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**The grammar of formal English**

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## Before you start

### 1 Review these intermediate grammar points and check you know them.

#### Adjectives

- Adjectives are words which give extra information about nouns. They do not change their form to show number or gender:  
*The hero was played by a **young** boy. Several **young** girls took the secondary roles.*
- Many adjectives are formed from other words:  
*history → **historic** beauty → **beautiful** depend → **dependent** effect → **effective***
- We often use the past (-ed) and present (-ing) participles as adjectives to describe feelings or emotions.  
We use the -ing form to describe a feeling that something causes:  
*It was a **frightening** film. (= It frightened us/made us feel afraid.)*  
We use the -ed form to describe a feeling that someone experiences:  
*I felt **frightened** when I watched that film. (= I was frightened/experienced fear.)*  
Inanimate objects cannot have feelings so we don't usually use -ed adjectives about feelings to describe them:  
~~*X The report into police behaviour during the demonstration was rather worried.*~~  
*✓ The report was rather **worrying**. (= The report made readers feel anxious.)*
- We can also combine words to make compound adjectives, e.g. *home-made, Spanish-speaking.*

#### Adverbs

- Adverbs are words which modify or give extra information about verbs, adjectives, other words or whole clauses. Here are some common examples:

not formed from other words	<i>here just never quite soon still tomorrow too well</i>	
fixed phrases	<i>at last kind of of course</i>	
formed from other words	adjective + -ly (note spelling)	<i>easy → easily excitable → excitably real → really tragic → tragically</i>
	compounds	<i>some + times → sometimes</i>

- The most common use of adverbs is to modify adjectives; the adverb usually comes before the adjective:  
*I thought his answers were **pretty good** on the whole.*  
*Those cars are **terribly expensive**.*  
Some adverbs, e.g. *really, almost, quite, pretty*, can modify another adverb:  
*The French team did **quite well** in the first round.*

- 2 Read the article and identify examples of adjectives and adverbs.**

### The Brink's-MAT Robbery

The biggest robbery in British history took place on 26 November 1983 when six men broke into the Brink's-MAT warehouse at Heathrow Airport, London.

They stole £3 million in cash and three tonnes of gold bullion, worth around £26 million. The armed robbers poured petrol over the terrified security guards and threatened to set them alight. The British police pursued the gang tirelessly, and in 1984 Brian Robinson and gang leader Michael McAvoy were caught and found guilty of armed robbery, receiving sentences of 25 years in prison. However, the other members of the gang are still at large, and the bulk of the gold has never been found.

- 3 Complete the diagnostic test below. Choose the correct words in *italics*. If both options are correct, choose both.**

- 1 In view of the terrible nature of the crime, *the sentence imposed by the judge was maximum* / *the maximum sentence was imposed by the judge.* ➤ Unit 12.1
- 2 The *involved people* / *people involved* will be caught and severely punished. ➤ Unit 12.3
- 3 The rich *seem* / *seems* to be getting richer and the poor poorer these days. ➤ Unit 12.5
- 4 They're selling that *Victorian wonderful house* / *wonderful Victorian house* on the corner. ➤ Unit 13.1
- 5 Prisoners can be identified by their *grey and white* / *grey white* striped uniforms. ➤ Unit 13.2
- 6 In the eighteenth century, the Bastille was the most infamous prison *of* / *in* France. ➤ Unit 14.1
- 7 The divorce has undoubtedly made him the *unhappiest* / *most unhappy* man in the street. ➤ Unit 14.3
- 8 Our new social security scheme is *lots* / *far* more generous than the previous government's. ➤ Unit 14.5
- 9 Getting a made-to-measure suit was not nearly *more expensive than* / *as expensive as* I had feared. ➤ Unit 15.1
- 10 The more frustrated he becomes, *angrier* / *the angrier* he gets. ➤ Unit 15.4
- 11 The flavour is *more sweet* / *sweeter* than savoury. ➤ Unit 15.5
- 12 Maria worked *like* / *as* a shop assistant during the university vacation. ➤ Unit 15.6
- 13 The weather in Greece was *more boiling* / *much hotter* than we expected. ➤ Unit 16.1
- 14 Steve's sister is *absolutely* / *very* intelligent. ➤ Unit 16.2
- 15 After two months with no rain the grass is *almost* / *slightly* dead. ➤ Unit 16.5
- 16 The result of the election came as *so* / *quite* a shock. ➤ Unit 17.2
- 17 As we descended the hill the car began to go *faster* / *more fast*. ➤ Unit 17.3
- 18 I *very carefully* opened the old box containing my mother's photographs. / *opened the old box containing my mother's photographs very carefully.* ➤ Unit 18.1
- 19 I've been suffering from insomnia recently. *I only slept last night* / *Last night I only slept* for four hours. ➤ Unit 18.2
- 20 *Emotionally*, Harriet / *Harriet emotionally* has always been dependent on her brothers. ➤ Unit 18.5

- 4 Check your answers on page 384. Then go to the unit for more information and practice.**

# 12 Adjective patterns

After a spate of vandalism in Sporn-ton, the police have reassured **concerned residents** that the **persons responsible** will be caught and punished.



## 1 Adjectives before nouns (attributive position)

Most adjectives can be used before a noun (attributive position), or after a linking verb, e.g. *be, become*, etc. (predicative position):

ATTRIBUTIVE *We've just seen an **exciting** film.*  
 PREDICATIVE *That film was **exciting**.*

But classifying adjectives (which describe what type of thing something is) and emphasising adjectives are normally only used BEFORE a noun:

✗ *The ~~plant~~ they are building here is **chemical**.* ✓ *They're building a **chemical plant** here.*  
 ✗ *The ~~chance~~ that they met was **mere**.* ✓ *It was **mere chance** that they met.*

ATTRIBUTIVE POSITION	
classifying (examples)	<i>chemical chief criminal elder entire eventual former industrial local lone main maximum medical national nuclear only outdoor/indoor principal social sole underlying whole</i>
emphasising	<i>mere sheer utter</i>

**ACADEMIC ENGLISH** In academic writing we usually prefer adjectives in attributive position, e.g. *basic processes, experimental physics, appropriate conditions, principal causes*, etc.

## 2 Adjectives after verbs (predicative position)

Adjectives in predicative position are usually the complement of a linking verb, e.g. *be, become, feel, seem* (► Unit 42.1): *When she heard the noise Mary **became** very **uneasy**.*

However, after certain verbs of thinking and feeling (i.e. *consider, find, think*) we can omit the linking verb: *I **consider/find** him (to be) very **reliable**.*

Many adjectives beginning with the letter *a* and adjectives describing health and feelings are not usually used before nouns; instead, we use them in predicative position:

✗ *Try not to disturb the ~~asleep~~ children.* ✓ *Try not to disturb the children; they are **asleep**.*

PREDICATIVE POSITION	
beginning with a	<i>ablaze aflame afloat afoot afraid alight alike alive alone aloof ashamed askew asleep awake aware</i>
health and feelings	<i>content fine glad ill* pleased poorly ready* sorry* sure* upset* (un)well</i>

\* There are some fixed phrases/idioms in which we use normally predicative adjectives before a noun with a special meaning, e.g. *a sure grasp, ill health, a ready wit, a sorry state, an upset stomach*.

Some predicative adjectives have equivalent words which can be used before a noun:

PREDICATIVE	<i>alive</i>	<i>afraid</i>	<i>alike</i>	<i>asleep</i>	<i>ill</i>
ATTRIBUTIVE	<i>live/living</i>	<i>frightened</i>	<i>similar</i>	<i>sleeping</i>	<i>sick</i>

*They are doing experiments on **live** animals/animals which are **alive**.*



### 3 Adjectives after pronouns, nouns, etc.

Adjectives always come AFTER indefinite pronouns, e.g. *something, anyone* (► Unit 5.2):

✗ *I'm looking for cheap something.* ✓ *I'm looking for something cheap.*

Some adjectives, including many that end in *-able* and *-ible*, can follow a noun after a superlative adjective or after the *first/last/next/only*:

✓ *The only seat available is in the back row.* ✓ *The only available seat is in the back row.*

Adjectives that are followed by a prepositional phrase, e.g. *interested in something, suitable for somebody*, go after, not before, a noun:

✗ *The project will appeal to interested in ecology students.*

✓ *The project will appeal to students interested in ecology.*

This is similar to a reduced relative clause (► Unit 55.5). We can also use a full relative clause with the adjective in predicative position:

*The project will appeal to students who are interested in ecology.*

Some adjectives have a different meaning when used before or after a noun:

*The meeting was full of concerned residents.* (= worried)

*The students concerned were a small minority.* (= who took part/were involved)

*I'm afraid we have opposite points of view.* (= contrasting)

*We used to live in the house opposite.* (= physically facing/across from us)

*The present director is American.* (= current/existing now)

*We took a vote of all members present.* (= physically there)

*Responsible parents have been outraged by this show.* (= caring/conscientious)

*The person responsible will be caught and punished.* (= who did the action)

*He gave us a ridiculously involved excuse.* (= complicated)

*The president gave medals to all those involved.* (= who took part)

### 4 Verbs acting as adjectives

Participle forms of verbs (usually ending in *-ed* or *-ing*) can often act as adjectives. Some of these can be used on their own before or after a noun:

*Please provide me with a list of the selected candidates/candidates selected.*



Some participle forms can only be used AFTER a noun:

✗ *Please dispose of your rubbish in the provided bins.* ✓ *... rubbish in the bins provided.*

before or after a noun	<i>affected chosen identified infected remaining selected stolen</i>
------------------------	--

only after a noun	<i>applying caused discussed found provided questioned taken</i>
-------------------	--

When we use participles as adjectives, present (*-ing*) participles have an active meaning and past participles have a passive meaning:

*I always seem to play for the losing team.* (= the team which is losing)

*She found the lost ring under the sofa.* (= the ring which had been lost)

Participle forms after a noun can be part of a reduced relative clause:

*I feel sorry for the people left behind.* (= the people that are left behind)

More on the use of participles in clauses ► Unit 55

### 5 Adjectives acting as nouns

Adjectives can sometimes act as nouns when they describe a particular group or characteristic (► Unit 1.5). We usually use the definite article and a plural verb:

*Old people are becoming more numerous.* = *The old are becoming more numerous.*



We cannot use the possessive 's with adjectives used as nouns or make them plural:

✗ *The government is looking at the disabled's problems.*

✓ *The government is looking at the problems of the disabled.*

✗ *The Japaneses enjoy a high standard of living.*

✓ *The Japanese (or Japanese people) enjoy a high standard of living.*

## Practice

1 Look at sentence A and B in each pair. Tick (✓) those which are grammatically correct and cross (X) those which are incorrect. In some cases both sentences are correct.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 A Cost is the chief factor. ....            | B The cost factor is chief. ....           |
| 2 A This is the principal argument. ....      | B This argument is principal. ....         |
| 3 A He had an ashamed feeling. ....           | B He felt ashamed. ....                    |
| 4 A That's a ridiculous idea. ....            | B That idea is ridiculous. ....            |
| 5 A The village has a local post office. .... | B The village post office is local. ....   |
| 6 A It was sheer madness. ....                | B The madness was sheer. ....              |
| 7 A You have a ready dinner. ....             | B Your dinner is ready. ....               |
| 8 A He had an alone sensation. ....           | B He sensed he was alone. ....             |
| 9 A We're building an indoor pool. ....       | B The pool we are building is indoor. .... |
| 10 A You have very alike children. ....       | B Your children are very alike. ....       |
| 11 A That was a silly comment. ....           | B That comment was silly. ....             |
| 12 A She's a mere beginner. ....              | B That beginner is mere. ....              |
| 13 A Those are afraid people. ....            | B Those people are afraid. ....            |
| 14 A We have maximum security here. ....      | B Here the security is maximum. ....       |
| 15 A He's my ill brother. ....                | B My brother is ill. ....                  |

2 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Choose the correct words in *italics* in this article. If both options are correct, choose both.




**RESULTS OF a recent survey of international air travellers have revealed huge discrepancies in the levels of (1) *comfort and service provided* / *provided comfort and service* at many leading airports around the world.**

A (2) *staggered* / *staggering* 75 percent of those interviewed felt that airports were failing to provide a (3) *relaxed* / *relaxing* and efficient environment. Airports in the UK and the United States came in for particular criticism. Fewer than one in ten people were fully (4) *satisfied* / *satisfying* with the service at leading airports in these countries. Airports in continental Europe received (5) *alike* / *similar* negative feedback. Perhaps the enormous growth in passenger numbers

in recent years is the (6) *underlying problem* / *problem which is underlying*.

By contrast, airports in the growing economies of south-east Asia and the Pacific have received far higher satisfaction ratings. Many of the (7) *involved researchers* / *researchers involved* noted that these airports, which are generally more modern than their equivalents in the West, offered (8) *enhanced* / *enhancing* check-in facilities and (9) *pleasant somewhere* / *somewhere pleasant* in which to wait for flights.

With regard to the issues which most annoyed people, the lack of children's facilities and wireless Internet access were two of the (10) *concerns which were main* / *main concerns*. Another was the way in which airports deal with flight delays. The better airports have found ways to cope with this, ranging from television lounges to children's activity areas. (11) *Delayed* / *Delaying* passengers seem to appreciate small details such as comfortable seating and the availability of a wide range of refreshments – anything to relieve the (12) *boredom utter* / *utter boredom* of waiting for a delayed flight. (13) *Affected passengers* / *Passengers affected* were less likely to complain if their children were (14) *amused* / *amusing* and they were able to find inexpensive cafés and restaurants. The airports which came out worse seemed to have (15) *aloof staff* / *staff who were aloof*, with little interest in communicating with passengers.

**3** Indicate the correct position for the words in brackets, as in the example. The word the adjective/phrase describes is underlined.  2.22 Listen and check.

- 0 There was nothing<sup>original</sup> in the book. (original)
- 1 All students should apply to the bursar's office before the end of term. (interested in the grant)
- 2 There was something about her behaviour. (inexplicable)
- 3 They gave an explanation which simply served to confuse the jury. (involved)
- 4 I'm afraid six o'clock is the only appointment. (available)
- 5 The state of affairs is unlikely to continue for much longer. (present)
- 6 I'm afraid the person is on holiday at the moment. (responsible for recruitment)
- 7 They've started having late night parties in the apartment. (opposite)
- 8 Anyone would be deeply offended by that harrowing documentary. (sensitive)
- 9 Don't worry about getting receipts, the amounts are very small. (concerned)
- 10 Make sure you are wearing shoes before you set out. (suitable for a rocky terrain)

**4** **GRAMMAR IN USE** Some of the underlined phrases in this article contain mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them.  2.23 Listen and check.

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## More violent crime

Crime is on the rise according to a (1) worried report issued this week by the government's national statistics office.

(2) Concerned citizens are likely to be alarmed by the report's conclusions. Despite promises that the government was tackling serious crime, the report indicates a 6% rise in serious offences over the last year. The largest increase has been in assaults, especially those involving knives or other weapons. The (3) factor main in these crimes appears to be the growth of gangs in our inner cities, and many of the crimes are drug-related.

Burglaries and theft have also increased, although by a smaller percentage. The (4) publishing figures show a 3% growth since last year. Government sources claim that the (5) underlying reason for this increase is the economic situation. An opposition spokesman said there was (6) nothing surprising in the figures. He pointed at (7) causes which are social and blamed the rise in crime on the (8) present government's lack of investment in education and training. The chair of the Police Officers' Association placed responsibility for the situation on the shoulders of the Minister of Justice, the (9) responsible politician for policing. Reductions in police numbers have been a (10) factor which is principal in the growth of crime, he contends.

As usual, it is (11) old and vulnerable who are most likely to be the victims of crime. More than 38% of the (12) victims identified in the report were over the age of 65. It is certainly true that there is a fear of crime amongst the elderly, and lobbying groups are calling for (13) radical something to be done about the problem. They are asking for (14) sentences which are maximum to be given to those criminals that target (15) the elderly or disabled. They feel the (16) involved criminals should be punished more severely than others.



# 13 Groups of adjectives

In cartoons and movies prisoners are often shown wearing rough grey and white striped uniforms. In fact, these days most prisoners wear blue or grey boiler suits or overalls.



## 1 Adjective order

We often use more than one adjective to describe a noun. We put opinion adjectives, e.g. *fantastic*, *beautiful*, *useful*, *charming* before all others:

~~✗ I've bought a new fantastic MP3 player.~~ ✓ I've bought a **fantastic** new MP3 player.

We put the category which is most permanent or important (usually 'type' or 'purpose') next to the noun; these are often part of the noun, e.g. *mobile phone*:

~~✗ We removed the gas heating old system.~~ ✓ We removed the old **gas heating** system.

More on compound nouns ► Unit 70.1

If there are other adjectives, we usually put them in this order:

a **large** **well-preserved** **eighteenth-century** farmhouse

size + quality/character + age/shape + colour + origin + material

a **square** **black** box a **grey** **Italian** **leather** sofa



We don't usually use more than three or four adjectives before a noun. If we want to give more information, we can use additional clauses:

[Elaine's just bought a beautiful well-preserved eighteenth-century French stone farmhouse.]

Elaine's just bought a **beautiful French** stone farmhouse **which is well-preserved and dates from the eighteenth century**.

## 2 Paired adjectives

If two adjectives describe different parts of the same thing, we put *and* between them:

~~✗ The chrome steel door glinted in the sun.~~

✓ The **chrome and steel** door glinted in the sun. (Some parts were chrome, some were steel.)

We always use *and* between two colours:

~~✗ They are wearing grey white uniforms.~~ ✓ They are wearing **grey and white** uniforms.

We can use *and* between two adjectives which describe similar aspects of something:

The protesters are calling for more **political and economic** freedom.

When two adjectives describe contrasting aspects of the same thing (i.e. it might seem surprising that they go together) we put *but*, *yet* or *though* between them:

The flat was located in a **rundown but central** part of town.

Group therapy can be a **simple yet effective** solution to this sort of problem.

## 3 Using commas or *and*

When there are several adjectives in predicative position we usually put *and* before the last one: *I'm afraid the hotel was ancient, dirty and overpriced.*

With longer lists of adjectives of the same category before a noun we can use commas and put *and* before the last adjective, or we can simply list the adjectives:

I found him a **friendly, knowledgeable and dedicated** guide.

I found him a **friendly, knowledgeable, dedicated** guide.



We don't use *and* before the last adjective when the adjectives are of different categories:

~~✗ We enjoyed sitting in the fantastic soft grey and leather seats.~~

✓ We enjoyed sitting in the **fantastic, soft, grey leather** seats.

## Practice

### 1 Choose the correct words in *italics*. If both options are correct, choose both.

- 1 The colour scheme for the party is *red orange* / *red and orange*.
- 2 Dieter had always wanted *an expensive German* / *a German expensive* sports car.
- 3 The old cottage has *brick and stone* / *brick stone* walls and a charming thatched roof.
- 4 It was a challenging, *difficult, demanding* / *difficult and demanding* course.
- 5 We found the hotel to be a welcome *though* / *and* pricey haven from the noise and confusion of the surrounding streets.
- 6 Many of these *stone large* / *large stone* structures date from the early Bronze Age.
- 7 We can seat up to ten people at our *oval and mahogany* / *oval mahogany* dining table.
- 8 I'm fed up with these mindless, *boring and sentimental* / *boring, sentimental* TV talent shows.
- 9 We will never submit to their outrageous *yet* / *and* unreasonable demands.
- 10 Nineteenth-century novels tend to be full of *long, detailed* / *long and detailed* descriptive passages.

### 2 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Complete the article, using the words in brackets in the correct order. If necessary, add *and* or *yet*. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

**2.24** Listen and check.

#### Thief caught by text message

The thief of a (0) *priceless Renaissance* (Renaissance / priceless) salt cellar has been caught after a three-year hunt. The (1) ..... (encrusted enamel / gold) salt cellar, known as the Saliera, is one of the most (2) ..... (beautiful / famous) works of the (3) ..... (sixteenth-century / Florentine / celebrated) sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini. The salt cellar, which is worth at least 50 million euros, was stolen from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The theft was (4) ..... (simple / daring). In the middle of the night the thief climbed up some scaffolding, walked through an empty gallery and smashed the (5) ..... (glass / heavy) display case containing the salt cellar. The alarm went off but the security guards assumed it was faulty and ignored it. It wasn't until four hours later that the cleaners noticed the (6) ..... (shattered / glass) display case and raised the alarm.

Some time later the police received a ransom demand of 10 million euros for the return of the (7) ..... (priceless / missing) sculpture. In a modern twist on a very traditional crime the thief sent his demand by text message. It was a (8) ..... (stupid / fatal) mistake. The police were able to trace the mobile phone which sent the text message and the shop which had sold that particular phone. By an (9) ..... (amazing / fortuitous) coincidence the shop had a surveillance camera and still had the tapes from the day on which the phone had been sold. The (10) ..... (grainy / distinct) pictures of the man who had bought the phone were broadcast on TV and within days several people had phoned in with a positive identification. The suspect gave himself up to the police and led them to a forest north of Vienna. There they found the (11) ..... (complete / undamaged) sculpture hidden in a (12) ..... (wooden / small) box.



Detail from the Saliera

# 14 Comparative and superlative adjectives

## 1 Form and use

We use comparative adjectives to compare two (or more) things or people, and superlative adjectives to distinguish one thing or person from a number of others.

	COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES	SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES
one syllable* <i>large</i>	adjective + <i>-er</i> (+ <i>than</i> ): <i>Los Angeles is <b>larger</b></i> <i>(than San Francisco).</i>	<i>the</i> + adjective + <i>-est</i> : <i>The Twin Towers Correctional Facility</i> <i>is <b>the largest</b> prison in the world.</i>
two or more syllables* <i>expensive</i>	<i>more</i> + adjective (+ <i>than</i> ): <i>Gold is <b>more valuable</b></i> ( <i>than silver</i> ).	<i>the most</i> + adjective: <i>Platinum is <b>the most valuable</b> metal.</i>
irregular adjectives <i>good/bad, far, old</i>	<i>better/worse, further/farther,</i> <i>older/elder</i>	<i>the best/worst, the furthest/farthest,</i> <i>the oldest/eldest</i>

\* For exceptions ► 14.3 below

Spelling rules for these forms ► page 367

We use *than* to introduce a noun or a clause after a comparative adjective:

*Los Angeles is **larger than San Francisco**. Los Angeles is larger **than I expected it to be**.*

We can use other phrases between a comparative adjective and a *than* clause:

*The prisoners were **more violent in this prison than in the others** we visited.*

If the object of the comparison is a pronoun without a verb we usually use an object pronoun (► Unit 4.1). If there is a verb we use a subject pronoun:

[*I'm taller than he.*] ✓ *I'm taller than **him**.* ✓ *I'm taller than **he is**.*

When we have two or more adjectives with *more* in a list, we usually only use *more* once:

[*Lester and Graves were **more hardworking and more determined** than the others.*]

✓ *Lester and Graves were **more hardworking and determined** than the others.*



After superlatives we use *in* before singular nouns (i.e. the name of a place or group), but we use *of* before plural nouns:

✗ *The Twin Towers Correctional Facility is the largest prison of the world.*

✓ *The Twin Towers Correctional Facility is the largest prison **in the world**.*

*Mallorca is the largest **of the Balearic islands**.*

In formal English we can add an *of* phrase at the beginning of the sentence:

***Of the candidates interviewed,** David Slater was the most suitable for the post.*

## 2 less and least

We use *less* and *least* as the opposite of *more* and *most*. We use these words with all adjectives including one-syllable adjectives:

*I prefer the paisley pattern; it's **less bold** than the others.*

*The tuna salad is **the least expensive** dish on the menu.*

### FORMALITY CHECK

In informal English we usually prefer to use *not as ... as*:

*I prefer the paisley pattern; it **isn't as bold as** the others.*

*more/most/less/least with nouns* ► Unit 57.2

## 3 Special rules

One-syllable adjectives ending in *-ed* and the adjectives *real*, *right* and *wrong* form the comparative and superlative with *more* and *most* (we do not add *-er* or *-est*):

✗ *I was **bored**er than I was on the flight to Sydney.*

✓ *I was **more bored** than I was on the flight to Sydney.*

Many two-syllable adjectives ending in *-ly*, *-y*, *-ow*, *-r* and *-l*, and the adjectives *common*, *handsome*, *mature*, *pleasant*, *polite*, *simple* and *stupid* can have either *more/most* or *-er/-est*:  
*The photographer wanted something **more lively** (or **livelier**).*

*The staff couldn't have been **more friendly** (or **friendlier**).*

*Are people in the country **more polite** (or **politer**) than those in the city?*

When we add a negative prefix to two-syllable adjectives ending in *-y* (e.g. *happy – unhappy*) they can also take *more/most* or *-er* and *-est*:

*She was the **unlikeliest** candidate to succeed. He's the **most unhappy** man I've ever met.*

We sometimes omit *the* before superlatives describing titles, award, prizes, etc:

*This year's prize for **most promising** newcomer goes to Lizzie Gordon.*

**FORMALITY CHECK** In informal spoken English we sometimes use a superlative adjective when we are only comparing two things, especially if the two things make a set:  
*I've got two cars but the Mercedes is the **best**.*

#### 4 Irregular adjectives

We can use *elder* and *eldest* (instead of *older* and *oldest*) to talk about people's ages, especially people in the same family, but we can't use *elder* immediately after a verb:

*Their **eldest/oldest** son went to Harvard. Mary is **the eldest/the oldest**.*

✗ *My sister is **elder** (than me).*

Note that we don't use *elder* and *eldest* to talk about the age of things:

✗ *This is the **eldest** house in the street.*

We use *further* or *farther* to talk about a 'greater distance':

*John's house is the **farther** one.*

*I've moved **further** away from my parents. (= a greater distance away)*



We use *further* (not *farther*) with the meaning of 'extra' or 'more':

*Let me know if you have any **further** questions. (= extra/more)*

#### 5 Intensifying and weakening; emphasis

Comparatives and superlatives can be made stronger or weaker by adding the following:

COMPARATIVES		
→ stronger	<i>even (very) much far a lot lots (informal) considerably significantly substantially a great deal</i>	<i>His new film's <b>even more</b> exciting than the last one. The issue of accountability became <b>substantially more important</b> in the weeks before the election.</i>
→ weaker	<i>a little slightly a bit (informal) somewhat (formal)</i>	<i>The lamb's <b>a bit cheaper</b> than the fish. The artist's style is <b>somewhat darker</b> than that of his contemporaries.</i>



We don't use *a little/a bit* when a noun follows the comparative adjective:

✗ *It's **a little higher price** than I expected. ✓ The price is **a little higher** than I expected.*

SUPERLATIVES		
→ stronger	<i>by far easily (informal)</i>	<i>The Twin Towers Correctional Facility is <b>by far the largest</b> prison in the world. (much larger than all the others)</i>
→ weaker	<i>one of some of among</i>	<i>New York is <b>one of the largest</b> cities in the world. (there may be some larger)</i>

**FORMALITY CHECK** Most one-syllable adjectives can also form the comparative and superlative with *more* or *most* instead of *-er* or *-est*. We usually use these forms for emphasis in spoken English:

*You should be **more proud** of the things you've already achieved. (= prouder)*

*I think this is the award she is **the most proud** of. (= proudest)*

## Practice

- 1 Complete the sentences, using suitable comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives in the box. Add *than* or *the* if necessary, as in the example.

🔊 2.25 Listen and check.

bad bored dry far good keen loose pretty real scared tidy wet wrong

- 0 Since we've had a cleaner, the house has become a lot ...tidier than... it used to be!
- 1 And now we come to the award for ..... actor in a leading role.
- 2 It's been raining non-stop. I think this will be ..... July on record!
- 3 The authenticity of dialogue and setting often makes low-budget films seem ..... the somewhat artificial version of reality in Hollywood movies.
- 4 In medieval times people rarely travelled far. For most peasants, ..... destination would be the local market town.
- 5 This skirt's much too tight on the hips. I need something with a ..... fit.
- 6 The pianist was awful! I think that's ..... performance I've ever heard.
- 7 I don't mind the Mediterranean summer because it's a ..... heat than you find in the tropics.
- 8 I like all Mozart's operas but I think *Don Giovanni* is the one I am ..... on.
- 9 We've inherited two paintings. Of the two, I'd say the landscape is ..... .
- 10 I know all theft is wrong, but don't you agree that it's ..... to steal from an individual than from a company?
- 11 ..... I've ever been was when Joe and I were flying over the Himalayas and we hit a storm; it was absolutely petrifying.
- 12 That play was so tedious. I was ..... watching that than I was when I spent three hours trapped in that lift last year!

- 2 GRAMMAR IN USE Find and correct ten more mistakes. 🔊 2.26 Listen and check.

KAREN Now we've seen all the candidates, what do you think?

TOBY It's a difficult choice, but I thought Steven was the <sup>strongest</sup> most strong of the three.

KAREN Oh? You couldn't be more wrong! Meera definitely has better experience.

TOBY Well of course she does, she's elder than the other two.

KAREN Yes, and she's maturer.

TOBY True. But don't you think she's a bit set in her ways? Would she really fit in here?

KAREN I don't see why not. Let's face it, the other two are very young – significantly more younger than most of our staff.

TOBY That could be a good thing. I mean younger people are adaptabler than older ones.

KAREN OK. What about Ahmed? He was the best qualified in the candidates.

TOBY I'm not sure. He seemed the less promising of the three. He was too laid back.

KAREN Yes, he was the easily most relaxed – people are usually more nervouser at interviews.

TOBY So we come back to Steven. He was one the most ambitious candidates I've ever interviewed. I thought that was a positive thing ...

KAREN Yes. But he's very distant. Aren't we looking for someone more friendlier and approachable? Let's look at their CVs again.

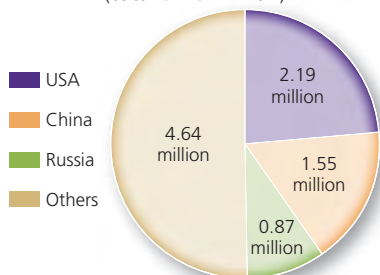


**3 Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first. Use three to six words in your answer, including the word in brackets, as in the example.**

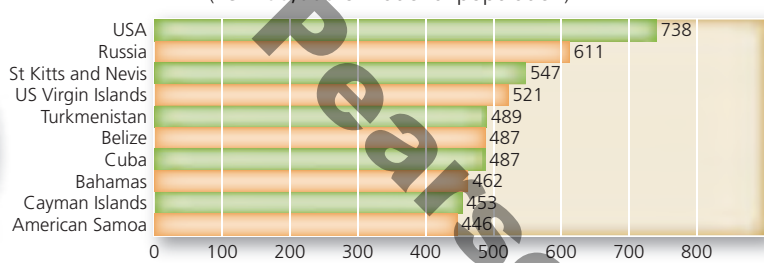
- 0 All the other members of the family are younger than Uncle Jacob. (the)  
Uncle Jacob ..... *is the oldest member* ..... of the family.
- 1 I live closer to the bus stop than Ivan does. (away)  
Ivan lives ..... than me.
- 2 These apples aren't as tasty as the ones Lizzie bought. (than)  
The apples Lizzie bought .....
- 3 The massacre was among the most despicable episodes in the regiment's history. (one)  
The massacre was ..... in the regiment's history.
- 4 The ending of the film wasn't as sentimental as I'd expected. (than)  
I'd expected the ending of the film to be ..... it was.
- 5 Mikhail's essay wasn't as bad as the others. (the)  
Mikhail's essay .....
- 6 All the other flights were more expensive than the Easyjet one. (of)  
The Easyjet flight ..... the flights.
- 7 That was easily the most ridiculous story I've ever heard. (by)  
That was ..... I've ever heard.
- 8 Of the two sisters, Sophie and Caroline, Sophie is the elder. (than)  
Sophie is ..... sister Caroline.

**4 GRAMMAR IN USE Study the charts; then complete the description, using the prompts in brackets. If you see <, use a suitable modifying word or phrase, e.g. considerably, among etc. as in the example.**

Number of prisoners worldwide  
(total 9.25 million)



Prisoners as proportion of population  
(Per 100,000 of national population)



From World Prison Population List (seventh edition). Kings College London International Centre for Prison Studies

- 0 The USA has *by far the highest number of prisoners*.. (< / high / number / prisoners)
- 1 The USA has .....  
(< / large / numbers of prisoners / any other country)
- 2 It also has .....  
of the national population. (high / number / prisoners / as a proportion)
- 3 ..... American Samoa has (countries / the chart)  
..... per 100,000 population. (low / number of prisoners)
- 4 China has .....  
(< / great / number of prisoners / Russia).
- 5 St Kitts and Nevis and the US Virgin Islands are small states, but they have  
.....  
(< / high / proportion of prisoners per population / apart from the USA and Russia).

# 15 Other comparative patterns

**Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow** are the most famous bank robbers in American history. In the early 1930s they carried out a string of robberies in the American mid-West. Although they looked like an innocent young couple, they were ruthless criminals. As they travelled, they became **more and more daring**, killing at least nine police officers. They were eventually shot dead by police in 1934. Their story was made into a film in 1967.



## 1 (not) as ... as

We can say that two things are equal by using *as* + adjective + *as*:

*The Spanish omelette is **as expensive as** the chicken salad. They both cost €7.99.*

We make this comparison more emphatic with *just*:

*In the American legal system, juries are **just as important as** in the UK.*

To say that things are almost equal we use *just about*, *about*, *almost*, *more or less* or *nearly* + *as*:

*Let's not eat here. This café's **just about as bad as** the last one.*

*My niece is **nearly as old as** me!*

We make a negative comparison with *not as/so* + adjective + *as*:

*Warsaw **isn't as large as** London. (= London is larger.)*

We can modify this type of comparison with *nearly* or *quite*:

*Motor bikes **aren't nearly so expensive as** cars. (= Motor bikes are much cheaper.)*

*My mobile phone **isn't quite as good as** Sunil's. (= Sunil's phone is slightly better.)*

**FORMALITY CHECK** In informal spoken English we can use *not anything like*, *nothing like* or *nowhere near* + *as* + adjective:

*That dress **isn't anything like as nice as** the red one.*

*This outfit's **nothing like/nowhere near as fashionable as** the one in the magazine.*

*similar to*, *different than/from/to* ► pages 370–1

## 2 no/not any + comparative adjective

We can use comparative adjectives to say that two things are equal.

We use *is* + *no* + comparative adjective or *is not* + *any* + comparative adjective:

*That Nokia phone is **no more expensive than/no dearer than** the Samsung.*

(= They are the same price.)

*The Nokia **isn't any cheaper than/isn't any less expensive than** the Samsung.*

(= They are the same price.)

## 3 Progressive comparison

We can describe how something increases or decreases in intensity by repeating *more* or the same comparative adjective, with *and* between the forms:

*As they travelled, Bonnie and Clyde became **more and more daring**.*

*Her visits to the country to see her son became **rarer and rarer**.*

#### 4 Combined comparison

To describe how a change in one thing causes a change in another, we can use two comparative forms with *the*. Note the use of the comma after the first clause:

*The longer you leave it, the worse it'll get.*

We sometimes omit the verb *be* in the clauses:

*The more sophisticated the product, the more substantial the potential profit.*

#### 5 Contrastive comparison

When we contrast two related qualities, we always use *more* (not *-er*):

✗ *I'm sadder than disappointed.* ✓ *I'm more sad than disappointed.*

✓ *Her eyes are more green than grey.*

We can also use *not so much ... as* or *rather than*:

*I'm not so much disappointed as sad. Her eyes are green rather than grey.*

#### 6 like and as; similes and metaphors

We often describe something by comparing it to something else which has similar qualities. These comparisons are known as 'similes'. There are two forms:

- *as + adjective + as*: *Listening to her was as interesting as watching paint dry.*

(In informal English we sometimes omit the first *as*: *She looks white as a sheet.*)

- *like + noun or verb phrase*: *The cruise ship was like a skyscraper lying on its side.*

There are many idioms in which we use these two patterns:

*You're as white as a sheet; I think you'd better see a doctor.*

*I feel full of energy today – I slept like a log last night.*



We use *like* (not *as*) before a noun to compare two things which SEEM similar:

✗ *Although they looked as an innocent young couple, they were ruthless criminals.*

✓ *Although they looked like an innocent young couple, they were ruthless criminals.*

(They appeared to be innocent, but they weren't.)

*When Mike puts on his dark suit he looks like a waiter.* (= He resembles a waiter.)

*Sometimes my boss acts like a dictator.* (= He behaves in a similar way to a dictator.)

*This fabric is so soft it feels like silk.* (= similar to silk)



We use *as* (not *like*) before a noun when we are describing someone's actual job, role or identity, or something's function:

✗ *Simon's working like a waiter during the summer vacation.*

✓ *Simon's working as a waiter during the summer vacation.* (This is his job.)

*Use your payroll number as a password for the computer.* (This is its function.)

*Jude Law appeared as Hamlet in a recent production of the play.* (This was his role.)

*The SAT tests are used as an entry test by many American universities.* (This is their function.)

We can also describe something by comparing it with something similar without using *like* or *as*; this is known as a 'metaphor':

*The new treaty will form a bridge between our two nations.* (*a bridge* = metaphor for 'a link')

Metaphors are common in poetry and literary English:

*I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed! (thorns of life = bad experiences)*

#### 7 as and such

We can use *as* and *not such* to introduce a comparison with nouns. There are two patterns:

- *as + adjective + a + noun + as*:

*It wasn't as bad a result as I'd expected.* (= better than expected)

- *not such a + adjective + noun + as*:

*It wasn't such a bad result as I'd expected.*

*so dark/such a dark night that ... not light enough to, etc.* ► Unit 59.4

## Practice

### 1 Choose the best explanation, A or B.

- 1 The prices on the menu aren't nearly as expensive as I expected.
  - A Prices are a little cheaper than I expected.
  - B Prices are much cheaper than I expected.
- 2 It looks as if your new car isn't any more reliable than the old one!
  - A Both cars are equally unreliable.
  - B The new car is slightly less reliable than the old one.
- 3 I have to say that the hotel wasn't quite as luxurious as the brochure claimed.
  - A The hotel was much less luxurious than the brochure claimed.
  - B The hotel was slightly less luxurious than the brochure claimed.
- 4 She isn't anything like as snobbish as you said.
  - A She is less snobbish than you said.
  - B She isn't snobbish.
- 5 I'm afraid your figures are no more accurate than the ones Rachel gave me.
  - A Your figures are less accurate than Rachel's.
  - B Your figures and Rachel's figures are equally inaccurate.
- 6 As far as Daniel's job is concerned, things are about as bad as they can be.
  - A Daniel's job could get worse.
  - B Daniel's job couldn't be any worse than it is.
- 7 Carol's nowhere near as efficient as my last assistant, Becky.
  - A Carol is slightly less efficient than Becky.
  - B Carol is much less efficient than Becky.
- 8 In his new job, Gerhard is working like a slave!
  - A Gerhard is an actor in a film about ancient Rome.
  - B Gerhard has to work very hard.

### 2 Choose the correct words in *italics*. 2.27 Listen and check.

- 1 My exam results were *nearly not* / *not nearly* as good as Carmen's.
- 2 When Lucy gets dressed up she looks *as* / *like* a movie star.
- 3 It wasn't as exciting *film* / *a film* as his earlier ones.
- 4 Are you feeling OK? You're as *white as* / *whiter than* a sheet!
- 5 My new house is nothing *as* / *like as* big as my previous place.
- 6 Mobile phones seem to be getting *smaller and smaller* / *more small and more small*.
- 7 It's an unusual colour, *redder* / *more red* than pink.
- 8 When he was younger, my uncle worked *like* / *as* a porter in the local hospital.
- 9 It wasn't *such* / *so* a surprising piece of news as we'd expected.
- 10 The higher you climb, *the further than* / *the further* you have to fall.
- 11 When George tried to sing it was *like* / *as* a cat screeching!
- 12 This sweater isn't as *darker* / *dark* a colour as I'd wanted – can I exchange it?
- 13 The furnishings in the hotel rooms are comfortable rather *as* / *than* luxurious.
- 14 Carly is *nowhere* / *nothing* near as tolerant as her younger sister.
- 15 It wasn't as *easier* / *easy* a victory as everyone had expected.
- 16 As we approached the city, the roads became more *and* / *than* more crowded.
- 17 The further out you swim, *the colder* / *the more cold* the water gets.
- 18 Is it OK to use my date of birth *as* / *like* my PIN number?
- 19 I'm not as dedicated a fan of the band *than* / *as* I was when I was younger.
- 20 My bed is really comfortable, I slept *as* / *like* a log last night!

**3 GRAMMAR IN USE** Complete the text by writing one word only in each gap.

**2.28** Listen and check.

## Teenage girls cause mayhem in California street races

FOR YEARS illegal street races have been the scourge of Los Angeles. Weaving through the busy city streets in souped-up cars, amateur drivers race to win prizes of up to \$3,000. Crashes and fatalities are commonplace and the police seem unable to stop the menace because (1) ..... faster they chase the criminals, the (2) ..... they drive, causing even more damage. The drivers call these races 'cutting up' contests and their aim is to drive (3) ..... fast as possible through crowded streets, overtaking and 'cutting up' ordinary drivers. The criminals use special cars – they look (4) ..... ordinary family cars to the naked eye, but in fact they have been fitted with fuel boosters. Although (5) ..... nearly as powerful (6) ..... professional racing cars, these vehicles can still reach high speeds and be extremely dangerous.

Ten years ago about ten people a year were killed in street races in the Los Angeles area. Now the figure

is more than a hundred. As street races have grown more and (7) ..... dangerous, the police have been forced to take stronger action. The crackdown has resulted in a surprising discovery – most of the racers are teenage girls rather than teenage boys, and some are as young (8) ..... sixteen. But to many members of the public this isn't (9) ..... a surprising revelation. Especially as many of these girls seem to be from the Asian community, perhaps modelling themselves on Nadine Toyoda, a Scottish-Japanese former street racer who has changed her ways and now works (10) ..... a legitimate racing driver.

Psychologists have blamed the crime wave on the influence of computer games, many of which feature street races. Teenagers want to be (11) ..... the drivers in these games. But driving in a game is fictional (12) ..... than real. When you crash a car in a computer game you simply start again. In real life the consequences are rather more serious.

**4** Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first. Use the word(s) in brackets, as in the example.

- 0 As students get closer to their exams they become more nervous. (the more)  
The closer students *get to their exams, the more nervous they become.*
- 1 Their summer party wasn't anything like as good as their previous one. (nothing)  
Their summer party ..... their previous one.
- 2 My test score wasn't as bad as I'd feared. (such)  
It wasn't ..... I'd feared.
- 3 I'm bored rather than tired. (not so much)  
I'm .....
- 4 My friends claimed that the film was interesting but I found it pretty dull. (film)  
It wasn't as .....
- 5 If you keep picking that spot it will get worse. (the more)  
..... it will get.
- 6 She's slightly angry but she's very disappointed. (than)  
She's .....
- 7 We noticed the sound of the police siren becoming increasingly loud. (and)  
We noticed the sound of the police siren .....
- 8 As dogs get older they become less aggressive. (the less)  
The older dogs .....

# 16 Gradable and ungradable adjectives



THE MOST FAMOUS art forger of the twentieth century was the Dutch artist Han Van Meegeren. He created several works which he passed off as **priceless** masterpieces by Vermeer. He was exposed in 1947 and his paintings were revealed as fakes and therefore **absolutely worthless**.

## 1 Gradable and ungradable adjectives

Gradable adjectives represent a point on a scale. For example, *cheap* and *expensive* are adjectives on the scale of 'how much something costs'.

Ungradable adjectives represent the limits of a scale. For example, *free* (= it costs nothing) and *priceless* (= its cost is too great to be counted) are the limits on the scale of 'how much something costs'.

ungradable adjectives	<i>free</i>	<i>freezing</i>	<i>vast/enormous</i>
↑ gradable adjectives ↓	<i>(very cheap)</i>	<i>cold</i>	<i>large/big</i>
	<i>cheap</i> <i>(not very cheap)</i>	<i>cool</i>	
	<i>(a bit expensive)</i>	<i>tepid</i>	<i>small</i>
	<i>expensive</i> <i>(very expensive)</i>	<i>hot</i>	
ungradable adjectives	<i>priceless</i>	<i>boiling</i>	<i>minute/tiny</i>

Most English adjectives are gradable. We can make comparative and superlative forms from all gradable adjectives (► Unit 14). We don't usually make comparisons with ungradable adjectives, although there are some patterns we use in spoken English:

*That was **the most delicious** meal! Her house is **even more enormous** than his!*



Some adjectives can have both gradable and ungradable meanings, depending on whether the speaker is describing an absolute quality or one which is relative to something else:

*I'm afraid there are no rooms – the hotel is **full**.* (ungradable = completely full)

*The hotel's very **full** but I think I can get you a single room for tonight.*

(gradable = has many guests but there is still some space)

Other adjectives like this are: *empty, beautiful, black, delicious, new, possible*.

## 2 Intensifying gradable adjectives

We can make gradable adjectives stronger with *very*, but not with the adverb *absolutely*:

~~*That new jacket looks absolutely expensive.*~~ ✓ *That new jacket looks very expensive.*

There are other words we use to strengthen the meaning of these adjectives:

*extremely most* (formal) *pretty* (informal) *rather really so terribly*

*Last night's match was **terribly exciting**. I felt **pretty upset** after the accident.* (informal)

*The chapter on the early sonnets was **most instructive**.* (formal)

We usually use *rather* with negative adjectives or when describing something unexpected:

*There was a **rather unpleasant** smell in the flat. Surprisingly, the film was **rather good**.*

More examples in spoken English ► Unit 81.1

We often use less common adverbs to intensify certain gradable adjectives:  
*I was **bitterly disappointed** at my exam results. My brother is **painfully shy**.  
 The students in this school are **highly intelligent**.*

But note that we can often only use certain adverbs with certain adjectives.

Common adverb + adjective collocations ► page 369

### 3 Weakening gradable adjectives

Gradable adjectives can usually be made weaker by the words *fairly*, *slightly*, *a (little) bit* (informal) and *somewhat* (formal):

*I've been feeling **slightly dizzy** all morning.*

*My friend was **a bit upset**.* (informal)

*The police reported that the man was **somewhat aggressive**.* (formal)

We can use *not very* and *not at all* to weaken gradable adjectives after the verb *be*:

*The end of term test **wasn't very long** and it **wasn't at all difficult**.*

With gradable adjectives *quite* usually means 'fairly' but can have other meanings, depending on stress and intonation:

*The lecture was **quite interesting**.* (unmarked: fairly interesting)

*The lecture was **quite interesting**.* (stressed adjective: more interesting than the speaker expected)

*The lecture was **quite interesting**.* (stressed adverb: less interesting than the speaker expected)



Pronunciation ► 1.04

### 4 Intensifying ungradable adjectives

A common way to intensify the meaning of ungradable adjectives is with the adverb *absolutely*. We often use this device to add emphasis in informal English:

*I couldn't swim in the sea; the water was **absolutely freezing**.*

*The show was **absolutely fabulous**.*



We do not usually use *very* with ungradable adjectives:

✗ *Entrance to the museum is **very free**.* ✓ *Entrance to the museum is **absolutely free**.*

When we use *quite* with ungradable adjectives, it has a similar meaning to 'completely', emphasising the strength of the adjective. In speech the stress is usually on *quite*:

*The tenor's performance was **quite amazing**. You're **quite correct**.*

We can also use *a most* before an ungradable adjective + noun:

*Hilary has **a most amazing hairstyle**.* (= Her hairstyle is completely amazing.)

Although we use *absolutely* with many ungradable adjectives, there are some adjectives where we prefer to use other intensifying adverbs such as *completely*, *totally* and *utterly*.

There are no grammar rules which explain these combinations so it is best to learn them as vocabulary items (► page 369).

*I'm afraid your answer is **completely wrong**.*

*Since the accident Henry has been **totally deaf** in one ear.*

*Susan was **utterly appalled** by her husband's dishonesty.*

### 5 Weakening ungradable adjectives (*almost*, *nearly*, etc.)

We use *almost*, *nearly*, *practically* or *virtually* to indicate a point close to the absolute meaning of ungradable adjectives:

*He never turns the heating on – it's **practically freezing** in there.*

*The battery in my calculator is **almost dead**.*

*After six months with the disease he was **nearly deaf** and **virtually blind**.*



We do not usually use the modifiers *fairly*, *slightly*, *a (little) bit*, *somewhat* or *not very* with ungradable adjectives:

✗ *Their favourite possession is **a slightly priceless Satsuma vase**.*

✗ *I wouldn't recommend the show; it's **not very fabulous**.*


**Practice** To complete these exercises you will need to refer to page 369.

**1 Put each adjective into the correct box below. Each box will contain ten adjectives.**

amazing attractive cold correct dead enormous exciting expensive extinct  
fascinating freezing good huge interesting large minute paralysed shy sick ugly

ungradable adjectives

gradable adjectives

**2 Use the words in the box below to make the adjectives in each sentence either stronger or weaker, as in the example. Use each word once only.  2.29 Listen and check.**

a bit absolutely fabulously fairly highly slightly somewhat very virtually

**Make these sentences weaker:**

- 0 The dress I bought yesterday is damaged. *..slightly damaged..*
- 1 These days mobile phones are inexpensive. .....
- 2 Take care when you change gear; the gearstick's stiff. .....
- 3 The inscription on the tomb was indecipherable. .....
- 4 Many of the Inca ceremonies were bloodthirsty. .....


**Make these sentences stronger:**

- 5 Jane's flat was freezing last night. .....
- 6 This new computer game sounds interesting. .....
- 7 Hilary's husband is rich. .....
- 8 Victory in our next game seems unlikely. .....

**3 Six of these sentences contain mistakes. Tick (✓) the correct sentences, then find the mistakes and correct them.**

- 1 We thought the state rooms in the White House were very impressive!
- 2 I'm afraid there's nothing to eat; the fridge is very empty.
- 3 The tour bus is completely full so I've only got six seats left to offer you.
- 4 Come on, Lizzie. Let's get some of those Italian ice creams – I'm very famished.
- 5 We chose the hotel because it was very recommended by our neighbours.
- 6 If you were really serious about your studies, you would have given up that evening job.
- 7 Everyone in our class likes Jackie – she's pretty friendly.
- 8 Jack was a very built man with massive shoulders and a menacing stare.
- 9 I found the funeral ceremony absolutely moving.
- 10 The Ambassador would be highly delighted to accept this honour on behalf of the President.



- 4 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Read the article and decide which word, A, B or C below, best fits each gap, as in the example.  2.30 Listen and check.

## Fakes found in major museums

OSCAR WHITE MUSCARELLA, a (0) ..... respected archeologist at New York's Metropolitan Museum, claims that more than 1,250 forgeries are on display in the world's leading museums and art galleries. In his latest book Muscarella specifically names 37 forgeries in the Louvre, 16 in the British Museum and 45 in his own museum in New York.

Muscarella's earlier claims have been heavily (1) ..... by some museum officials who are (2) ..... opposed to his arguments. But he has (3) ..... good scientific evidence for his claims, showing that over 40 percent of the objects examined by the Oxford thermoluminescence laboratory are fakes.

The reason for the quantity of forgeries is (4) ..... simple. Because many of the objects in our museums were found by amateurs and illegally exported from their countries of origin they have no official provenance or documented history. Museums are painfully (5) ..... of this embarrassing problem and as a result they have been known to overlook the lack of written records before accepting or buying antiquities.

This practice makes it (6) ..... impossible to detect forgeries, especially if they are accurate copies. But in fact many forgeries are (7) ..... obvious as they are often copied from a photograph which only shows the front of

an object. When examining the back of the forgery they can look (8) ..... different from the original. But museum officials tend to be (9) ..... conservative and hate to question objects which have been sitting in their collections for many years.

Muscarella specialises in the ancient Middle East, and this is the area of archaeology in which he has found so many forgeries. But his research has had the effect of undermining the reputation of some of our most (10) ..... regarded institutions, and this should be of concern to anyone who values our cultural heritage.



- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0 A absolutely <b>B</b> highly C very | 6 A very B virtually C pretty        |
| 1 A discussed B rejected C criticised | 7 A a bit B entirely C deeply        |
| 2 A bitterly B highly C rather        | 8 A completely B absolutely C almost |
| 3 A perfectly B absolutely C somewhat | 9 A heavily B utterly C deeply       |
| 4 A virtually B quite C a bit         | 10 A very B highly C absolutely      |
| 5 A conscious B understanding C aware |                                      |

# 17 Adverb form and use

## 1 Confusing forms

Some adverbs have the same form as adjectives:

*close, dead* (informal), *fast, fine, long, low, pretty* (informal), *short, straight, wide, wrong*

Some adverbs are formed by adding *-ward/s* or *-wise* to a noun or preposition:

*home* → *homeward* *after* → *afterwards* *price* → *pricewise* *health* → *healthwise*

### SOME BASE ADVERBS WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS

<i>close</i> (= not far away) <i>closely</i> (= very carefully)	<i>He lives <b>close</b> to me.</i> <i>We watched them <b>closely</b>.</i>
<i>direct</i> (= without stopping) <i>directly</i> (= exactly/precisely)	<i>We flew <b>direct</b> from La Guardia to Houston.</i> <i>The taxi waited <b>directly</b> opposite the house.</i>
<i>late</i> (= not on time/not early) <i>lately</i> (= recently)	<i>The plane arrived <b>late</b> due to bad weather.</i> <i>She's been rather ill <b>lately</b>.</i>
<i>high</i> (= to a great height) <i>highly</i> (= extremely)	<i>He lifted it <b>high</b> over his head.</i> <i>Arsenic is <b>highly</b> toxic.</i>
<i>hard</i> (= with a lot of effort/severely) <i>hardly</i> (= scarcely, almost not)	<i>He braked <b>hard</b> when he saw the cat.</i> <i>We <b>hardly</b> know our neighbours.</i>
<i>right</i> (= direction/correctly) <i>rightly</i> (= correctly in my opinion)	<i>Turn <b>right</b> at the crossroads. Try to do it <b>right</b> this time!</i> <i>The tribunal <b>rightly</b> condemned the war criminals.</i>
<i>free</i> (= without paying) <i>freely</i> (= without limitation or control)	<i>We got into the concert <b>free</b>!</i> <i>Sheep roam <b>freely</b> over the hills.</i>
<i>deep</i> (= to a great depth/distance) <i>deeply</i> (= thoroughly/extremely)	<i>We travelled <b>deep</b> into the jungle.</i> <i>I'm <b>deeply</b> ashamed of my behaviour.</i>



There are a few adjectives which look like adverbs, e.g. *friendly, lonely, cowardly*.

We cannot make these adjectives into adverbs in the usual way:

✗ *He left ~~cowardlily~~, ~~sneaking out the back door~~.* ✓ *He left **in a cowardly way/manner** ...*

Adjectives as adverbs in spoken English ▶ Unit 81.2 American English ▶ page 368

## 2 Adding information; modifying

We use adverbs to add information about the time, manner or place of an action or state:

adverb of manner                      prepositional phrase as adverb of place  
*He hit the ball **hard** and **this time** it flew **into the back of the net**.*  
noun phrase as adverb of time

Certain adverbs, e.g. *quite (a), roughly, rather (a), about, approximately*, can be used to modify noun phrases, prepositional phrases and numbers: *Her news came as **quite a shock**.*

*In our college **roughly fifty students** have motorbikes. She made **rather a fuss** about the results.*

More on *rather* and *quite* ▶ Unit 16.2/4

We can use adverbs with *as, so, too, enough*, etc:

*She performed **so enthusiastically** that the judges overlooked her inexperience.*

*We missed the bargains because we didn't get to the shops **soon enough**.*

## 3 Using adverbs in comparisons

We can use adverbs in comparatives and superlatives, usually with *more* and *most*:

*This car seems to need servicing **more frequently** than our old one.*

*Of all the relatives at Gran's funeral, I think Uncle Ralph felt her loss **most deeply**.*

Adverbs which do not end in *-ly* take the same comparative and superlative forms as adjectives (▶ Unit 14):

*If you tuned the engine **more often** the car would go **faster**. Do **the best** you can.*

## Practice

- 1 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Choose the correct words in *italics*. **2.31** Listen and check.

### Prison or holiday camp?

IN A RECENT (1) *high* / *highly* contentious move the Prison Service has announced a decision to build three more open prisons and to close two existing 'closed' prisons. The Service says the move is prompted by the increasing numbers of low-risk prisoners. Critics are (2) *right* / *rightly* concerned about this move and believe it is (3) *serious* / *seriously* flawed. They argue the decision is a cynical cost-cutting measure which may put the public at risk.

At present open prisons are restricted to prisoners who have committed non-violent crimes and to those who are getting (4) *close* / *closely* to the end of their prison term. (5) *Rough* / *Roughly* 20% of prisoners are held in these facilities at the current time. Many

open prisons are more like country hotels; prisoners can wander (6) *free* / *freely* around the grounds and there are no high walls or barbed wire fences. Inmates can (7) *easy* / *easily* walk out into the surrounding areas. And as most are positioned (8) *deep* / *deeply* in the countryside it would be (9) *easy* / *easily* for absconding offenders to disappear with little hope of recapture.

Critics of open prisons say that they do not provide the deterrent effect of traditional prisons in which prisoners have to work (10) *hard* / *hardly* and have few luxuries. The problem for the prison authorities is that traditional jails are (11) *high* / *highly* expensive to run and offer few opportunities



A female prisoner does the gardening, East Sutton Open Prison

for the rehabilitation and re-education of offenders. In open prisons offenders have the chance to experience something closer to everyday life, and this helps to prepare them for their eventual release. Whoever is (12) *right* / *rightly*, the public is bound to be concerned about this new development in prison policy.

- 2 Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first. Use three or four words in your answer, including the word in brackets, as in the example.

- 0 Karen did really well in the test. (highly)  
Karen ..... *was highly successful* ..... in the test.
- 1 The car started to accelerate as we turned the corner. (go)  
As we turned the corner, the car .....
- 2 She really didn't expect to inherit so much money. (quite)  
Inheriting so much money came ..... surprise.
- 3 Evolution is slower during periods of climatic stability. (happens)  
Evolution ..... during periods of climatic stability.
- 4 We didn't get there in time to hear the overture. (soon)  
We wanted to hear the overture but we didn't get .....
- 5 More or less three-quarters of our students are fee-paying these days. (roughly)  
These days ..... our students pay fees.
- 6 In the USA only a few people have heard of our products. (entirely)  
Our products are ..... in the USA.
- 7 Melinda's attempt to repair the torn curtain wasn't very successful. (rather)  
Melinda's attempt at curtain repair ..... failure.
- 8 Mr Skidmore had a deeper involvement than any of the other directors. (most)  
Of all the directors, Mr Skidmore was .....

# 18 Adverb position

The thief entered the room **silently** and **carefully** opened the safe door.



## 1 The three positions

Adverbs which modify a verb or add information about how, when or where something happens can take several positions in a sentence:

front position (before subject)

end position (after object or complement)

**These days** I **probably** take my health **much more seriously**.

mid position (next to verb)

If the object or complement of a verb is very long, we can put an end-position adverb before it:

*These days I take **much more seriously** all those things I used to take for granted.*

## 2 Front position

We usually put time and place adverbs at the end of the sentence, e.g. *I worked more than twelve hours **yesterday***, but we can put them at the front to form a link or contrast with information in the previous sentence:

*I've been incredibly busy this week. **Yesterday** I worked more than twelve hours.*

After negative adverbs (e.g. *never*), or after adverbs of time and place followed by a verb of movement or position, we can put the verb before the subject. We usually only do this in formal written English:

***Never** had he seen such a disturbing sight. **Here** lies the body of our late sovereign.*

Inversion ► Unit 76.2/3



We do not use adverbs of definite frequency, e.g. *daily*, *weekly*, in front position:

*✗ **Monthly** I get paid. ✓ I get paid **monthly**.*

## 3 Mid position

This is the usual position for the following adverbs, and for *even* and *only*.

adverbs of indefinite frequency	<i>always frequently generally hardly ever never normally occasionally often rarely seldom sometimes usually</i>
adverbs of degree	<i>absolutely almost completely entirely just hardly partly quite rather really slightly totally</i>
adverbs of certainty	<i>certainly definitely probably</i>
most short adverbs of time	<i>already finally immediately no longer soon still then (but not today, yesterday, tomorrow, etc.)</i>



With the present and past simple we put the adverb between the subject and the verb, but with simple forms of *be* the adverb goes after the verb:

*✗ She **arrives always** by taxi and she **always is** on time.*

*✓ She **always arrives** by taxi and she **is always** on time.*

If there is a modal or auxiliary verb we put the adverb after the (first) auxiliary (+ *not*):

*We've **never** been to the Greek islands. You **can just** see the coast.*

*Sea eagles **have occasionally** been seen around Loch Lomond.*

*They **don't really** understand my point of view.*



We put *sometimes*, *still*, *certainly*, *definitely* and *probably* BEFORE a negative auxiliary:

*✗ I **don't sometimes** understand his arguments. He **hasn't still** convinced me.*

*✓ I **sometimes don't** understand his arguments. He **still hasn't** convinced me.*

**FORMALITY CHECK** In spoken British English, if we want to emphasise an auxiliary verb or a simple form of *be*, we can put some mid-position adverbs before it. The auxiliary/verb is usually stressed:

'But I thought you liked him!' 'Oh, you **really don't** understand me at all!'

'Joe's late. That's strange' 'Not really, he **never is** on time!'

Compare:

*I don't really like him.* (unmarked: I slightly dislike him.)

*I really **don't** like him.* (emphatic: I strongly dislike him.)

We do not use other time adverbs (definite time or frequency) in mid position:

✗ *We yesterday bought our lunch at Joe's sandwich bar.* ✗ *I once a month pay my rent.*

But we can do this in news reports:

*The Federal Reserve **today announced** an immediate rise in interest rates.*

## 4 End position

This is the most frequent position for adverbs. It is the usual position for *yet, a lot, any more, any longer, too, as well*:

✗ *They aren't any more selling it.* ✓ *They aren't selling it **any more**.*

We usually put adverbs of manner (which describe how something is done) and adverbs of definite frequency in this position:

✗ *He well plays the guitar.* ✓ *He plays the guitar **well**.* ✓ *The magazine is published **monthly**.*

Adverbs of manner which end in *-ly* (except *badly*) can go in end or mid position:

*Harry **painstakingly** counted out the coins and arranged them **neatly** into piles.*

*The thief entered the room **silently and carefully** opened the safe door.*

We don't use *hardly ever* or *never* in end position:

✗ *They watch television hardly ever.* ✓ *They **hardly ever** watch television.*

If we put *often, rarely* and *seldom* in end position, we use a modifier, e.g. *very, extremely*:

✗ *These days I eat desserts rarely.* ✓ *These days I eat desserts **very rarely**.*

We usually avoid having too many adverbs in end position, but when this occurs we often follow this sequence:

1 manner
2 place
3 time

*The statue was lifted **carefully** **onto the platform** **before the ceremony**.*

## 5 Sentence adverbs

**Sentence adverbs** refer to the whole sentence, not just part of it. We usually put these adverbs at the beginning of a sentence, separated by a comma:

***Economically**, the current government has been a resounding success.*

(= The government has successfully managed the economy.)

***Generally**, the employer pays for travel expenses.* (= This is true in most cases.)

**Comment adverbs** are sentence adverbs such as *admittedly, frankly, indeed, understandably*, which we use to express our attitude towards the information in a statement:

***Admittedly**, these results are only preliminary.* (= This may contradict previous information.)



**Pronunciation** ▶ 1.05

Use of these adverbs in writing ▶ Unit 78.4, in speech ▶ Unit 81.3

Other linking adverbs, e.g. *additionally, however, therefore* ▶ Unit 61



Some adverbs, e.g. *naturally* and *clearly*, can be used as sentence adverbs and also as adverbs of manner. Note the different meanings:

*Despite being in a zoo, the animals behaved quite **naturally**.* (= in a natural way)

***Naturally**, wild animals behave quite differently in captivity.* (= of course)

*The teacher answered the question **clearly** and precisely.* (= in a clear way)

***Clearly**, the teacher didn't answer the question.* (= This is obvious.)

## Practice


**1** Tick (✓) all those adverbs which can complete the sentences and cross (✗) those that cannot, as in the example. In one case, none of the adverbs will fit.

- 0 The bank robbers ..... opened the door to the secret compartment.  
 A slowly ..... ✓ B last week ..... ✗ C probably ..... ✓
- 1 We don't ..... know the identity of the masked gunman.  
 A still ..... B really ..... C certainly .....
- 2 You can ..... see the coast from this point.  
 A definitely ..... B just ..... C as well .....
- 3 Our next door neighbours go there .....  
 A as well ..... B hardly ever ..... C a lot .....
- 4 ..... the boss gives me a hard time.  
 A Every day ..... B Daily ..... C Sometimes .....
- 5 I get the feeling you haven't ..... understood my point.  
 A entirely ..... B really ..... C probably .....
- 6 The public don't ..... respond in the ways advertisers expect them to.  
 A sometimes ..... B immediately ..... C always .....
- 7 I haven't been to the cinema .....  
 A yet ..... B often ..... C very often .....
- 8 Signs of radiation leakage have been ..... reported at the power station.  
 A often ..... B this week ..... C always .....
- 9 ..... have our clients been subjected to such outrageous demands.  
 A Never ..... B Rarely ..... C Admittedly .....
- 10 I'm afraid the bank does not ..... permit such large overdrafts.  
 A generally ..... B any longer ..... C any more .....
- 11 The patient ..... reacts to any kind of bright light.  
 A badly ..... B immediately ..... C usually .....
- 12 He plays the saxophone .....  
 A too ..... B quite rarely ..... C never .....
- 13 The data from those sensors isn't ..... reliable.  
 A absolutely ..... B sometimes ..... C always .....
- 14 The last contestant stood up and sang the song .....  
 A beautifully ..... B well ..... C badly .....

**2** Rewrite these sentences, using the words and phrases in brackets in the best order, as in the example. Note that none of these sentences is emphatic. **▶▶ 2.32** Listen and check.

- 0 My parents (allowed/hardly ever) us to (late/on weekdays/stay up).  
*My parents hardly ever allowed us to stay up late on weekdays.* .....
- 1 Owen kicked the ball (into the net/just before half time/skilfully).  
 .....
- 2 Foxes (often/be seen/can) scavenging (on the streets of London/at night).  
 .....
- 3 David (well/behaves/quite) when he is at home but he (at school/causes trouble/often).  
 .....
- 4 The post (arrive/sometimes/on time/doesn't) in this part of the city.  
 .....
- 5 Jennifer (immediately/didn't/recognise) the man waving (at the end of the show/frantically/from the balcony).  
 .....

- 6 Such losses (have/would/normally/avoided/been) by the use of back-up devices.  
.....
- 7 These children (never/have/had/probably) the opportunities we take for granted.  
.....
- 8 (no longer/is/unfortunately, access to the Internet) available (on weekday mornings free of charge/at our libraries).  
.....
- 9 We (unable/offer/are/usually/to) refunds on the spot, but we will examine (thoroughly before the end of the week/your claim).  
.....
- 10 Many of the old masters had assistants who would prepare the oil pigments (each morning/by hand/in their studios).  
.....

**3 GRAMMAR IN USE** Rewrite the answers in these short dialogues to make them more emphatic. Use the adverb in brackets in a suitable position, as in the example. Make any other necessary changes.  2.33 Listen and check.

- 0 'Lucy hasn't turned up yet again.' 'I know. She is unreliable, isn't she?' (really)  
*I know. She really is unreliable, isn't she?*  
.....
- 1 'Admit it. You stole it.' 'Sorry, I don't know what you're talking about!' (really)  
.....
- 2 'They can't fit us in on Saturday.' 'That place is full on Saturday evenings!' (always)  
.....
- 3 'He never mentions his wife. Isn't that strange?' 'Yes, I've wondered about that.' (often)  
.....
- 4 'Alan won't even discuss your proposal.'  
'I'm not surprised. He doesn't listen to my ideas.' (never)  
.....
- 5 'That customs officer really went through my luggage with a fine-tooth comb!'  
'That's not unusual; the customs officers here are quite thorough.' (usually)  
.....
- 6 'You must have some idea of his whereabouts.'  
'I'm sorry but we don't know where he is.' (honestly)  
.....
- 7 'I think you should swallow your pride and apologise to them.'  
'Come off it. You can't expect me to just give in like that.' (really)  
.....
- 8 'Take a break? Give yourself space? What are you on about?'  
'You don't have a clue what I'm talking about, do you?' (absolutely)  
.....
- 9 'Downloading that software seems to be taking an awfully long time.'  
'I'm afraid these programs do take a long time to download.' (sometimes)  
.....
- 10 'Look. It's midday and Zoe still isn't here.'  
'Well, she is in the office before twelve these days.' (rarely)  
.....

# Review MODULE 4

**1 UNITS 12,13 AND 16** All these sentences contain one or more mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them, as in the example. In some cases you may need to add, remove or change words; in others, you may also need to change the word order.

- 0 The book is bound to appeal to ~~fascinating by crime~~ <sup>readers fascinated by crime</sup> readers.
- Sylvia had a warm, gentle but friendly personality.
  - They've just bought a little Persian beautiful cat.
  - This was the taken route by the original explorers.
  - The wealthies seem to have all the power in our capitalist societies.
  - Janine was absolutely upset by the behaviour of her boss former.
  - We comforted the afraid children after their terrified ordeal.
  - The injuring bird appeared to have a breaking wing.
  - Darren's new boat has an aluminium and glass-fibre unique hull.
  - The old hospital was very vast and full of rusty and decaying equipment medical.
  - No punishment is severe enough for the responsible person for these crimes.
  - Living in Scotland viewers may experience poor reception due to weather conditions.
  - Tall anyone will find these seats cripplingly uncomfortable.

**2 UNITS 14 AND 15** Match sentences 1–7 with the meanings in A–G.

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 It's slightly cheaper.           | A It's considerably more expensive. |
| 2 It's much cheaper.               | B It's the least expensive.         |
| 3 It isn't anything like as cheap. | C It's more expensive.              |
| 4 It's just as cheap.              | D It's somewhat less expensive.     |
| 5 It's by far the cheapest.        | E It's no more expensive.           |
| 6 It isn't quite as cheap.         | F It's slightly more expensive.     |
| 7 It isn't as cheap.               | G It's nothing like as expensive.   |

**3 UNITS 17 AND 18** Rewrite these sentences, using all the words in brackets.

- My boss advised me not to discuss the matter.  
(before the conference / last week / publicly)  
*Last week my boss advised me not to discuss the matter publicly before the conference.*
- Ruined, the owner of the business agreed to sell the premises.  
(reluctantly / within the month / financially / rather)  
.....
- There is nothing better than collapsing.  
(onto a sofa / probably / at the end of the day / lazily)  
.....
- Controlled, this effective new drug can reduce blood pressure.  
(amazingly / within hours / carefully / dramatically)  
.....
- We seem to get the chance to talk.  
(about anything / seriously / these days / rarely)  
.....
- Many of my colleagues disapprove of my scheme to update the accounting procedures  
(thoroughly / over the next quarter / unfortunately / in the sales department)  
.....



## 4 ALL UNITS Choose the correct word or phrase for each gap, A, B, or C.

Subject Robbed in Barcelona!


Hi Susanna,

We've been having an absolutely (1) ..... time here in Barcelona – well, until last night that is! We've been staying in a (2) ..... hotel in the Gothic quarter. (3) ..... for a delicious meal and walked back to the hotel at about midnight. It was (4) ..... dark and suddenly three young guys surrounded us and demanded our wallets. I've never been so (5) ..... They had a knife so we didn't resist. And there was (6) ..... so we couldn't even call for help. (7) ..... had a few euros in our pockets, no credit cards or anything (8) ..... that. They just took the money and ran away, they didn't hurt us. So it wasn't as (9) ..... as it might have been. I'm (10) ..... going to let it spoil my trip!

Anyway, everything else has been (11) ..... fantastic. The weather has been wonderfully hot and sunny and we've seen most of the (12) ..... On Tuesday we went to the 'Sagrada Familia' – (13) ..... the most interesting building here – although Steve felt it wasn't (14) ..... beautiful as some of Gaudi's other buildings. (15) ..... we went to the Maritime Museum. Steve finds anything to do with boats utterly (16) ..... but I find that kind of thing about as interesting (17) ..... watching paint dry! We've also (18) ..... here. We managed to find some local restaurants where the food is (19) .....

Anyway, I hope things are OK at the office and you're not working too (20) ..... – although I can't say I'm very (21) ..... at the thought of getting back (22) .....

Jackie



- 1 A nice B wonderful C pleasant
- 2 A charming little B absolutely little C little charming
- 3 A We yesterday went B Yesterday went we C Yesterday we went
- 4 A absolutely B utterly C pretty
- 5 A frighten B frightened C frightening
- 6 A nobody nearby B nearby nobody C near us nobody
- 7 A We only luckily B Luckily, we only C We only naturally
- 8 A such B as C like
- 9 A bad B worst C worse
- 10 A not certainly B certain not C certainly not
- 11 A very B really C such
- 12 A in the city sights B sights in the city C sights that in the city are
- 13 A by far B the most far C the farthest
- 14 A quite as B as quite C as quite a
- 15 A After B Afterwards that, C Afterwards,
- 16 A interesting B fascinating C nice
- 17 A like B to C as
- 18 A very well eaten B so well eaten C eaten very well
- 19 A inexpensive and delicious B inexpensive delicious C inexpensive, delicious.
- 20 A hardly B hard C much hardly
- 21 A exhilarated B thrilled C amazed
- 22 A there next week B next there week C next week there