

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.
bad/badly	worse	The garden looks better since you tidied it up.
		'Is your headache better?' 'No, it's worse .'
far	further (or farther)	The situation was much worse than we expected.
		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.
- He has 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.

