

Unit 5

Comparatives and superlatives



Grammar in Context

Theme: Teenage life—interests & hobbies

Words by Theme



Read the following journal entry about school life and answer the questions.

15th July (Friday)

 Cloudy

I'm glad to be in Class 2A because we all love music. Most of our classmates can play musical instruments¹. Some of us play the **less common ones**, such as the clarinet, the harp and the Japanese drum. We have **more** guitar players **than** the other S.2 classes. We also take part² in music extra-curricular activities³ **more regularly**.

Certainly, we enjoy listening to music. Pop music is **the most popular** music genre. Of various types of pop music, K-pop has **the most** supporters in our class. At the same time, we appreciate⁴ the **less typical** types as well. Some of us like listening to lo-fi music while studying. As it is not **as upbeat as** other music genres, it helps us focus⁵ **more easily**.

We share our music preferences⁶ and new songs through music apps. We use Snappy Station **the most frequently**. Most of us agree that Snappy Station is far **more functional than** Woow. We also think that Snappy Station is not **as commercial as** Woow because Snappy Station has **fewer** advertisements.

Unluckily, we are not great singers. We have **less** confidence in singing **than** composing⁷ music. We have three bands in our class. Yellow Bus composes songs **as creatively as** The Silent Voice. Classical Blast plays only classical music. It has **the fewest** members but it is **the most active one** among the three bands. Anyhow, music really brings us together⁸!



1. Read the first and the last paragraphs again. What do *ones* and *one* refer to?

(i) *ones*: _____

(ii) *one*: _____

2. Are the following statements correct? Put a tick (✓) or a cross (✗) in each box.

(i) Class 2A does not participate in music activities as often as other classes.

(ii) Lo-fi music is less likely to distract attention than pop music.

(iii) There are more advertisements in Woow than in Snappy Station.

(iv) The Silent Voice is the least creative band in Class 2A.

PART 1A Comparative adjectives and adverbs

We use comparative adjectives and adverbs to compare two units, people, places, things or actions. We place **than** after the adjectives or adverbs, but in some cases, we can omit it. (Refer to Book 1 Units 7 & 8 for detailed explanation of adjectives and adverbs.)

	Examples
adjectives (adj.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are busier this year than last year. The coastal area is more populated than the inland area.
adverbs (adv.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karl kicked the ball more swiftly than Joshua. The old machine worked efficiently. The new one works even more efficiently.

PART 1B Forming comparative adjectives and adverbs

We form comparative adjectives and adverbs depending on the number of syllables.

Syllables	Endings	Formation	Adjectives	Adverbs
one to two	—	+ -er	<i>cold</i> → <i>colder</i>	<i>hard</i> → <i>harder</i>
	-e	+ -r	<i>wide</i> → <i>wider</i>	<i>late</i> → <i>later</i>
	vowel + consonant	final consonant x2 + -er	<i>fat</i> → <i>fatter</i> <i>thin</i> → <i>thinner</i>	—
	consonant + -y	-y + -ier	<i>happy</i> → <i>happier</i> <i>easy</i> → <i>easier</i>	<i>early</i> → <i>earlier</i>
three or more	—	<i>more / less</i>	<i>important</i> → <i>less important</i>	<i>angrily</i> → <i>more angrily</i>
—	-ful, -less, -ing or -ed		<i>joyful</i> → <i>more joyful</i>	—
—	-ly		<i>friendly</i> → <i>more friendly</i>	<i>calmly</i> → <i>less calmly</i>
irregular		change the whole word	<i>good</i> → <i>better</i> <i>bad</i> → <i>worse</i> <i>far</i> → <i>further / farther</i>	<i>well</i> → <i>better</i> <i>badly</i> → <i>worse</i> <i>far</i> → <i>further / farther</i>

Reminder!

Some two-syllable adjectives can form comparatives in either way:

friendly → friendlier // **more / less** friendly
common → commoner // **more / less** common

narrow → narrower // **more / less** narrow
clever → cleverer // **more / less** clever

Error Diagnosis

Hard and **late** are both an adjective and an adverb.

Hardly and **lately** are adverbs. They have a totally different meaning from **hard** and **late**.

hard (= not easily)

They worked hardly for their exam. ❌

They **hardly** (= almost not) take a rest. ✓

late (= not early)

I arrived lately at school as I missed the bus. ❌

I haven't seen him **lately** (= recently). ✓

PART 1C Intensifying and weakening comparison

We can modify comparatives by adding quantifiers or adverbs in front of them.

	Examples
<i>much</i>	Rachel is much older than her baby cousin.
<i>a lot / far</i>	The athlete can jump a lot / far higher than me.
<i>a bit / a little / slightly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could you speak a bit / a little more loudly? The patient feels slightly better after sleeping.
<i>comparatively</i>	This vase looks comparatively nicer than the other one.



Exercise 1.1

Complete the comparative sentences using the correct form of the given words.

- The classroom is _____ hotter _____ (hot) now as the fan has been turned off.
- The foil fencer played _____ (skilful) after intensive strength training.
- The room was _____ (tidy) last night. It is now a mess after the party.
- Your cats are _____ (friendly) mine. Mine would growl at strangers.
- This pool is _____ (a little / deep) the one over there. Children should go to that one.
- She won in the singing contest as she performed _____ (significantly / good) other contestants.



Exercise 1.2

Dominic is writing a review on two messaging apps. Complete the review by circling the best answers.

Chit-Chat versus Babble

Let me guide you through the features of the two new messaging apps, Chit-Chat and Babble, and you'll find out which one suits you **(1)** (better / more well). First, the price of Chit-Chat is a bit **(2)** (higher / more high) than Babble's, but that may explain why Chit-Chat's functions are **(3)** (more diverse / diverser). Yet, you may fall in love with Babble at first sight as its design is **(4)** (less eye-catching / more eye-catching).

H¹

Li³

Be⁴

Both apps offer all the basic chat room functions, but Babble is much more **(5)** (practical / practically) for students. It features additional functions to aid learning, such as a dictionary, a calculator and the periodic table. Babble allows users to share screens far **(6)** (more smoothly / smoother) than other messaging apps. It is especially suitable for school project discussions.

For casual chatting, users may find Chit-Chat **(7)** (more lovable / lovable). There are plenty of stickers, which are much **(8)** (cuter / more cute) than the standard emojis. Its voice-changing function is worth trying too. Users can sing **(9)** (more sweetly / sweeter) or talk **(10)** (more confidently / confidenter) with the latest pitch-correction software ...

PART 2A Superlative adjectives and adverbs

We use superlative adjectives and adverbs to compare three or more units, people, places, things or actions. We place *the* before the adjectives or adverbs, but in some cases, we can omit it. (Refer to Book 1 Units 7 & 8 for detailed explanation of adjectives and adverbs.)

	Examples
adjectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The laptop is the most expensive among the three gadgets. I can lend you my softest pillow.
adverbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elizabeth drives the most carefully in her family. The yellow balloon flew the furthest.



PART 2B Forming superlative adjectives and adverbs

We form superlative adjectives and adverbs depending on the number of syllables.

Syllables	Endings	Formation	Adjectives	Adverbs
one to two	—	+ <i>-est</i>	<i>cold</i> → <i>coldest</i>	<i>hard</i> → <i>hardest</i>
	<i>-e</i>	+ <i>-st</i>	<i>wide</i> → <i>widest</i>	—
	vowel + consonant	final consonant x2 + <i>-est</i>	<i>fat</i> → <i>fattest</i> <i>thin</i> → <i>thinnest</i>	—
	consonant + <i>-y</i>	<i>-y</i> + <i>-iest</i>	<i>happy</i> → <i>happiest</i> <i>easy</i> → <i>easiest</i>	<i>early</i> → <i>earliest</i>
three or more	—	<i>most / least</i>	<i>generous</i> → <i>least generous</i>	<i>skilfully</i> → <i>most skilfully</i>
—	<i>-ful, -less, -ing</i> or <i>-ed</i>		<i>excited</i> → <i>most excited</i>	—
—	<i>-ly</i>		<i>friendly</i> → <i>most friendly</i>	<i>gently</i> → <i>least gently</i>
irregular		change the whole word	<i>good</i> → <i>best</i> <i>bad</i> → <i>worst</i> <i>far</i> → <i>furthest / farthest</i>	<i>well</i> → <i>best</i> <i>badly</i> → <i>worst</i> <i>far</i> → <i>furthest / farthest</i>



Reminder!

Some two-syllable adjectives can form superlatives in either way:

gentle → gentlest // *most / least* gentle

quiet → quietest // *most / least* quiet

PART 2C Common patterns with superlatives

Patterns	Examples
<i>one of</i> + plural noun	William is one of the most talented writers in our class.
<i>in</i> + singular noun	This T-shirt is the least expensive in the store.
<i>of / among</i> + plural noun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Katie is the most humorous of all my friends. Among all the choir members, Samuel sang the most charmingly.
<i>has / have</i> + <i>ever</i> + past participle	That is the most boring course he has ever taken.



Exercise 2.1

Complete the superlative sentences using the correct form of the given words.

lovely meaningless talkative scary pretty clever early

- Departing for work before sunrise, Noel always arrives at the office _____ the earliest _____.
- This chubby cat with big eyes and snowy fur is _____ pet I have ever kept.
- My brother just showed me one of _____ magic tricks.
- Mr Ho is _____ of all my neighbours. He talks to whoever is in the elevator.
- In her long white dress, Priscilla dressed _____ among the ladies in the ball.
- This product is of no use at all. It is _____ invention I have ever seen.
- The Shining* is one of _____ horror films of all time.



Exercise 2.2

Teresa is drafting a film review. There are some mistakes. Correct the underlined mistakes and write the correct words in the spaces provided.

Super Suspect:

(1) A Better Suspense Film of the Year 98%

Super Suspect is one of the (2) more mind-blowing thrillers I have ever watched. The story takes place in America's (3) less developed city, which has an obsolete network. The film begins with a murder without a body.

(4) About all suspects, the main character, Harrison, is (5) more suspiciously one. Thanks to the skilful acting of all actors, no one in the film seems innocent, not even (6) a youngest character. The mysteries are mind-twisting.

I believe (7) a more determining factor to the film's success is the cast. Gordon Blake performed the most (8) impressive of all the actors. *Super Suspect* is still the (9) fine suspense film of the year, if not one of (10) more thrilling suspense films in history.

- _____ The Best _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

PART 3A (not) as ... as

We use **as ... as** to make comparisons if the two people or things are equal in some ways.

Examples	
<i>as ... as</i>	<i>Pamela is as hard-working as Julia. The new washing machine operates as noisily as the old one.</i>
<i>not as ... as</i>	<i>The oranges are not as sour as the grapefruit. Neil doesn't dance as well as his sister.</i>

PART 3B fewer and less

Less is the comparative form of *little* and *fewer* is the comparative form of *few*.

<i>few</i> + countable noun	<i>little</i> + uncountable noun
Ladybirds have fewer <u>legs</u> than spiders. (=Spiders have more <u>legs</u> .)	Baked potatoes contain less <u>oil</u> than chips. (=Chips contain more <u>oil</u> .)
Kim received the fewest <u>presents</u> last Christmas. (=Ann received the most <u>presents</u> .)	Class 2C has the least <u>homework</u> . (=Class 2B has the most <u>homework</u> .)

Error Diagnosis

We should make comparisons between two items of the same category.

Ann's hair is longer than me. ❌

Ann's hair is longer than mine. (= my hair) ✓

My results are as good as Ben. ❌

My results are as good as Ben's. (= Ben's results) ✓

Exercise 3.1

Complete the sentences about a pop idol with the given phrases. Write the letters (A-F) in the brackets.

- Evan Lo has (B)
- He is making ()
- The brands that he has endorsed have gained ()
- He never gets the ()
- Working day and night, he spends ()
- His latest solo music video has the ()



- a lot less time with his family than in the past.
- more fans than other members in the group.
- least lines in the group songs.
- comparatively more money than other members.
- most views of the videos released recently.
- as much fame as he has.

Exercise 3.2

Complete the speech with the help of the given words. Use comparatives, superlatives or (not) as ... as.

My Career on Social Media

Hi everyone, I'm one of (1) _____ the youngest influencers _____ (young / influencer) in Hong Kong. In my starting year, I produced (2) _____ (video) I do now. I used to post videos about song-making only once a month. Ten months later, I got (3) _____ (subscriber) many others. I was surprised because I (4) _____ (not / famous) the top influencers. I wanted to be even (5) _____ (good). Since then, I've worked much (6) _____ (hard). Currently, my channel does (7) _____ (successful) Game King's and The Cool Cook's. So far, *How to play music with cola cans?* is the video with (8) _____ (view). It has far (9) _____ (technical information) the other videos. I think that's why people of all ages have enjoyed it.

Grammar Wrap-up

You are planning to line up overnight for a new set of headphones that has become very popular in town. You are reading a gadget review on it. Complete the review by circling the best answers.

The (1) amazing headphones have arrived!

Sonic III is the (2) headphones by True Tune Company. When Sonic I came out, many users considered it a product of the (3) quality. A year later, Sonic II impressed us again. It performs more (4) than the previous model. It produces sound (5). Sonic III's sound is as clear as (6).

Moreover, there are a few new improvements. Sonic III extends battery life (7). Its bass is also much (8) both previous models'. Sonic III's shell is (9) the previous models', making it easier to carry. The materials for the ear pads are slightly (10) for better comfort. The new pads help deliver excellent surround sound too. Sonic III offers (11) colour options. There are only three colours available, but they all look cool in my opinion.

In short, Sonic III is the greatest headphones (12).



- (1) A. more
B. as
C. less
D. most

- (2) A. latest
B. later
C. most new
D. newly

- (3) A. highly
B. highest
C. much higher
D. most high

- (4) A. stand out
B. standout
C. outstanding
D. outstandingly

- (5) A. much clearly
B. more clearer
C. a lot more clearly
D. the least clearest

- (6) A. Sonic II
B. Sonic II's
C. Sonic II does
D. Sonic II did

- (7) A. than significantly
B. as significantly
C. significantly
D. more significantly

- (8) A. as strong as
B. the strongest
C. stronger than
D. more stronger than

- (9) A. heavier than
B. as heavy as
C. not as heavy as
D. the lightest

- (10) A. softer
B. softest
C. more soft
D. more softly

- (11) A. less
B. more
C. least
D. fewer

- (12) A. I've ever seen
B. I never saw
C. I am using
D. I use

Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: Teenage life—growing up

Teresa is writing a blog entry about how she coped with changes. There are some mistakes. Correct the underlined mistakes and write the correct words in the spaces provided.

Words by Theme



Socialising¹ in the New Normal²

During the pandemic, we could not live as freely (1) than we had before.

As teenagers, those years were the most difficult period we had

(2) never experience. As face-to-face lessons only took place every other week, we had much (3) fewer time to interact³ with others in person.

Because of this situation, some application developers revised their existing apps by adding (4) fewer functions so that people could get in touch⁴ despite lockdown, quarantine and social distancing restriction orders!

School life then became very different. With apps that supported video conferencing, teachers could conduct lessons much more (5) convenient than before. Yet, their effectiveness was obviously not (6) higher as that in actual classrooms. Many students developed pandemic fatigue⁵. We were tired of making efforts⁶ to fight the virus. Luckily, Miss Tang, one of the (7) better teachers in our school, helped us adjust to the new normal.

Social life also changed a lot. Before the pandemic, my friends and I would hang out⁷ at weekends. Compared to staycations, virtual gatherings⁸ were a (8) safest way to catch up with⁹ one another. Therefore, we often took part in virtual marathons and attended online dance sessions together. Virtual gatherings were as enjoyable (9) than face-to-face ones.

Connecting with¹⁰ friends is always the (10) more importance thing in life, and laughter is as (11) contagiously as a virus. With friends, life at its worst can become (12) the least demoralising¹¹.

1. _____ as _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____



Brain Breaks

People now use the brands of online tools as verbs. What do the following verbs mean?

- ① The tutor **zooms** her students.
- ② I **skyped** my co-worker this morning.
- ③ I **googled** the answer.



- Answers:
- ① to conduct online lessons
 - ② to have video conferences or to send text messages
 - ③ to browse websites for information

In writing, we can describe things or discuss ideas by comparing people, places, things or actions with comparatives or superlatives.

- Wearing heavy makeup, Susan looks **older than** Emily. (comparative adjective)
- Without regular practice, my brother doesn't swim **as well as** I do. (comparative adverb)
- Mum made a sugar-free cake. It was **the healthiest** cake she had ever made. (superlative adjective)
- Of all members in his team, he works **the least efficiently**. (superlative adverb)

Version 1

Kayden is writing an email to his cousin in France about an exhibition on entertainment. Read the email and pay attention to the underlined sentences.

Subject: An interesting exhibition you shouldn't miss Send

Dear Marcus,

How are you? **(1)** Sorry for writing you fewer emails than before. **(2)** I've become increasingly busy with schoolwork after changing to the new school. Last Sunday, I finally took a break and visited an exhibition with my father. It was brilliant. I highly recommend it to you.

The exhibition displays different forms of entertainment of teenagers in modern history. **(3)** Among all the exhibits, music players have caught the most attention of the visitors. **(4)** The phonograph has a long history. It's over a hundred years old. I've attached a photo. Isn't it beautiful? **(5)** It appeared before the gramophone and the record player.

In the exhibition, there are a collection of vinyl records for visitors to listen to. **(6)** The sound quality of a vinyl record is far higher than that of a CD. **(7)** Its sound resembles the original recording.

At the exhibition, I came across a rectangular device. It looked very familiar. I once saw Dad repairing it for Grandpa. Dad told me that it was an MD player. **(8)** It plays MiniDiscs, which aren't as big as CDs. Like cassette tapes, they can store different songs. **(9)** However, MD players have eventually disappeared in recent history as they aren't very user-friendly music players.



(10) Nowadays, we can play music without difficulty with our phones. Still, it's interesting to know about music players and different forms of entertainment. The exhibition is now taking place in Asia. If you're interested, you can check on the official website for its schedule in Europe. Write back and tell me about your life in Paris.

Best,
Kayden

Version 2

Rewrite the underlined sentences in Version 1 based on the instructions.

Subject: An interesting exhibition you shouldn't miss

Send



Dear Marcus,

How are you? **(1)** Sorry for not writing you emails as often as before (not ... as ... as + often). **(2)** _____

_____ (comparative: *much / busy*). Last Sunday, I finally took a break and visited an exhibition with my father. It was brilliant. I highly recommend it to you.

The exhibition displays different forms of entertainment of teenagers in modern history. **(3)** _____

_____ (superlative: *attractive / exhibits / in the venue*).

(4) _____

_____ (superlative: *old / exhibit / ever see*). It's over a hundred years old. I've attached a photo. Isn't it beautiful? **(5)** _____

_____ (comparative: *early*).



In the exhibition, there are a collection of vinyl records for visitors to listen to.

(6) _____

(not as ... as + superlative). **(7)** _____

_____ (comparative: *close to*).

At the exhibition, I came across a rectangular device. It looked very familiar. I once saw Dad repairing it for Grandpa. Dad told me that it was an MD player. **(8)** _____

_____ (comparative: *small*). Like cassette tapes,

they can store different songs. **(9)** _____

_____ (not + one of + superlative: *user-friendly*).

(10) _____

(a lot + comparative: *easily*). Still, it's interesting to know about music players and different forms of entertainment. The exhibition is now taking place in Asia. If you're interested, you can check on the official website for its schedule in Europe. Write back and tell me about your life in Paris.

Best,

Kayden