

9.1 Comparatives and superlatives

GR9.1)))

- 1 George is a banker. He's **richer** than most of his friends.
- 2 Living in London is **more expensive** than living in Birmingham.
- 3 Some people think that watching golf is **less exciting** than watching football.
- 4 It's **the best** meal I've ever had.
- 5 The Pyramids in Egypt are some of **the oldest** buildings in the world.

Comparatives

We use the comparative form of adjectives to compare people and things with each other.

*I'm **taller** than my sisters. Paris is **more beautiful** than London.*

- For one-syllable adjectives, we add *-er* (or *-r* for adjectives that end in *-e*). For multi-syllable adjectives, we use *more*.
short → *shorter* *ancient* → *more ancient*
- For some two-syllable adjectives, we can either add *-er* or use *more*. However, for two-syllable adjectives ending in *-y*, we generally change the *-y* to *i* and add *-er*.
gentle → *gentler/more gentle* *happy* → *happier*
- To make a negative comparison, we use *less* + adjective.
*Beards are **less popular** than they used to be.*
- We use *than* when we make a direct comparison between two things.
*Pedro's hair is **darker than** Lucca's.*
- To say something is the same, we use *as ... as*. To say something is not the same, we use *not as/so ... as*.
*I'm **as tall as** my dad. Paola's hair is **not as long as** before.*

We use modifiers when we want to give more detail about the degree of difference between two things.

*I'm **a bit taller** than my brother.*

*Anna is **much older** than Andre.*

- To make the difference between the things being compared stronger:
a lot far much so much very much
- To make the difference between the things being compared smaller:
a bit a little slightly
- To say there is no difference between the things being compared:
not any no

Superlatives

We use superlatives to compare people and things with everything in their group.

*Alex is **the tallest** person I know.*

*She's **the most intelligent** person I've ever met.*

For one-syllable and most two-syllable adjectives we use *the* and add *-est*. For multi-syllable adjectives, we use *the most*.

short → *the shortest* *beautiful* → *the most beautiful*

- 1 Complete the sentences with the correct comparative form of the adjectives in brackets.

- 1 Helen is *much shorter* (short) than her younger brother, David.
- 2 People who live in _____ (warm and dry) climates are often _____ (healthy) than people who live in _____ (cold and damp) climates.
- 3 It is _____ (easy) and slightly _____ (quick) to cycle to work than to go by bus.
- 4 The doctor told Steve he was _____ (likely) to get ill because he didn't do much exercise.
- 5 The cities here are _____ (much/big) than in my country, where the population is _____ (small).
- 6 You should wear _____ (good) sunglasses than those. Your eyes should be _____ (well/protected) from the sun.

- 2 Complete the text with the comparative or superlative form of the adjectives in brackets and any other necessary words.

Physical changes in human appearance have occurred ever since we first appeared. However, 1 *more recent* (recent) changes have not been 2 _____ (dramatic) they were in the 3 _____ (distant) past. This is because we have become 4 _____ (much/good) at adapting the environment to suit us rather than evolving to fit in with the environment.

Some changes have been 5 _____ (global) whereas others have been 6 _____ (regional) and localized. The 7 _____ (important) change affecting us is that the human body has become 8 _____ (slightly/small). Humans are not 9 _____ (tall or heavy) they used to be.

The 10 _____ (tall) humans lived around 40,000 years ago, with an average height of 183 cm. This is 11 _____ (much/tall) today's average height of 175 cm.

Perhaps surprisingly, the human brain is also not 12 _____ (big) as it used to be. In fact, the human brain is now the 13 _____ (small) it has been at any time in the past 100,000 years, and is about 14 _____ (10%/small) when humans first appeared.

9.2 Modals of deduction and speculation

GR9.2))

- The lights are on. Someone **must be** at home.
- He **can't be** English. Listen to his accent – I think he's South African.
- It's very cold. It **might snow** soon.
- Don't you think she looks a bit like Andrea? She **could be** his sister.

When we are making a deduction or speculating (= making a guess, usually based on evidence), we use the modal verbs *must*, *can't*, *might* and *could* to express how sure we are about something.

Must and can't

- We use *must* when we are very sure something is true.
*You've been driving all day. You **must be** tired.*
*My keys **must be** here somewhere!*
- We use *can't* when we are very sure something is not true.
*This photo **can't have been taken** in the UK. They're driving on the right.*
*This **can't be** Satiana's coat. It's too big.*
- We do not use *mustn't* in this way.
~~*This **mustn't be** Satiana's coat. It's too big.*~~

Might and could

- We use *might* or *could* when we are not sure, but we think something is possible. *Might* and *could* have the same meaning.
*This photo **might/could be** in the UK. They're driving on the left.*
*This **might/could be** Alex's phone. He's got one like this.*
- We can use *might not*, but we do not use *could not*.
*This **might not be** Jenny's house. I think hers has a green door.*
~~*This **could not be** Jenny's house. I think hers has a green door.*~~

We use **look + adjective** – when something **appears to be** ...
*It **looks** cold.*

- Complete the second sentence using *must*, *can't* or *might/could* so the meaning is the same as the first sentence.
 - Perhaps my keys are in the kitchen.
My keys *might be in the kitchen*.
 - I guess Erika likes black. She always wears black.
Erika _____ . She always wears it.
 - Perhaps that apartment over there is Frank's.
That apartment _____ .
 - It's possible that this painting is by Rembrandt. It's his style.
This painting _____ .
 - It's impossible that this is Ute's house. She said hers has a bright red door.
This _____ . Hers has a bright red door.
 - Ten euros for a coffee! Surely there's a mistake.
Ten euros for a coffee! There _____ .
 - Ten euros for a coffee! I'm sure that's not right.
Ten euros for a coffee! That _____ .
- As part of a competition, two people are trying to match some photos with the countries: the UK, Australia, the USA and South Africa. Complete the conversations using *must*, *can't* or *might/could*.

A What about this photo? Where do you think this is?

B Well, it ¹_____ be the UK – the weather's too nice, and there are no beaches like that in the UK. But it looks a bit like the UK. It ²_____ be Australia, maybe. Ah, look – I think that's the Australian flag in the background. It ³_____ be Australia.

A OK, and what about this one?

B Well, I'd say this one ⁴_____ be the UK, but I'm not sure.

A Yes, I agree. Look at that cloudy sky. I think you're right. And the number plate looks British. Yes, this one ⁵_____ be of the UK.

B OK, so this next one ⁶_____ be the UK or Australia – we've already got those. So, it ⁷_____ be either the US or South Africa. Which do you think?

A Well, it's difficult to say. It ⁸_____ be either, I suppose. There's nothing obvious. Oh, hang on. I'm not sure, but I think this one ⁹_____ be South Africa.

B What makes you think that?

A Look at the roads in the distance – the cars are driving on the left. I think they drive on the left in South Africa, don't they?

B Yes, I think they do. So it ¹⁰_____ be the US – they drive on the right there.

A OK, so this one ¹¹_____ be South Africa. And that means the last one ¹²_____ be the US.