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# Lesson 20 – Comparison of adjectives and adverbs

## Adjectives

### Comparative

When we compare two things in English we often use the comparative form of an [adjective](/latin/stage-2-latin/resources/stage-2-glossary-of-english-terms/#adjective) (</latin/stage-2-latin/resources/stage-2-glossary-of-english-terms/#adjective>). To do this we add ‘-er’ to the end of the adjective or precede it with ‘more’

For example:

Adjective	Comparative
beautiful	more beautiful
pretty	prettier

To form the comparative of most Latin adjectives we use the ending ‘-ior’ for the masculine and feminine forms and the ending ‘-ius’ for the neuter form.

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For example:

The comparative for *pulcher, pulchra, pulchrum* 'beautiful' is *pulchrior* (masculine), *pulchrior* (feminine) and *pulchrius* (neuter) 'more beautiful'.

## Handy hint

Apart from the nominative singular ending of *-ior* or *-ius*, these forms decline like third declension nouns.

## Superlative

When we compare more than two things in English we often use the superlative form of an adjective. To do this we add *'-est'* to the end of the adjective or precede it with *'most'*.

Adjective	Superlative
beautiful	the most beautiful
pretty	prettiest

To form the superlative of most Latin adjectives we use the ending *'-imus'* for the masculine form, *'-ima'* for the feminine form, and *'-imum'* for the neuter form. The formation of the central [stem \(/latin/stage-2-latin/resources/stage-2-glossary-of-english-terms/#stem\)](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/stage-2-latin/resources/stage-2-glossary-of-english-terms/#stem) of the superlative depends on the type of adjective.

For example:

The superlative for *pulcher, pulchra, pulchrum* 'beautiful' is *pulcherrimus* (masculine), *pulcherrima* (feminine), *pulcherrimum* (neuter) 'the most beautiful'. These forms decline like *'bonus, -a, -um'*.

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When it comes to translating Latin comparatives and superlatives, be aware that their meanings are more flexible than those in English and can be expressed in a variety of different ways.

For example:

<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>longus, longa, longum</i>	long
<i>miser, misera, miserum</i>	wretched
<i>durus, dura, durum</i>	hard

  

<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>longior, longior, longius</i>	longer (rather long, too long, quite long)
<i>miserior, miserior, miserius</i>	more wretched (rather wretched, too wretched, quite wretched)
<i>durior, durior, durius</i>	harder (rather hard, too hard, quite hard)

  

<b>Superlative</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>longissimus, longissima, longissimum</i>	the longest (very long)
<i>miserrimus, miserrima, miserrimum</i>	the most wretched (very wretched)
<i>durissimus, durissima, durissimum</i>	the hardest (very hard)

## Irregular adjectives

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Some adjectives are irregular (</latin/stage-2-latin/resources/stage-2-glossary-of-english-terms/#irregular>) in the way they form their comparative and superlative forms, for example:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative	Meaning
<i>bonus-a-um</i>	<i>melior-ior-ius</i>	<i>optimus-ima-imum</i>	good, better, the best
<i>magnus-a-um</i>	<i>maior-ior-ius</i>	<i>maximus-ima-imum</i>	great, greater, the greatest
<i>malus-a-um</i>	<i>peior-ior-ius</i>	<i>pessimus-ima-imum</i>	bad, worse, the worst
<i>parvus-a-um</i>	<i>minor-us</i>	<i>minimus-ima-imum</i>	small, smaller, the smallest
<i>multus-a-um</i>	<i>plus</i>	<i>plurimus-ima-imum</i>	much, more, the most

## Handy hint

The comparative forms of most adjectives that end in a vowel plus '-us', such as '*idoneus, a, -um*' 'suitable', are made by adding the word '*magis*' to the adjective in question to form the comparative and the word '*maxime*' to form the superlative.

For example:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
<i>idoneus</i> suitable	<i>magis idoneus</i> more suitable	<i>maxime idoneus</i> most suitable

## Adverbs

### Comparatives

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When we compare the way in which two things are carried out in English we often use the comparative form of an [adverb \(/latin/stage-2-latin/resources/stage-2-glossary-of-english-terms/#adverb\)](/latin/stage-2-latin/resources/stage-2-glossary-of-english-terms/#adverb). To do this we most commonly precede the adverb with 'more'.

For example:

Adverb	Comparative
beautifully	more beautifully

To form the comparative of most Latin adverbs, we use the accusative singular neuter of the comparative adjective and so the ending is often *'-ius'*.

For example:

Adjective	Comparative adjective	Adverb	Comparative adverb
<i>pulcher</i>	<b>Masculine/Feminine</b> <b>Nom.</b> <i>pulchrior</i> <b>Acc.</b> <i>pulchriorem</i>	<b>Neuter</b> <i>pulchrius</i> <b><i>pulchrius</i></b>	<i>pulchre</i> <b><i>pulchrius</i></b>

## Superlatives

When we compare the way in which more than two things are carried out in English we often use the superlative form of an adverb. To do this we precede it with 'most'.

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beautifully

most beautifully

To form the superlative of most Latin adverbs we replace the '-us' ending of the superlative adjective with '-e', so that the endings are most commonly '-issime', '-errime', '-illime'.

For example:

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**Superlative adjective**

*pulcherrimus*

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**Superlative adverb**

*pulcherrime*

Just as with adjectives, when it comes to translating Latin comparative and superlative adverbs, be aware that they are more flexible than those in English and can be expressed in a variety of different ways.

For example:

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**Adverb**

**Meaning**

*facile*

easily

*pulchre*

beautifully

*tuto*

safely

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**Comparative adverb**

**Meaning**

*facilius*

more easily, rather easily, too easily

*pulchrius*

more beautifully, rather beautifully, too beautifully

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<i>tutius</i>	more safely, rather safely, too safely
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**Superlative adverb****Meaning**

<i>facillime</i>	most easily, very easily, in an extremely easy way
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<i>pulcherrime</i>	most beautifully, very beautifully, in an extremely beautiful way
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<i>tutissime</i>	most safely, very safely, in an extremely safe way
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**Handy hint***'Quam'*

When *'quam'* is used with a comparative adjective or adverb, it means 'than'.

For example:

*hoc messuagium fuit maius quam illud* – English

This message was larger than that one

When *'quam'* is used with a superlative adjective or adverb, it means 'as ...as possible'.

For example:

**Latin****English**

<i>quam maximus</i>	as great as possible
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<i>quam largissimus</i>	as large as possible
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<i>quam maxime</i>	as greatly as possible
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Close

*quam largissime*

as largely as possible

## Irregular adverbs

If an adjective is irregular, then it is often the case that the corresponding adverb will be irregular too. Compare these to the irregular adjectives we have already looked at in this lesson.

for example:

<b>Adverbs</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>paulum</i>	a little
<i>multum</i>	much

  

<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>minus</i>	less
<i>plus</i>	more

  

<b>Superlative</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>minime</i>	least
<i>plurimum</i>	most

Adverbs which are not linked to corresponding adjectives can also be irregular but you are not likely to come across these.

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## Checklist

Are you confident with

- the meaning of comparative and superlative adjectives?
- the form of comparative and superlative adjectives?
- the meaning of comparative and superlative adverbs?
- the form of comparative and superlative adverbs?

## What next?

- [Go to Activity 20 \(/latin/stage-2-latin/activities/activity-20-comparison-of-adjectives-and-adverbs/\)](/latin/stage-2-latin/activities/activity-20-comparison-of-adjectives-and-adverbs/)
- [Go to Lesson 21 \(/latin/stage-2-latin/lessons/lesson-21-subjunctive/\)](/latin/stage-2-latin/lessons/lesson-21-subjunctive/)

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