

Unit 102

Comparison (2)

a Some adjectives and adverbs have irregular comparative forms:

good/well	better	Let me ask him. I know him better than you do. The garden looks better since you tidied it up.
bad/badly	worse	'Is your headache better ?' 'No, it's worse .' The situation was much worse than we expected.
far	further (or farther)	I'm very tired. I can't walk much further . (or ... much farther .)

Further (but not 'farther') can also mean **more** or **additional**:

- Let me know immediately if you hear any **further** news. (= any more news)

Note the comparative words **more** and **less**:

- I smoke **more** than I used to.
- We've got **less** time than I thought.

b Older and elder

The comparative of **old** is **older**:

- Tom looks **older** than he really is.

We use **elder** when we are talking about members of a family. We say (my) **elder brother/sister/son/daughter**:

- My **elder brother** is a pilot.

We use **elder** only before a noun:

- My brother is **older** than me. (not 'elder than me')

For **eldest** see **Unit 104c**.

c Sometimes you can use two comparatives together. For example: **harder and harder**, **more and more**, **more and more difficult**. We use this structure to say that something continuously:

- It's becoming **harder and harder** to find a job.
- Your English improving. It's getting **better and better**.
- It's becoming **more and more difficult** to find a job.
- These days **more and more** people are learning English.

d Note the structure **the + comparative the better**. For example:

- 'What time shall we leave?' 'The **sooner the better**.' (= it will be best if we leave as soon as possible)
- 'What size box do you want?' 'The **bigger the better**.' (= it will be if the box is as big as possible)

We also use **the ... the ...** (with two comparatives) to say that one thing depends on another thing:

- The **warmer** the weather, the **better** I feel.
- The **earlier** we leave, the **sooner** we will arrive.
- The **more expensive** the hotel, the **better** the service.
- The **more** electricity you use, the **higher** your bill will be.
- The **more** you have, the **more** you want.

