, nicer, rarer*	add *-st*: *finest, nicest, rarest*
adjectives with one vowel + one consonant:	double the final consonant and add *-er*: *bigger, hotter, thinner*	double the final consonant and add *-est*: *biggest, hottest, thinnest*

Note the pronunciation of these comparatives and superlatives:

1. *long /lɒŋ/ longer /lɒŋgə(r)/ longest /lɒŋgəst/*
2. *strong /strɒŋ/ stronger /strɒŋgə(r)/ strongest /strɒŋgəst/*
3. *young /jʌŋ/ younger /jʌŋgə(r)/ youngest /jʌŋgəst/*

One-syllable adjectives which are irregular

Some one-syllable adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms:

1. *bad, worse, worst far, farther/further, farthest/furthest*
2. *good, better, best old, older/elder, oldest/eldest*

The morning flight is better than the afternoon one.

His elder sister works for the government.

Olivia is Denise's best friend.

I think that was the worst film I've ever seen!

Pluto is the furthest planet from the sun in our solar system.

Warning:

We do not use *more* or *most* together with an *-er* or *-est* ending:

They emigrate because they are looking for a better life.

Not: … a more better life

The beach at Marmaris is one of the biggest in Turkey.

Not: … the most biggest …

See also:

- *Farther, farthest* or *further, furthest*?
- *Elder, eldest* or *older, oldest*?

Two-syllable adjectives

Two-syllable adjectives ending in *-y* change *y* to *i* and take the *-er* and *-est* endings:

busy, busier, busiest happy, happier, happiest
easy, easier, easiest funny, funnier, funniest

We were busier last week than this week.

Are you happier now that you've changed your job?

That was the easiest exam I've ever taken.

Some other two-syllable adjectives (especially those ending in an unstressed vowel sound) can also take the *-er* and *-est* endings:

clever, cleverer, cleverest quiet, quieter, quietest
narrow, narrower, narrowest simple, simpler, simplest

I've always thought that Donald was cleverer than his brother.

This new bed is narrower than the old one.

The guest bedroom is the quietest room in the house because it overlooks the garden.

We don't normally use the *-er* and *-est* endings with two-syllable adjectives ending in *-ful*. Instead, we use *more* and *most/least*:

This dictionary is more useful than the one we had before.

Not: This dictionary is usefuller …

You'll have to try to be more careful in future.

The most useful tool in the kitchen is a good sharp knife.

Not: The usefulest tool in the kitchen …

This is the least harmful chemical in terms of the environment.

Longer adjectives

Adjectives of three or more syllables form the comparative with *more/less* and the superlative with *most/least*:

The second lecture was more interesting than the first.

Not: The second lecture was interestinger …

That way of calculating the figures seems less complicated to me.

London is the most popular tourist destination in England.

Not: London is the popularest …

If you are going as a group, the least expensive option is to rent an apartment or villa.

Comparative adjectives: using *much, a lot, far,* etc.

We can strengthen or emphasise a comparative adjective using words such as *much, a lot, far, even* or *rather*, or by using *than ever* after the adjective:

This food is much better than the food we had yesterday.

The town is a lot more crowded these days because of the new shopping centre.

Alex is far less intelligent than the other kids in the class.

We've been busier than ever at work this last month or so.

We can soften a comparative adjective using *a little* or *a bit*. *A bit* is less formal:

She feels a little more confident now that she's given her first public performance.

or *She feels a bit more confident …* (less formal)

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We use *than* when we mention the second person or thing in the comparison. If the second person mentioned takes the form of a personal pronoun, we normally use the object form of the pronoun (*me, you, him, her, us, them*):

Could you carry this? You're stronger than me.

Not: You're stronger than I.

Why did you choose Robert? Marie is more experienced than him.

In more formal situations, instead of *than* + object pronoun, we can use *than* + subject pronoun + *be*:

You managed to answer the ten questions correctly? Well, you're definitely cleverer than I am!

I preferred Henrietta to Dennis. She was always more sociable than he was.

Comparative adjectives: *-er and -er, more and more*

To talk about how a person or thing is changing and gaining more of a particular quality, we can use two *-er* form adjectives connected by *and*, or we can use *more and more* before an adjective. We don't follow such comparisons with *than*:

The weather is getting hotter and hotter.

I'm getting more and more interested in conservation these days.

Comparative adjectives: *the -er, the -er* and *the more …, the more …*

If a person or things gains more of a particular quality and this causes a parallel increase of another quality, we can repeat *the* + a comparative adjective:

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The more generous you are towards others, the more generous they are likely to be towards you.

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After *than*, we often don't repeat subject pronouns with impersonal subjects, or auxiliary verbs with passive voice verbs:

The exam results were better than predicted. (preferred to … *better than people predicted*.)

Temperatures that summer were higher than previously recorded. (preferred to … *than were previously recorded*.)

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The second method was less complicated than the first one.

This new laptop is not as fast as my old one. I'm sorry I bought it now. (preferred to *is less fast than my old one*.)

Comparison: adjectives (*bigger, biggest, more interesting*)

from English Grammar Today

Comparative and superlative adjectives

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The second method was less complicated than the first one.

This new laptop is not as fast as my old one. I'm sorry I bought it now. (preferred to *is less fast than my old one*.)

Prepositions after superlative adjectives

We don't normally use *of* before a singular name of a place or group after a superlative adjective:

The castle is the oldest building in the city.

Not: The castle is the oldest building of the city …

She's the youngest musician in the orchestra.

However, we can use *of* with a plural word referring to a group:

All the sisters are pretty, but Sarah's the prettiest of them all.

The with superlative adjectives

When a superlative adjective is followed by a noun, we normally use *the*:

This is the best meal I've had for a long time.

Not: This is best meal …

In informal situations, we can often omit *the* after a linking verb (*be, seem*) or a verb of the senses (*look, taste*) if there is no noun:

[talking about sweaters in a shop]

They've got them in red, green or grey. Which looks best?

If you want to get a message to Peter, email is quickest. He never answers the phone.

Other determiners with superlative adjectives

Before a superlative adjective, we can use a possessive determiner (*my, his, their*), or *the* + a number (*two, three, first, second*), or a possessive determiner + a number:

My worst score ever in an exam was zero. I just couldn't answer any of the questions.

Birmingham is the second biggest city in England.

His two best friends organised a surprise party for him on his fortieth birthday.

Emphasising superlative adjectives

We can make a superlative adjective stronger with *by far*, *easily* or *of all*:

The Beatles were by far the most successful rock band of the 1960s.

This method is by far the least complicated.

She's easily the best dancer in the group. No one is as elegant as her.

There were a number of excellent poems entered for the competition, but the best poem of all was written by a ten-year-old boy.

In more formal situations, we can use *quite*:

This is quite the most irresponsible behaviour I have ever seen.

To-infinitives after superlative adjectives

We can use a *to*-infinitive after a superlative adjective, with a meaning similar to a relative clause with *who*, *which* or *that*:

Who was the oldest person to compete in the London Marathon of 2008? (Who was the oldest person who competed …?)

The Golden Swan was the largest sailing-ship ever to be used in battle.

See also:

- Relative clauses

Comparative adjectives: typical errors

- A comparative adjective is followed by *than*, not *that* or *as*:

The next hotel we tried was more expensive than the first one.

Not: … more expensive that the first one … or …more expensive as the first one …

- After a superlative adjective, we don't normally use *of* before a singular name of a place or group:

She was the tallest girl in the team.

Not: She was the tallest girl of the team.

- We use the superlative, not the comparative, when we compare more than two people or things:

Which is the city's biggest hotel?

Not: … bigger hotel

Practice Questions

Zambia

In December 1990 former Zambian president Kaunda signed the **repeal** of Article 4 of the Constitution. Little did he know that he was signing away his iron hold on the country he had led since independence from Britain in 1964.

For the articles repeal meant that political partiesother than his own United National Independence party (UNIP) were **legalized** after 17 years of one party rule.

With the **collapse** of communism in Eastern Europe, Zambians pressed for democratization. Pressure from the movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) forced Kaunda to call an early election.

The resultant 1991 October poll saw the MMD, led by trade unionist Frederick Chiluba win a landslide victory over the UNIP. Chiluba's message during the campanign stressed the need for Zambians to work, hard to mend their battered economy.

And with good reason: the country's external **debt** of over $7 billion meant there would be no easy ride for the new government. But most Zambians were prepared to support **their** new rulers and the harsh economic recovery measures.

Yet, when Chiluba announced his cabinet it was apparent that he had already ignored some of his campaign pledges. He virtually ignored women MPs, relegating them to deputy cabinet portfolions. Front-runner posts were filled with Chiluba's relations and his trade union associates.

To make matters worse, the new president fired the heads of many of the semi-government organizations such as the grain maketing board because they had been appointed during the UNIP ear.

1. One of the foolwing is true according to the above passage.
    A. Chiluba is younger than Kaunda.
    B. Britain ruled Zambia for about 17 years.
    C. Kaunda put an end to one-party rule in Zambia.
    D. The UNIP was made illegal as soon as the MMD took over
2. Almost a year after the repeal of Article 4 of the Constituaion.
    A. Kaunda became the president of Zambia.
    B. Communism in Eastern Europe collapsed
    C. The UNIP was made a legal party.
    D. An early election was called.
3. During the election campaign, Chiluba stressed that it was essential to
    A. Work had C. win a landslide victory
    B. Batter the economy D. support the MMD
4. The idea that Chiluba did not keep his campaign words is
    A. stated B. implied C. suggested D. questioned
5. "the new government" (paragraph 5 line 16) refers to
    A. kaunda's government C. Eastern European govermment
    B. Chiluba's Govermment D. The govermment that took over from Chiluba
6. "… their" (paragraph 5 line 2) refers to
    A. Chiluba's govermment C. Zambians
    B. Kaunda's govermment D. $ 7 billion debt
7. repeal (paragraph 1 line 1) means
    A. writing B. inclusion C. drafting D. cancellation
8. legalized (paragraph 2 line 2) means
    A. outlawed B. made lawful C. formulated a low D. made illegal
9. collapse (paragraph 3 line 1) means
    A. spread B. building up C. fall apart D. democratization
10. debt (paragraph 5 line 1) means)

A. economy B. profit C. loss D. loan

Directions: for items (11-15) read each situation or dialogue carefully. Then choose the alternative the best answer each question.

11. a. Could you do me a favour?

    b. _____

    A. Are you sure? C. Of course

    B. I don't want to trouble you D. Not at all

12. a. I'd be glad to give you a hand.

    b. _____

    A. You're welcome C. Thanks for offering

    B. No, not at all D. My pleasure.

13. a. Are you sure you don't mind?

    b. _____

    A. You're welcome C. No' not at all

    B. Oh'okay D. I'm sorry

14. a. I'm sorry I can't help you now.

    b. _____

    A. Take care of it C. That's all right

    B. My pleasure D. Don't mention it

15. a. Would it be all right to leave a little early today.?

    b. _____

    A. Don't mention it C. It's fine with me

    B. I'd be happy to D. I really regret it

Direction: The following sentences (item 16-20) are all incomplete from the alternative given, choose the one that best completes each sentence.

16. Making sure that the project is completed on time is her _____

    A. respect B. responsibility C. create D. judgment

17. My younger brother lives in America. I haven't seen him for many years.

    I _____ What he looks like now.

A. wonder B. surprise C. create D. contain

18. The talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis have _____
    A. disputed B. collapsed C. create D. contain
19. It was a small class so the teacher was able to give us each a lot of _____ attention.
    A. single B. private C. individual D. lonely
20. Could you hurry up, please? We _____ our meal half an hour ago.
    A. asked B. demanded C. ordered D. reguested

Letter

Direction: Below is a beer of invitation. It is however incomplete. Ciadissie cirumy, the president of the teachers association, write the letter to Ayelech Bedassa, a high school teacher Answer questions 21-23 in order to complete the letter.

P.O.Box 143

Addis Ababa

_____

(1)

Wzo. Ayelech Bedassa

_____

P.O.Box 2471

Addis Ababa

(2)

_____

We are pleased to invite you to a conference that is sponsored by the Ethiopian Teacher's Association. The conference will be held 12- 17 January 2001. The enclosed brochure will give you details on

21. Which one of the following expressions could go in the place of the bank space indicvated by number1?

A. Yours sincerely
B. 1st Octorber 2001
C. Dear Wzo Ayelech Badassa
D. How are you?

22. Which one of the following expressions could go in the place of number 2?

A. Yours faithfully
B. To Wzo Gadissie Gurmu
C. Hello, Gadissie
D. Dear Wzo Ayelech Bedassa

Directions: Choose the correctly punctuated sentence for questions 22- 24

23. We can have one of the following in the place of number 3.

A. Yours sincerely
B. Dear Wzo Ayelech Bedassa
C. Goodbye for now
D. Let's keep in touch

24. A. "No" said my father, "It cannot be done."
B. "No" said my father. "it cannot be done."
C. "No" said my father, "It cannot be done."
D. "No," said my father, "it cannot be done."

25. A. He did not, however gain a big object.
B. He didn't. however, gain a big object.
C. He didn't however gain a big object.
D. He didn't however, gain a big object.

26. A. He is always cool reserved and precise.
B. He is always cool, reserved and precise.
C. He is always, cool, reserved, and precise.
D. He is always cool reserved, and precise.

Direction: Choose the best answer to complete sentences 27-30

27. _____ chair the meeting.

A. John was decided to
B. There was decided that John should
C. It was decided that John should
D. John had been decided to

28. We can't use the sports hall because it _____

A. is still built
C. is still being built
B. is still building
D. is still being build

29. Where _____? Which hairdresser did you go to?

A. Did you cut your hair
C. did you have your hair cut
B. Have you cut your hair
D. did you have cut your hair

30. There is somebody walking behind us. I think _____

A. We are following
C. We are followed
B. We are being followed
D. We are being following