Comparatives and Superlatives

13.1 COMPARATIVES
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- Comparison Cards 2
- Match
- Magazine Search
- It's Bigger Than a Baseball

13.2 SUPERLATIVES
- The Superlative Taste Test
- Survey
- Classmate Questionnaire
- The Compliment Game

13.3 REVIEW
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- Word Search
- Compare Them
- Who's the Worst (Best)?
1. COMPARISON CARDS 1

Materials: Worksheet 81 or 3” x 5” cards

Dynamic: Groups

Time: 10 minutes

Procedure:
1. Make as many copies of the worksheet as you have groups. Cut the worksheets up into cards to make sets for each group. Arrange the class into groups of three or four and give each group a set of cards.

2. One student in each group draws a card and makes a comparative sentence using the two nouns and adjective on the card.

Example: My legs (short) Your legs

Student sentence: My legs are shorter than your legs.

The other students in the group judge whether the sentence used the correct comparative form and decides if it is logical/correct.

3. The students take turns in the group choosing cards and making sentences until they finish all the cards or time is up. The students can keep score in their groups to see who makes the most correct sentences.

SUGGESTION: Make some of your own cards, using names of students in the class.

2. COMPARISON CARDS 2

Materials: Small pictures

Dynamic: Pairs

Time: 15 minutes

Procedure:
1. Arrange students in pairs, and give each pair two or more pictures to compare. (You may want to stick to one topic, such as famous people, or have several types of pictures.)

2. Each pair writes comparisons of the two pictures.

Example: A bear is shorter than a giraffe.
3. When everyone has finished, have the pairs show their pictures and read their sentences. You might ask the other students whether they agree or disagree. This is interesting when students use a subjective adjective (such as *beautiful*) as their point of comparison.

**NOTE:** If you use famous people, you can write the names of the people under the picture for the students, or have them say simply “the man in picture A,” etc.

### 3. MATCH

**Materials:** Worksheet 82

**Dynamic:** Pairs

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Put students into pairs, and give each pair a copy of the worksheet. Go over the words on the list and explain any with which the students are unfamiliar.

2. Call out an adjective or phrase from the list below. The students choose two of the words or expressions on the worksheet and write a comparison sentence. Continue until all the words on the paper have been matched.

Adjectives to use with the worksheet:

- clean  
- expensive  
- noisy  
- slow  
- cold  
- good pet  
- quick  
- spicy  
- dangerous  
- hard  
- short  
- tall  
- easy to use  
- large

**Example:** Instructor says: “spicy”  
Students write:  
“Mexican food is spicier than Italian food.”

3. Go over the sentences by having the pairs write them on the board or read them aloud. The other students decide if the sentences are logical and grammatical.
4. MAGAZINE SEARCH

Materials: Magazines or catalogs
Dynamic: Small groups
Time: 15 minutes

Procedure:
1. Put students into groups of three. Give each group several magazines or catalogs that can be cut up. (Or, for a previous homework assignment, ask the students to bring in magazines or catalogs.)
2. In their magazines, the groups look for pictures to compare, then write comparison sentences. The number of sentences you assign will depend on how long you want to devote to this activity.
3. The groups take turns showing their pictures and reading their sentences aloud.

5. IT’S BIGGER THAN A BASEBALL

Materials: None
Dynamic: Pairs
Time: 25 minutes

Procedure:
1. Use the following riddle as a model, or make up one of your own, using comparisons.
   - It is bigger than a baseball.
   - It is as round as the moon.
   - It is as orange as a carrot.
   - It is as hard as a melon.
   - It is not as sweet as fruit.
   Answer: A pumpkin.
2. The students work in pairs and use the structure above to make their own riddles. Circulate and answer questions. Make sure the students’ riddles are not too ambiguous; that is, the answer should be clear by the time students get to the end of the riddle.
3. When they finish, do one of the following:
   a. Tape the riddles to the wall. The students circulate and write answers before discussing them as a class.
   b. The students exchange papers and discuss the answers with their partners.
   c. The students read their riddles aloud for the rest of the class to guess.
1. THE SUPERLATIVE TASTE TEST

Materials: Worksheet 83, three kinds of mints
Dynamic: Pairs/Small groups
Time: 20 minutes
Procedure:
1. Place three dishes of mints on a table, enough for each student to have one of each flavor. Put students in groups of two or three. Give each group a copy of the worksheet. One student from each group will be the recorder. You may need to go over the worksheet vocabulary words before the students begin the taste test.

2. Each student eats one mint from each dish, noting qualities such as color, taste, and texture. Group members discuss these qualities with each other and decide which mint ranks best in each area. Then the group writes two sentences about each mint, using the superlative.

Examples: Mint #1 is the smoothest tasting. Mint #2 has the blandest taste.

Then the group decides which mint they liked the best overall.

3. Circulate to make sure that everyone is on task and is using the correct forms of the superlatives.

4. Call on each group to share results with the class.

NOTE: Other types of food can be used. You can use three of the same kind of food (such as three different brands of potato chips) or have three very different food items, such as pickles, pretzels, and hard candy.

2. SURVEY

Materials: Worksheet 84 (two pages)
Dynamic: Pairs/Small groups
Time: 30 minutes
Procedure:
1. Divide the class into pairs or groups of three or four. Give each group 11 copies of a different section of the worksheet.

2. Have the students go over the words on their list and decide if they would use most or -est to form the superlative. Do NOT allow
them to use dictionaries. Even if they are unfamiliar with some of
the words, they should be able to apply rules they know for
forming the superlative.

3. Send them out to ask 10 native speakers about which form they
think is correct, either in class time or as a homework activity. If it
is done during class hours, set a time limit. If it is not possible to
interview native speakers, the students should interview people
who are fluent or use English in their jobs.

4. The students tabulate their results and compare them to their
group’s answers. Each group then makes a short presentation to
the class and says what they think the best choice is and why. An
effective way to do this is to put the worksheet with the words for
each group on an overhead projector. The class will be able to
follow the oral reports more easily.

### 3. CLASSMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

**Materials:** Worksheet 85

**Dynamic:** Pairs

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Procedure:**
1. Put students into pairs. Give each pair a copy of the handout.
2. Have students answer the questions in complete sentences. Some
   students will be able to answer without talking to their classmates,
   but others will require asking their classmates questions.

**Variation:** To take less time, have students answer the questions in pairs without
talking to their classmates. They can begin the sentences with “We
think . . .” or “We guess . . .” Then have the pairs read their answers. (Have
all pairs give their answers for question 1 before going on to the next
question.) Determine who has written the correct answer. You may want
to do this as a competition and assign points for every correct answer.

### 4. THE COMPLIMENT GAME

**Materials:** 3” x 5” cards with an adjective written on
one side, paper

**Dynamic:** Whole class

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Procedure:**
1. Review the rules for superlatives, if necessary. Give each student a
card and a piece of paper. Tell the students to write, on the reverse
of their cards, the superlative form of the adjective on the front.
Suggested adjectives (for a lower-level class, you will of course choose easier adjectives):

- attractive
- beautiful
- bright
- comfortable
- cute
- delightful
- funny
- happy
- interesting
- large
- modern
- nice
- pleasant
- pretty
- small
- terrific
- unique
- wonderful

2. The students are to imagine that they are rich aristocrats at a party. They are to act very formally and give compliments to everyone they meet. They are to go up to other “guests” and show them the word on their card. Each “guest” approached (Student B) then compliments the “guest” who approached him or her (Student A), using the correct superlative form of the word he or she is shown.

Example:

- Student A’s card: beautiful
- Student B’s compliment: You are wearing the most beautiful dress in the room.

If Student B’s compliment uses the correct form of the superlative, Student A signs Student B’s paper. If Student B’s compliment does not use the superlative correctly, Student A does not sign Student B’s paper. At the end of the allotted time, the student with the most signatures (that is, the student who used the superlative correctly the most) wins.

### REVIEW

#### 1. READING QUESTIONS

**Materials:** Reading handout or book used in reading class

**Dynamic:** Pairs/Small groups

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Arrange students in pairs or groups of three.

2. Have each group make up 10 questions based on a short story or novel they are using in their reading class. The questions can elicit either the comparative or superlative form. If the students are in different reading classes or if you do not have access to their reading material, give them something short to read for homework. Keep it short and relatively simple, as the focus of this activity is to use the comparative and superlative, not to concentrate on reading comprehension. Then discuss the reading before the students make up their questions.
3. Have the groups exchange question papers with each other and answer the questions they receive.

4. The groups then return the questions papers (now with answers) to the groups who made them up to be checked.

   **SUGGESTION:** You may want to set a time limit for making the questions.

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### 2. WORD SEARCH

**Materials:** Worksheet 86A or 86B

**Dynamic:** Pairs/Small groups

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Put students into pairs or groups of three. Give each group one copy of the worksheet.

2. Students work together to find all the comparative and superlative forms. The forms may be up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal. You may prefer not to include the word list on the worksheet.

3. You may set a time limit, or tell the students that the first group to find all the forms wins.

   **SUGGESTION:** A good way to go over where the hidden forms are is to use an overhead after the game.

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### 3. COMPARE THEM

**Materials:** None

**Dynamic:** Pairs

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Put students into pairs. Assign each pair a different topic of comparison.

   **Examples:** Two fast-food restaurants
   Two famous people
   Two cars
   Two animals
   Two grocery stores
   Two brands of soda

2. On the board, make a list of adjectives. Students choose from the list to write 10 comparisons of their two items, using either comparative or superlative forms.
You may want to choose from the following list of adjectives:

bad      funny      new      quiet      tasty
beautiful good      nice      rich      ugly
bright    handsome noisy    serious wise
busy      messy      old      short    wonderful
empty     neat      pretty    tall      young

SUGGESTION: In a higher-level class, the pairs can write a paragraph instead of individual sentences.

4. WHO’S THE WORST (BEST)?

Materials: Worksheet 87
Dynamic: Small groups
Time: 30 minutes
Procedure:

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four and give each student a copy of the worksheet (or make one of your own).

2. After they read the story, the students in each group rate the characters in the story from 1 to 4 as to who has the worst character (#4 is the worst). There may be disagreement in the group, so the students should express their reasons for their choices (“Maria is the worst because . . .”).

3. After the group reaches an agreement, a member of each group comes to the board and list the four characters in descending order, #4—worst to #1—best.

4. Have the class compare the answers and discuss the differences. Each group should be prepared to state why they listed the characters in the order in which they did.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>my legs</th>
<th>biology</th>
<th>(short)</th>
<th>(interesting)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your legs</td>
<td>history</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the weather here</td>
<td>comics</td>
<td>(bad)</td>
<td>(funny)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the weather in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my hometown</td>
<td>novels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>a skyscraper</td>
<td>(difficult)</td>
<td>(tall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>a gas station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a giraffe’s neck</td>
<td>my old shoes</td>
<td>(fat)</td>
<td>(comfortable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an elephant’s neck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a tree</td>
<td>our grammar book</td>
<td>(thin)</td>
<td>(easy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a stick</td>
<td>our writing book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a mouse</td>
<td>your hair</td>
<td>(small)</td>
<td>(long)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an elephant</td>
<td>my hair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>winter</td>
<td>my eyes</td>
<td>(good)</td>
<td>(dark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer</td>
<td>my teacher’s eyes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a motorcycle</td>
<td>a chocolate bar</td>
<td>(expensive)</td>
<td>(fattening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a bicycle</td>
<td>an apple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your teacher will give you an adjective. Choose two words in this list and write a sentence using the two words and the adjective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>airplane</th>
<th>cat</th>
<th>dog</th>
<th>ladder</th>
<th>rock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ant</td>
<td>chalk</td>
<td>fog</td>
<td>lake</td>
<td>snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bee</td>
<td>charge cards</td>
<td>giraffe</td>
<td>Mexican food</td>
<td>stilts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus</td>
<td>checks</td>
<td>Italian food</td>
<td>mud puddle</td>
<td>wolf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________
6. ____________________________________________
7. ____________________________________________
8. ____________________________________________
9. ____________________________________________
10. ____________________________________________
You have been selected by the Magnificent Marketing Company to taste-test three new mints before they go on the market. The company wants to know which mint the public prefers, and why.

Taste each mint. Describe its qualities, such as color, taste, and texture. Write at least two sentences about each mint in the space provided, using superlatives. Decide with your group which mint is best.

You may want to use some of these words in your sentences. You may use a dictionary to find their meaning and/or a thesaurus to find other words to use.

- delicious, tasty, smooth, creamy, sweet, rich, flat, bland

**MINT #1**
1. 

2. 

---

**MINT #2**
1. 

2. 

---

**MINT #3**
1. 

2. 

We think the best mint is #_____.
Using the list your teacher assigns your group, decide together if you would use most or -est to form the superlatives of the words. Then use the other 10 copies to survey native speakers about which form they think is correct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 1:</th>
<th>GROUP 2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most</td>
<td>-est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. old</td>
<td>1. wise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. famous</td>
<td>2. clever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. busy</td>
<td>3. pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. important</td>
<td>4. beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. sweet</td>
<td>5. wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. gross</td>
<td>6. keen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. handsome</td>
<td>7. difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. rough</td>
<td>8. queasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. listless</td>
<td>9. tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. young</td>
<td>10. tough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 3:</th>
<th>GROUP 4:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most</td>
<td>-est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. slow</td>
<td>1. thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. gentle</td>
<td>2. active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. friendly</td>
<td>3. happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. serious</td>
<td>4. courageous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. late</td>
<td>5. wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. windy</td>
<td>6. yummy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. confusing</td>
<td>7. orderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. funky</td>
<td>8. fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. helpful</td>
<td>9. comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. plain</td>
<td>10. narrow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using the list your teacher assigns your group, decide together if you would use *most* or *-est* to form the superlatives of the words. Then use the other 10 copies to survey native speakers about which form they think is correct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 5:</th>
<th>GROUP 6:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>most</strong></td>
<td><strong>most</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. red</td>
<td>1. new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. common</td>
<td>2. pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. heavy</td>
<td>3. dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. expensive</td>
<td>4. dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. weak</td>
<td>5. soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. shy</td>
<td>6. uncanny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. humid</td>
<td>7. unpopulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. safe</td>
<td>8. fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. delicious</td>
<td>9. boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. shallow</td>
<td>10. appetizing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 7:</th>
<th>GROUP 8:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>most</strong></td>
<td><strong>most</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. small</td>
<td>1. sour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. silly</td>
<td>2. noisy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. valuable</td>
<td>3. embarrassing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. nervous</td>
<td>4. homesick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. loud</td>
<td>5. sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. merry</td>
<td>6. hungry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. polluted</td>
<td>7. discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. dark</td>
<td>8. quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. relaxed</td>
<td>9. popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. joyous</td>
<td>10. ghoulish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worksheet 85: CLASSMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Answer the questions about your classmates in complete sentences.

1. Who is wearing the most jewelry today? __________________________

2. Who has the curliest hair? __________________________

3. Who has the longest name? __________________________

4. Who has the largest shoe? __________________________

5. Who has the nicest car? __________________________

6. Who has the most brothers and sisters? __________________________

7. Who brings the most books to class? __________________________

8. Who is the best singer in the class? __________________________

9. Who has studied English the longest? __________________________

10. Who traveled the farthest to come to this country? __________________________
Worksheet 86A: WORD SEARCH (LOWER LEVEL)

Find the comparative and superlative forms of the words on the list. The forms may be listed up, down, forward, backward, or diagonally.

F E E M W B F R F R
A S S R O T U E E L
R R L B R S R H W M
T O E E R E T T E B
H W A S S R H R R E
E A S T A S E U O S
S S T F B E S F M T
T E W O R S T R A F

Word list:

AS
BEST
BETTER
FARTHER
FARTHEST
FURTHER
FURTHEST
LEAST
LESS
MORE
MOST
WORSE
WORST
Find the comparative and superlative forms of the words on the list. The forms may be listed up, down, forward, backward, or diagonally.

Word list:

ALIKE
AS
BEST
BETTER
DIFFERENT
FARTHER
FURTHEST
LEAST
LESS
LIKE
MORE
MOST
OF ALL
SAME
SIMILAR
THAN
WORSE
WORST
Rate the characters from 1 to 4, with 4 being the worst person in the story.

Maria, Sachie, Toshie, and Ana shared an apartment near the college that they attended. Maria needed to buy a book for her history class, but she didn’t have enough money. She had a test in three days, and she needed the book to study. Maria knew that Sachie always kept quite a bit of money in an envelope in her desk drawer. Maria decided to take enough money from Sachie’s desk to buy the book. Maria told herself that she would return the money before Sachie noticed it was missing.

The next day, Sachie discovered that some money was missing from her desk. None of her roommates was home, so she looked around the apartment. On Toshie’s bed, she found a bag from a clothing store. Inside the bag was a new blouse with a sales receipt. The price of the blouse was only slightly less than the amount of the missing money. Sachie assumed that Toshie had taken her money to buy the new blouse. Sachie decided to teach Toshie a lesson, and she poured catsup all over Toshie’s new blouse.

When Toshie returned home, she found her ruined blouse. When she asked Sachie what had happened, Sachie asked her about the missing money. Toshie told Sachie that she had not taken her money, but Sachie didn’t believe her.

Ana returned home, and Toshie told her that Sachie had ruined all her clothes by putting catsup on them. Ana decided that Sachie was a troublemaker and that she didn’t want her living in the apartment anymore. Ana decided to call the apartment manager and tell him Sachie was keeping stolen goods at the apartment for her boyfriend so that she would have to move out.