# GRAMMAR REVIEW

## COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

One syllable adjectives form their comparative and superlative by adding *-er* and *-est*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *high* | *higher* | *the highest* |
| *low* | *lower* | *the lowest* |

Two syllable adjectives ending in *-le, -y, -ow, -er* form their comparative and superlative by adding *-er* and *-est*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *noble* | *nobler* | *noblest* |
| *pretty* | *prettier* | *prettiest* |
| *narrow* | *narrower* | *narrowest* |
| *clever* | *cleverer* | *cleverest* |

Adjectives of three or more syllables form their comparative and superlative by adding *more* and *most*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *interesting* | *more interesting* | *most interesting* |
| *beautiful* | *more beautiful* | *most beautiful* |

Some irregular comparisons:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *bad* | *worse* | *the worst* |
| *good* | *better* | *the best* |
| *little* | *less* | *the least* |
| *many/much* | *more* | *the most* |

In the comparative form the second object which is compared to the first is introduced by the word *than*: *The mystery plays were more elaborate than the mime tropes.*

The superlative has the definite article *the* in front, except when there is a possessive adjective or a possessive case: *The dog is the best hunter,* but *The dog is man's best friend.*

The superlative is followed by the preposition *in* when the object is a place or collective noun: *He is the best actor in the world. She is the worst student in the class.*

If the superlative refers to two elements then the comparative form is used: *She is the better singer of the two.*

The absolute superlative is formed by putting *very* + adjective: *It is very big.*
However, an absolute adjective is preferred: *It is huge.*

To express the same degree *as* + adjective/adverb/quantifier + *as* is used for the affirmative: The *play is as popular as ever.*
*Not as/so* + adjective/adverb/quantifier is used for the negative: *The theatre is not so/as popular today as in the past.*

**Exercise 2**
Choose the correct comparative or superlative form in these sentences.

1) *The Decameron* contains some of Boccaccio's *best / better* lyric poetry.
2) Religious literature was *the most / the more* prevalent genre in the Middle Ages.
3) The *commonest / most common* types of books were breviaries, missals and books of hours.
4) Liturgical drama was *more / most* formal than mime tropes.
5) The stage in Elizabethan theatre was *more / very* high.
6) The audience was *not as / more* quiet as spectators are today.
7) Shakespeare introduced *more / the more* new words into the English language than any other writer.
8) The theatre is *more interesting than / more interesting of* the cinema.

## ABSOLUTE ADJECTIVES

Absolute adjectives are generally used in place of the absolute superlative:
*The media plays a very huge* (= very big) *role in the everyday lives of the population.*

Some of the most common absolute adjectives are: *hilarious* (very funny), *starving* (very hungry), *furious* (very angry), *awful* (very bad), *brilliant* (very clever), *tiny* (very small), *boiling* (very hot), *terrified/terrifying* (very frightened/very frightening), *fantastic* (very good), *enormous* (very big), *filthy* (very dirty), *freezing/frozen* (very cold).
*Very* is not used with these adjectives.

Some absolute adjectives are placed together with a base adjective to reinforce the meaning:
*The room is freezing cold.* *The water is boiling hot.*

### Exercise 3

Use one of the absolute adjectives below to complete the sentences.

*freezing tiny starving hilarious terrified filthy furious brilliant*

1) The children played all day in the sand and were _____.
2) People who suffer from arachnophobia are _____ of spiders.
3) I thought the comedy was _____.
4) His mother was _____ when she saw his untidy room.
5) The room was absolutely _____ and they had to stamp their feet to keep warm.
6) The writing was so _____ that I needed a magnifying glass to read it.
7) Einstein was a _____ scientist.
8) There are still millions of people in the world who are _____.

## ADVERBS OF DEGREE

The most common adverbs of degree are :
*quite, nearly, almost, rather, fairly, so, only, very, extremely, absolutely, entirely, far, (very) much, completely, utterly, really, too, enough.*
Remember that *very much* is never placed between the verb and the object:
*I like music very much.* *I very much like music.*

Adverbs of degree modify other adverbs or adjectives. They are normally placed before the adverb or adjective they modify. The adverb *enough*, however, follows the adjective or adverb.

The adverbs *absolutely*, *utterly*, *really* are used together with absolute adjectives: *The film was absolutely terrifying*. They are normally only used in informal spoken English. The other adverbs of degree in fact cannot be used with base adjectives, with the exception of *quite*, which can have several meanings:

a) quite + base adjective expresses an idea of completeness: *You are quite right.* Here the meaning is that you are totally right.

b) quite + base adjective: *The film was quite good.* Here the meaning can depend on the tone, but usually means less than *very good.*

c) quite + absolute adjective: *The discovery was quite amazing.* The adverb reinforces the adjective.

The adverb *only* is placed next to the word to be modified and is placed before adjectives, adverbs and verbs and after nouns and pronouns:
*He only gave me ten pounds.* *Members only.*

The meaning of a sentence can change according to where *only* is placed:
*Only you understand me* = No one else understands me.
*You understand me only* = You understand me and no one else.