Using Adjectives and Adverbs

- What do adjectives and adverbs do?
  An adjective is a word used to modify (describe) a noun or a pronoun.
  An adverb is a word used to modify (describe) a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence.

Because the definition of an adverb is often more confusing than helpful, let’s look at some basic characteristics.

- An adverb often ends in ly.
  He ran quickly.
  She worked enthusiastically.

- Not all adverbs end in ly.
  An adverb indicating time like “soon” does not end in ly.
  An adverb indicating position such as “nearby” does not end in ly.
  An adverb indicating to what extent like “almost” does not end in ly.

An important thing to remember is that adjectives work only with nouns and pronouns, while adverbs work with anything other than nouns and pronouns.

Incorrect: The student is a quietly reader.
Correct: The student is a quiet reader.
Explanation: Because “quiet” describes the noun “reader,” the “ly” ending of the adverb is not appropriate.

Incorrect: The first attempt failed bad.
Correct: The first attempt failed badly.
Explanation: Because “badly” describes the verb “failed,” the “ly” ending of the adverb is needed.

- What is meant by the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs? How are they formed?

When you are comparing two items or qualities, use the comparative form of the adverb or adjective.

To form the comparative of a one syllable adjective or adverb, add “er”.
To form the comparative of an adjective or adverb with two or more syllables, add the word “more”.
To indicate a lesser degree, add the word “less”.

When you are comparing more than two items or qualities, use the superlative form of the adverb or adjective.

To form the superlative of a one (or sometimes two) syllable adjective or adverb, add the “est” suffix.
To form the superlative of an adjective or adverb with two or more syllables, add the word “most”.
To indicate the lesser degree, add the word “least”.

FYI: Never use “more” and the “er” suffix simultaneously. Never use “most” and the “est” suffix simultaneously. This is called a double comparison.

Incorrect: He is the most smartest student in our class.
Correct: He is the smartest student in our class.
### REGULAR COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>2 qualities or items</th>
<th>bigger</th>
<th>more excited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superlative</td>
<td>3 or more qualities or items</td>
<td>biggest</td>
<td>most excited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IRREGULAR COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>worse</td>
<td>worst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a little</td>
<td>less</td>
<td>least</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many, some, much</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>most</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>best</td>
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<td>good</td>
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</table>

#### - The Double Negative

The **double negative** is formed when two negatives (*no, not, none, never, no one, nothing, hardly, scarcely*) are used in the same sentence. According to *Warriner’s English Grammar and Composition*, “negative statements in standard English [English used in academic or formal settings] require only one negative word.”

### Practice Exercises:

Select the appropriate adjective or adverb.

1. The student is the (tallest, most tallest) player on the team.
2. Soon the troops were marching (more faster, faster) than they had previously.
3. I (can't hardly, can hardly) believe that it is really you!
4. The violinist plays (good, well).
5. Which of the two pieces of pottery is the (older, oldest)?
6. She is (more stronger, stronger) than he.
7. The goalie (has no, hasn’t no) excuse.
8. He piloted the craft (skillful, skillfully).
9. The instructor felt (worse, worst ) than he did yesterday.
10. Among all of us, she is the (wisest, wiser).

**Answers:** 1) tallest 2) faster 3) can hardly 4) well 5) older 6) stronger 7) has no 8) skillfully 9) worse 10) wiser