

## Adjectives and adverbs

### A Adjectives and adverbs

An adjective describes a noun.

Last year we had a **significant increase** in profits.

Last year **profits** were much **better** than this year.

If you want **big gains** on the stock market you need a **long-term view**. (TheStreet.com website)

An adverb says how (*quickly*), when (*tomorrow*) or where (*over there*) something happens.

Adverbs can come in different positions. 'How' adverbs usually come after the verb.

We **planned** everything **very carefully**.

The economy is **growing slowly**.

Frequency adverbs (unit 1) come after *be* and auxiliaries, but before other verbs.

She **is never** late.

She **has never** arrived late.

She **never goes** there.

Other 'when' adverbs can come before or after the verb.

**Last year** our profits **rose** slightly.      Our profits **rose** slightly **last year**.

If we have several adverbs together, the usual word order is:

HOW – WHERE – WHEN

Our profits rose **slightly in Germany last year**. (NOT ~~last year in Germany~~)

As well as describing verbs, adverbs can also describe adjectives and other adverbs.

It's **relatively expensive**. (adverb + adjective)

He arrived **extremely late**. (adverb + adverb)

Adverbs are also covered in units 1, 3, 5 and 7 (time expressions); 39 (*too, enough*); 40 (time

words like *in/on/at, for/since, by/until*); units 43 and 44 (linking words, which include

'sentence adverbs': *firstly, actually, in general, clearly, anyway*); and unit 49 (trends: *sales grew steadily all last year*).

### B Form of adverbs

Many 'how' adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to an adjective. A few add *-y, -ally, or -ily*, depending on the spelling of the original adjective.

*slow* – **slowly**    *slight* – **slightly**    *careful* – **carefully**

*full* – **fully**    *dramatic* – **dramatically**    *steady* – **steadily**

Some adverbs and adjectives have the same form. Examples include *fast, hard, early, late, high, low, right, wrong, daily/weekly/monthly/quarterly*.

This is a **fast machine**. (adj.)      This machine **goes** very **fast**. (adv.)

It's a **hard decision**. (adj.)      He's **working** very **hard** at the moment. (adv.)

Note that the adverb *hardly* is not related to the meaning of *hard*.

It's so *noisy* I can **hardly** think. ('hardly' = almost not)

Note that *good* is an adjective and *well* is an adverb.

She's a **good negotiator**.      She **negotiates well**.

### C Gradable and non-gradable adjectives

Look at these sequences:

boiling ←———— hot, warm, mild, cool, cold —————→ freezing  
excellent/fantastic ←———— good, bad —————→ awful/terrible  
enormous ←———— large/big, small, tiny —————→ minute

Adjectives in the middle of the sequence are 'gradable'. We can make them stronger or weaker with words like *very, a bit, quite, reasonably, relatively, extremely*.

The weather was **quite** hot/cold. (NOT ~~quite boiling/freezing~~)

The meal was **very** good/bad. (NOT ~~very excellent/awful~~)

Adjectives at the end of the sequence are 'non-gradable' or 'extreme'. With these adjectives we use *absolutely*.

The talk was **absolutely** excellent/awful. (NOT ~~very excellent~~)

### D Order of adjectives

When we have more than one adjective we use this order:

Opinion	<i>wonderful, lovely, nice, difficult, important</i>
Size	<i>large, small, long, short</i>
Other qualities	<i>cheap, clean, quiet, fast</i>
Age	<i>new, old, second-hand</i>
Shape, pattern, colour	<i>circular, flat, striped, red, black</i>
Origin, nationality	<i>French, Japanese, American, Scandinavian</i>
Material	<i>wooden, metal, plastic, steel</i>
Type (what kind?)	<i>third-generation (phone), economic (policy), safety (device), investment (bank), face (cream)</i>

Words in the final two categories can be nouns used as adjectives.

Here are some examples:

a <b>10-page American legal</b> contract	(size, nationality, type)
a <b>fast new sports</b> car	(quality, age, type)
an <b>efficient worldwide distribution</b> network	(opinion, size, type)
a <b>cheap clean energy</b> source	(quality, quality, type)

### E Adjectives ending *-ing* and *-ed*

Adjectives ending *-ing* describe something we are reacting to (outside us).

Adjectives ending *-ed* describe our feelings and reactions (inside us).

The meeting was very **interesting**. I was **interested** in your idea about outsourcing.

*Asia Online president Kevin Randolph says he does not concentrate on the number of customers because he is not really **interested** in mass marketing. 'I am **interested** in quality marketing,' Randolph says. 'We have 100,000 customers, which is an **interesting** number, but I am not managing the business based on that.'* (business review weekly website)

Other pairs like this are: *bored/boring, confused/confusing, excited/exciting,*

*fascinated/fascinating, surprised/surprising, tired/tiring*

*I found her comments quite **surprising**. I was **surprised** by her comments.*

### 36 Practice

#### Exercise 1 A B

Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- There was a slight fall in profits in April.  
In April profits fell slightly.
- There was a dramatic improvement in our share price last month.  
Last month our share price .....
- There has been a significant drop in demand for oil over the last few months.  
Demand for oil ..... over the last few months.
- Let's have a brief pause for coffee.  
Let's ..... for coffee.
- There has been a steady improvement in the inflation figures.  
The inflation figures .....
- There was a slow recovery in consumer confidence last year.  
Consumer confidence ..... last year.
- There has been a gradual rise in unemployment.  
Unemployment .....
- There has been considerable growth in Korean GDP over recent years.  
Over recent years Korean GDP .....

#### Exercise 2 C E

Underline the correct adjective.

- I couldn't do any more work last night. I was just so tired/tiring.
- I don't think the audience liked the talk. They looked bored/boring.
- I don't think the audience liked the talk. It was a bit bored/boring.
- Your new multimedia project sounds really excited/exciting.
- You look worried/worrying. Is anything the matter?
- Their profits last year were extremely large/enormous.
- Their profits last year were absolutely large/enormous.
- The sales figures last month were very bad/terrible.
- Warsaw is absolutely cold/freezing at this time of year.

#### Exercise 3 A

Complete the sentences with one word from the list A and one word from list B.

A: badly completely easily extremely heavily quite unexpectedly well

B: delayed designed helpful illegal late made promoted recognisable

- This suitcase is very well made. It will last for years and years.
- The new product is being ..... You see the adverts everywhere.
- This website is very ..... I can't find the information I need.
- You've been ..... I really appreciate it.
- Our offices are ..... Look out for the large flags at the front.
- I'm sorry, my flight has been ..... I'll call you when I arrive.
- Taking bribes is ..... You'll lose your job if they catch you.
- I arrived at the presentation ..... and missed the first part.

#### Exercise 4 D

Put each group of words into the best order.

- old-fashioned a large machine cutting ..... a large old-fashioned cutting machine
- wooden square two cartons .....
- new package an amazing software .....
- period a transition three-month difficult .....
- chips computer Taiwanese high-quality .....
- a strategy well-planned investment .....
- access cheap Internet high-speed .....
- a new revolutionary computer handheld .....
- a powder washing new wonderful .....
- awful plastic cheap souvenirs .....

#### Exercise 5 A B

Complete the sentences with a word from the list below. At the end of each sentence write *adj.* (adjective) or *adv.* (adverb) to show how the word in the gap is being used.

good well fast fast hard hard hardly late late monthly

- We're going to introduce a monthly newsletter for all employees. adj.
- I'm sorry, your goods are going to arrive about a week .....
- That flight time is too ..... Haven't you got anything earlier? .....
- Everything's fine. The meeting is going very .....
- I was so tired that I could ..... keep my eyes open. ....
- The hotel was ....., but we didn't like the food in the restaurant. ....
- It's a ..... choice, but I think Carla is the better candidate. ....
- I had to work very ..... to get everything finished on time. ....
- I'm sorry, I don't understand. You're talking too .....
- We'll have to make a ..... exit if things start going wrong. ....

#### Exercise 6 A B

 42 Read this report about the convergence of mobile phones and handheld computers. Underline either the adjective or adverb each time.

It seems (1) strange/strangely, but some people are walking around with a mobile phone, a handheld computer like a Palm, a pager, and even a notebook computer with a (2) conventional/conventionally keyboard as well. These digital devices are converging (3) rapid/rapidly, but manufacturers are finding it difficult to get all the parts to integrate (4) proper/properly. Contemporary mobile phones look (5) good/well, are relatively (6) good/well at sending short text messages, but don't work (7) good/well as handheld computers. They lack memory, synchronise (8) bad/badly with desktop PCs, and are not

## The Net: anywhere, anytime, in the palm of your hand

(9) easy/easily to use for writing emails. (12) easy/easily and (13) cheap/cheaply, but still Searching for an address-book entry or scrolling through a contact list is (10) slow/slowly. Things are moving very (14) quick/quickly in this area, and the manufacturers who succeed in getting everything (15) right/rightly are going to make (16) huge/hugely profits.

Of course the big issue in the future is Internet access – it needs to be fast,

## Comparing 1

### A Comparatives and superlatives

- We use the comparative form of an adjective to compare two separate things.

Comparative: *Model C400 is **more powerful than** model C200.*

*Model C200 is **less powerful than** model C400.*

We use the superlative form to say that one thing in a group has more or less of a quality than all the others.

Superlative: ***The most powerful** model that we make is the C600.*

***The least powerful** model that we make is the C200.*

### B Form

- The form depends on the number of syllables in the word and the spelling.

	Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
One syllable	<i>cheap</i>	<i>cheaper</i>	<i>the cheapest</i>
	<i>nice</i>	<i>nicer</i>	<i>the nicest</i>
One syllable ending vowel – consonant	<i>big</i>	<i>bigger</i>	<i>the biggest</i>
	<i>hot</i>	<i>hotter</i>	<i>the hottest</i>
One/two syllables ending -y	<i>risky</i>	<i>riskier</i>	<i>the riskiest</i>
	<i>easy</i>	<i>easier</i>	<i>the easiest</i>
Two or more syllables	<i>modern</i>	<i>more/less modern</i>	<i>the most/least modern</i>
	<i>expensive</i>	<i>more/less expensive</i>	<i>the most/least expensive</i>

*A franchising contract is one of **the longest** and **most sophisticated** that investors will ever sign.* (Entrepreneur International website)

- Note that one-syllable adjectives ending in single vowel – single consonant double the final consonant, and that -y becomes *i*.
- big** – bigger   **flat** – flatter   **wet** – wetter*  
*easy – easier   noisy – noisier   happy – happier*
- Some two-syllable adjectives can form in either way. Examples include *clever*, *common*, *narrow*, *polite*, *quiet*, *simple*, *tired*.
- common   commoner/more common   the commonest/the most common*
- Note that long adjectives have both *more/most* and *less/least*, but short adjectives only have *-er/-est*.
- Note the following irregular forms:

<i>good</i>	<i>better</i>	<i>the best</i>
<i>bad</i>	<i>worse</i>	<i>the worst</i>
<i>far</i>	<i>farther/further</i>	<i>the farthest/furthest</i>

*Japan's economy is weakening. Its chances of recovery from **the worst** slowdown since World War II are getting smaller and smaller every day.* (Yahoo Business News website)

### C Other points

- We use *than* to link the things we are comparing.
- This year's profits will be a little **higher than** last year's.*  
*It's a lot more difficult **than** I thought at first.*
- Before a superlative we use *the* or a possessive form.
- This is **the/our/Digicom's** most powerful model.*

Comparative and superlative adjectives can be used without a noun if the meaning is clear from the context.

*Their level of service is good, but **ours** is **better**.*

*Digicom produces a range of models, but this one is **the most powerful**.*

The present perfect with *ever* is often used with superlatives.

*This is **the most powerful machine** that we **have ever produced**.*

*This is **one of the best** meals I **have ever eaten**.*

*The Brazilian supermarket chain Pão de Açúcar reported a profit of US\$167.3m last year, **the largest it has ever made**.* (Business News Americas website)

### D Comparing equal things

We can compare two equal things with *(just) as ... as*. We say that two things are not equal with *not as ... as*. The adjectives do not change.

*The C600i is **(just) as powerful as** the C600.*

*The C400 is **not as powerful as** the C600.*

*Trends in oil prices are about supply and demand fundamentals. It really is **as simple as** that.* (Gulf Business Magazine website)

*It's still **good to be king of your corporation** – just **not as good as** it used to be.* (BusinessWeek website)

### E Comparing actions

- When we compare actions we can use an auxiliary at the end of the sentence.
- The C600 runs faster than the C400. OR The C600 runs faster than the C400 **does**.*  
*You've done more work than me. OR You've done more work than **I have**.*

## 37 Practice

### Exercise 1 A B C D

Underline the correct words.

- 1 The new line should be *so profitable as/as profitable as* the old one.
- 2 This handset is *the most profitable/the more profitable* we've ever made.
- 3 This version of the programme is *the most recent/recenter*.
- 4 The guarantee is a year longer *than/that* with our older models.
- 5 Nothing is *worse/worst* than missing a flight because of traffic.
- 6 This printer is one of *the best/better* on the market.
- 7 The meeting wasn't *long as/as long as* I thought.
- 8 Today the share price is *more bad/worse* than it was yesterday.
- 9 I'm sorry, the journey took *longer than/the longest* we expected.
- 10 We'll be there soon. It's not much *farer/further*.

### Exercise 2 A B C D

Complete the sentences with a comparative or superlative form of the adjective in brackets. Include any other necessary words like *the, more, less, as or than*.

- 1 Coca-Cola is the biggest (big) soft drinks manufacturer in the world.
- 2 This keyboard is quite difficult to use. It's ..... (small) the one I'm used to.
- 3 The conference was a little disappointing. It was ..... (interesting) I expected.
- 4 Yesterday was one of ..... (hot) days of the year.
- 5 I think this suggestion is ..... (good) the other one.
- 6 It's impossible to choose between these two products. One is ..... (good) the other.
- 7 The first round of negotiations was easy. The next will be ..... (difficult).
- 8 We're only a small company. We're not ..... (large) the market leader in our sector.
- 9 This year our sales figure are ..... (bad) last year.
- 10 This is ..... (bad) case of corruption we've seen for years.

### Exercise 3 A B C D E

Put one suitable word in each space.


- 1 We are bigger than GNC, but Satco are the biggest in the market.
- 2 I can see you either day. One day is ..... good ..... the other.
- 3 Nobody knows more about electronics ..... Tina .....
- 4 Of course I'll speak to him. It's the ..... I can do after all your help.
- 5 Sorry, 5% discount is my best offer. It's the ..... I can do.
- 6 He is one of the ..... difficult customers I have ever dealt with.
- 7 Everyone else had worked a lot longer on the project ..... I .....
- 8 I don't think that this market is ..... risky ..... it was.
- 9 The restaurants are the same. This one is ..... as expensive ..... that one.
- 10 This restaurant is better for us. It's ..... as expensive ..... that one.

### Exercise 4 A B C D

Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- 1 David is a better technician than Paul.  
Paul is not ..... as good a technician as ..... David.
- 2 Nobody at KBN is a better investment analyst than Carol.  
Carol is the ..... at KBN.
- 3 I haven't read as many sections of the report as you.  
You've read .....
- 4 I expected the meeting to last longer.  
The meeting didn't last .....
- 5 Our training budget isn't as big as yours.  
Your training budget is .....
- 6 No presentation I've given is more important than this one.  
This is the .....
- 7 This speaker is more interesting than the last one.  
The last speaker was not ..... this one.
- 8 I ate less than George did.  
I didn't ..... George.
- 9 No one in the team has better communication skills than Jane.  
Jane has ..... in the team.
- 10 I have rarely met a more interesting person.  
He is one of .....

### Exercise 5 A B

-  43 Complete the magazine article about investment options with the comparative or superlative forms of the adjectives in brackets.

## Investment choices: risk and reward

In this report we're going to look at the three main types of investments: cash (in bank accounts), bonds (long-term loans that give a fixed rate of return) and stocks (equities). The (1) safest (safe) is cash, and the fact that this has less risk than the others means that it also has a (2) ..... (low) return. If you want a (3) ..... (good) return you should consider bonds. These are fixed interest investments, and are a (4) ..... (attractive) option than cash, particularly when interest rates are falling. The (5) ..... (risky) form of investment is stocks. They offer the chance of much (6) ..... (great) profits over the long term, but you might make a loss if the company does badly. The (7) ..... (bad) case scenario is that the company goes bankrupt and you lose everything. You can reduce the risk by investing in a fund rather than individual

stocks. Funds that invest in developed economies are a (8) ..... (sensible) choice for most people, as the markets have more liquidity and it is (9) ..... (easy) for the fund manager to buy and sell. But there are also emerging market funds that invest in countries like China, India or Turkey. These markets are only for the (10) ..... (aggressive) investors of all as they have much (11) ..... (high) volatility.

So what is the (12) ..... (good) solution? Most financial advisors recommend a balance. In the middle of your career you can afford to have a (13) ..... (large) part of your investments as stocks, perhaps 60-80%, with some bonds for stability and cash for emergencies. As you get (14) ..... (near) retirement you should consider switching most of your money to bonds, and increasing your available cash.

## Comparing 2

### A Large and small differences

We can use adverbs of degree (see unit 39) to talk about differences.

Product A	Product B
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\$220	\$200	A is a <i>bit</i> / a <i>little bit</i> / <i>slightly</i> more expensive than B.
\$300	\$200	A is <i>considerably</i> / <i>much</i> / a <i>lot</i> / <i>far</i> more expensive than B.

Using <i>as ... as</i>		
\$120	\$200	A is <i>not nearly</i> as expensive as B.
\$180	\$200	A is <i>almost</i> / <i>nearly</i> / <i>not quite</i> as expensive as B.
\$400	\$200	A is <i>twice</i> as expensive as B.
\$450	\$200	A is <i>more than twice</i> as expensive as B.

Foreign exchange markets are **far more** volatile and unpredictable **than** commodities markets. (African Business magazine website)

We can use *even* to emphasise the comparison.

Japan is a country full of distributors, wholesalers and other middlemen. The dislocation caused by the Internet could be **even greater than** in the US. (FT.com website)

### B Other structures with comparatives

We can say that something is increasing or decreasing by using two comparatives linked by *and*.  
The personal pensions market is growing **bigger and bigger**.  
Investors are becoming **more and more** sophisticated.

We can say that one situation depends on another by using *the* and one comparative followed by *the* and another comparative.

**The longer** the strike goes on, **the more difficult** it will be to find a solution.

**The bigger** the company and **the larger** its costs, **the greater** the opportunity to see tremendous efficiencies. (BusinessWeek Online website)

These phrases are also useful for comparing things:

<i>exactly/just/almost/nearly/virtually/more or less/roughly</i>	the same ... as ...
<i>exactly/just/very/more/less/quite/a bit/a little</i>	like
<i>completely/quite/slightly</i>	different from
<i>very similar</i>	to
<i>compared to/in comparison with</i>	

Online retailers with 30 employees have to offer **exactly the same** service **as** trading companies with turnover in billions of euros. (Connectis website)

### C Phrases with superlatives

These phrases are common with superlatives.

One of the **largest** retailing groups in Latin America.

By far the/Easily the **largest** retailing group in Latin America.

The second/third/fourth **largest** retailing group in Latin America.

The recession that followed the dollar crisis of 1994 was **one of the worst** in Mexican history. (Global Business Magazine website)

## D Comparing adverbs

☞ In general, adverbs follow exactly the same rules as adjectives.

One syllable: *hard, harder, the hardest*

Two syllables ending -y: *early, earlier, the earliest*

Two or more syllables: *efficiently, more/less efficiently, the most/least efficiently*

☞ The adverbs *well* and *badly* are irregular.

*well, better, the best* *badly, worse, the worst*

☞ We can use the same structures as adjectives.

*In the IT sector people are having to work **harder and harder** to get promotion.*

***The quicker** we can sign the deal, **the sooner** we can start production.*

*Those arguing that the US slowdown is about to end **almost as soon as** it began miss the point entirely.* (BusinessWeek website)

☞ We often need comparative and superlative adverbs when the verb has the form of a present participle (*doing*) or a past participle (*done*).

*Korea is one of **the most rapidly developing** countries in the world.*

*This product is **more attractively designed** and **more solidly** built.*

*The new Deutsche Bank will **be better placed** to use its strong corporate relationships to benefit from the restructuring and M&A boom currently happening across Europe.* (Business Week website)

## E Comparing nouns

☞ We compare nouns using the words below.

Countable nouns (products, people, customers, banks)

*more, fewer, the most, the fewest, (not) as many ... as*

*We have **far more people** working for us now **than** two years ago.*

*We don't have **as many products** on the market **as** two years ago.*

Uncountable nouns (time, money, information, progress)

*more, less, the most, the least, (not) as much ... as*

*I'm working as a freelancer now and I earn **considerably less money**.*

*I **don't** have nearly **as much time** for reading **as** I would like.*

## 38 Practice

### Exercise 1 A B C D E

Underline the correct words.

- The new design is considerably *more light/lighter* than the old one.
- There are nearly twice as many people working here *as/than* last year.
- The sooner they decide, *it's better/the better* for us all.
- There's *each time more/more and more* investment in China every year.
- We have *the nearly largest/the second largest* market share in Turkey.
- This model might be better for you. It's *slightly/quite* less expensive.
- This is our *faster/fastest* selling product.
- Everything's getting *more and more expensive/expensiver and expensiver*.
- If needed, could this production line go *more quickly/more quicker*?
- It's a little more expensive, but the quality is *much better/more better*.
- Our sales this year are virtually *the same as/the equal* of last year.
- This is one of *the best/the well* organised conferences I've ever been to.

### Exercise 2 A B

Write a word or phrase from the list next to a similar word or phrase below.

~~virtually~~ a bit roughly exactly much  
 nearly/~~virtually~~..... a little/..... far/.....  
 more or less/..... just/.....

Now complete these sentences by writing the pairs of words/phrases in the space.

- They're similar. They're roughly / more or less the same.
- They're very similar. They're ..... the same.
- They're identical. They're ..... the same.
- X costs \$580 and Y costs \$600. X is ..... cheaper.
- X costs \$400 and Y costs \$600. X is ..... cheaper.

### Exercise 3 D

Rewrite each sentence using a superlative with a present participle (doing) or a past participle (done).

- Few credit cards are accepted as widely as Visa.  
 Visa is probably the most widely accepted credit card.
- No market is growing as fast as China.  
 China is ..... market.
- Few watches on the market are designed as cleverly as the new Seiko.  
 The new Seiko is one of ..... watches on the market.
- Few of our products are selling as well as this.  
 This is one of our ..... products.
- Few facts about Oracle are less known than this.  
 This is one of ..... facts about Oracle.
- No area of business is changing anything like as rapidly as biotechnology.  
 By far ..... area of business is biotechnology.

### Exercise 4 A B C E

A company wants to move premises and there are several options. Read the details in the table.

Possible new premises	size (square metres)	rent per square metre	running costs per year	distance from city centre (km)
Docklands (converted warehouse)	285	\$500	\$120,000	4
City View Business Park	300	\$350	\$125,000	12
Newtown Industrial Area	310	\$200	\$105,000	30

Now complete the sentences with the phrases from the list below.

~~slightly~~ not nearly by far a lot more than twice roughly the same  
 slightly less considerably less almost as much almost as many

- The three options are all about the same size, but Newtown is slightly larger.
- The running costs at Docklands and City View are .....
- The running costs at Newtown are ..... than the other two places.
- There's ..... square metres at Docklands as at City View.
- There's ..... space at Docklands as at City View.
- The rent at Newtown is ..... than at the other two places.
- The rent at Docklands is ..... the rent at Newtown.
- Docklands is ..... the closest to the city centre.
- In terms of access to the centre, Newtown is ..... as convenient as City View.
- You'd have to travel ..... further to get to Newtown.

### Exercise 5 A B C D E

- 44 Look at the table then complete the presentation extract with phrases from the list below.

~~in comparison with~~ twice as much twice as many a lot a little  
 different similar by far considerably more roughly the same

	Sales \$ mil.	% change	Profit \$ mil.	% change
Chevron	50,000	42	5,000	150
Texaco	52,000	43	3,000	116
Exxon Mobil	210,000	29	16,000	102

'If we look at the figures for the oil sector last year, you can see that the three largest US companies all did very well (1) in comparison with the previous year.

Let's start by comparing Chevron and Texaco. Their sales were (2) ....., although Chevron made (3) ..... profit. Looking at the year-on-year trend you can see that the percentage change in sales was very (4) ..... between the two companies, whereas the change in profits was quite (5) ..... In fact, Chevron's profits grew (6) ..... faster - 150% compared to 116%.  
 Now let's look at Exxon Mobil, the market leader. The table shows that Exxon is (7) ..... the largest company, with more than (8) ..... sales as Chevron and Texaco combined, and exactly (9) ..... profit. In terms of percentage growth, Exxon's figures were (10) ..... lower than its two competitors.'

## Adverbs of degree

### A Adverbs of degree

- Adverbs of degree show how big or important something is. They make the meaning weaker (small degree) or stronger (large degree).

Small degree: *a little, a bit, slightly*

Medium degree: *quite, fairly, pretty, rather, reasonably, relatively*

Large degree: *extremely, really, very, absolutely, completely*

*Marc Faber is noted as a **slightly** eccentric but often **very** accurate market tipster.* (asia-inc magazine website)

Look at these examples.

With adjectives: *It was **a little** expensive/**rather** strange/**very** professional.*

With adverbs: *It was done **a bit** late/**quite** quickly/**very** professionally.*

With verbs: ***I really** disagree. They've increased their offer **a little**.*

With comparatives: *It's **a bit/slightly/considerably/much/a lot** cheaper.*

### B Too, enough, not enough

- Too* means 'more than is necessary or good'. *Not enough* means 'less than is necessary or good'. *Enough* means 'as much as is necessary' or 'sufficient'.

Adjectives: *The salary is **too low**. The salary isn't **high enough**.*

Adverbs: *I'm sorry, it goes **too slowly**. I'm sorry, it isn't **fast enough**.*

Nouns: *There's **too much work**. There isn't **enough time**.*

Note the positions: *too* comes before adjectives, adverbs and nouns; *enough* comes after adjectives and adverbs, but before nouns.

We use *too many/few* + plural nouns and *too much/little* + uncountable nouns.

*There are **too many people** involved in the project.*

*I think we spent **too much money** on the consultants.*

- We can leave out the noun if the meaning is clear.

*Just a little milk, please. Not **too much**.*

*There are six chairs. Is that **enough**?*

### C Other structures with too and enough

- After *too* and *enough* we can use a phrase with *for*.

*Their delivery times are **too long for us**.*

*Have we got **enough chairs for everyone**?*

- After *too* and *enough* we can use a to infinitive.

*Sales are **too slow to make** much profit.*

*We don't have **enough time to do** everything.*

*Simply put, information technology is just **not important enough** on its own **to generate** a sustained recovery.* (FT.com website)

## D So and such

- We use *so* and *such* for emphasis.

**So** with adjectives and adverbs:

*The meeting finished **so quickly**.*

**Such a** with adjective + singular noun:

*It was **such a quick meeting**.*

**Such/So many/So few** with plural nouns:

*You have **such friendly colleagues**.*

*We sold **so many policies** last month!*

**Such/So much/So little** with uncountable nouns:

*It was **such good advice**.*

*I have **so much work** to do.*

*'**Such a big merger** has huge competitive implications,' says a senior German banking executive.* (BusinessWeek Online website)

- So/such* and *too* are different. *So/such* express an opinion which can be either positive or negative. *Too* suggests a difficulty, that something cannot be done.

*There are **so many people** involved in the project.* (it's just my opinion)

*There are **too many people** involved in the project.* (we need to reduce the number)

*So/such* can be used with *that* to express a result. *Too* cannot be used with *that*.

*The meeting finished **so quickly that** I was home by 5.30.* (NOT ~~too quickly that~~)

## E Quite, fairly, pretty or rather?

- Quite, fairly* and *pretty* mean 'a medium amount'.

*'Like most businesses, we're **fairly** cautious about what might come in the next couple of years, mainly because of the Asian situation.'* (business review weekly website)

- In American English *pretty* is a common way of saying 'very'.

- We can change the meaning of *quite* in British English by stressing the adjective in speech. The meaning changes to 'very'. This is called understatement.

*The restaurant was **quite** good.* (normal meaning: it was OK)

*The restaurant was quite **good**.* (understatement: it was very good)

- Rather* also means 'a medium amount', but it often suggests that something is bad, surprising or unusual. It is more formal.

*It's **rather** late to do anything now.* (It's a little too late, I'm afraid)

*The restaurant was **rather** good.* (I enjoyed it, surprisingly)

- With a comparative we can only use *rather*, not *quite*.

*The meeting took **rather longer** than I expected.* (NOT ~~quite longer~~)

- With some adjectives *quite* means 'absolutely' or 'completely'. These include: *absurd, certain, different, hopeless, impossible, ridiculous, right, sure, true, wrong*.

*I'm **quite certain** about this.* (= absolutely certain)

*Are you sure that's **quite right**?* (= completely right)

## 30 Practice

### Exercise 1 A B E

Match each phrase 1–8 with the phrase a)–h) with the closest meaning. Be careful – some are similar.

- |                         |                                       |   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 It's a bit slow.      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b | a) It's comparatively slow.                   |
| 2 It's quite slow.      | <input type="checkbox"/>              | b) It's slightly slow.                        |
| 3 It's rather slow.     | <input type="checkbox"/>              | c) It's fairly slow.                          |
| 4 It's relatively slow. | <input type="checkbox"/>              | d) It's a little too slow, I'm afraid.        |
| 5 It's so slow.         | <input type="checkbox"/>              | e) I want it to be even slower.               |
| 6 It's too slow.        | <input type="checkbox"/>              | f) There's a problem. I want it to be faster. |
| 7 It's slow enough.     | <input type="checkbox"/>              | g) It really is very slow.                    |
| 8 It's not slow enough. | <input type="checkbox"/>              | h) OK. That's as slow as it needs to be.      |

### Exercise 2 B C D

Underline the correct words.

- The salary they are suggesting sounds so good/too good to be true!
- There were so few/so little customers that I went home early.
- We can't pull out now. There's too much/too many money involved.
- It was such/so a boring meeting that I nearly fell asleep.
- The meeting was such/so boring that I nearly fell asleep.
- I had to say 'no' – the cost was so much/too much for the budget I was given.
- We had so much/so many new business that we needed extra staff.
- I had so much/so many reports to write that I put the answering machine on.
- We have so few/so little information that we can't make a decision.
- The meeting was so short/too short to cover all the points properly.
- Can you help me? I'm not enough tall/tall enough to reach the top shelf.
- There isn't enough money/money enough in the budget for your idea.

### Exercise 3 B C D

Complete the sentences with one of these words: *too, enough, so, such, much, many, little, few*.

- Is your coffee too hot? Would you like a little more milk?
- I had ..... trouble finding somewhere to park that I arrived late.
- I had ..... problems finding somewhere to park that I arrived late.
- There were ..... replies to the last mailing that we won't do another.
- I had ..... cash on me that I couldn't even buy a sandwich.
- The price of their shares is ..... high to buy any more right now.
- We're making ..... progress that we should finish a week early.
- We're expecting a lot of people. This room won't be large .....
- I couldn't do any work on the train. I was ..... tired that I fell asleep.
- She speaks ..... quickly for me to understand.
- They pay ..... late that we won't receive the money until June.
- That's ..... a good idea. It'll save us thousands of dollars.

### Exercise 4 D

Look at the table below, then combine the sentences, using either *so ... that ...* or *such ... that ...*.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 a) There was a big drop in their share price.    | + Investors became very nervous.             |
| b) The drop in their share price was very big.     |  |
| 2 a) The advertising campaign was very successful. | + Sales increased by 25% per month.          |
| b) The advertising campaign was a success.         |  |
| 3 a) Our order processing system works very well.  | + Most goods are dispatched within 48 hours. |
| b) We have a very good order processing system.    |  |
| 4 a) That company has very large bank debts.       | + There's a risk it will have to close down. |
| b) That company's bank debts are very large.       |  |
| 5 a) The Internet connection is very fast.         | + Web pages appear almost instantly.         |
| b) There is a very fast Internet connection.       |  |

- a) There was such a big drop in their share price that investors became very nervous.  
b) The drop in their share price was ..... so big that ..... investors became very nervous.
- a) The advertising campaign was ..... sales increased by 25% per month.  
b) The advertising campaign was ..... sales increased by 25% per month.
- a) Our order processing system works ..... most goods are dispatched within 48 hours.  
b) We have ..... most goods are dispatched within 48 hours.
- a) That company has ..... there's a risk it will have to close down.  
b) That company's bank debts are ..... there's a risk it will have to close down.
- a) The Internet connection is ..... Web pages appear almost instantly.  
b) There is ..... Web pages appear almost instantly.

### Exercise 5 B D

Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first sentence and contains the word in brackets.

- I didn't buy that laptop because the screen was too small. (enough)  
I didn't buy that laptop because the screen wasn't large enough.
- The problem was so difficult that I referred it to my line manager. (such)  
It ..... that I referred it to my line manager.
- There weren't enough copies of the agenda. (few)  
There ..... of the agenda.
- There's not enough space on this spreadsheet for all the results. (little)  
There's ..... on this spreadsheet for all the results.
- It was such a good presentation that they gave us the contract immediately. (so)  
The ..... that they gave us the contract immediately.
- I sold too few units last month to get a bonus. (enough)  
I ..... last month to get a bonus.
- I've got such a busy schedule that I can't meet you until next Tuesday. (so)  
My schedule ..... that I can't meet you until next Tuesday.
- We've sent out lots of brochures and we'll need to print some more. (many)  
We've sent out ..... we'll need to print some more.
- I haven't got enough time to prepare for the meeting. (too)  
I've got ..... to prepare for the meeting.