

2.4 Comparison

1. **The two basic comparative forms are:**

The Pacific Ocean is *larger* than the Atlantic.
 His work is *more interesting* than hers.

 - a) *-er* is added to one-syllable adjectives (*slow/slower*) and two-syllable adjectives ending in *-y* (*easy/easier*).
 - b) *more* is used with words of two or more syllables.
 careful/more careful quickly/more quickly

However, there are some two-syllable words that can use either form:
 simple/simpler/more simple
2. **Comparisons can be made more exact by using *slightly, much, considerably, far* or *significantly* before the comparative:**

Dickens' novels are *considerably longer* than Austen's.
 The new Mercedes is *slightly more economical* than the old model.

Cross-reference	
2.9	Numbers
3.8	Nationality Language



3. **Study the table and complete the comparisons below.**

Cost of sending a letter to a domestic destination (Eurocents)

Germany	110
France	85
Japan	62
Britain	60
United States	48
Spain	45

- a) Letters in Japan are
 in Britain.
 - b) Spanish letters are
 German letters.
 - c) British letters are
 French ones.
 - d) Letters in Germany are
 in America.
4. **The form *as* *as* can be used to stress similarity:**
 British letters are nearly *as expensive* as Japanese letters.
 It can also be used for quantitative comparison:
 German letters are *twice as expensive* as American letters.
 (Also: *half as/three times as/etc.*)

5. Note the variety of forms possible:

German letters are more expensive than French (ones/
letters). (least formal)

Letters in Germany are more expensive than (those) in
France.

The cost of sending a letter is higher in Germany than in
France. (most formal)

(*High/low* are used for comparing abstract concepts such as
rates.)

Ones can replace the noun when used with an adjective:

German letters are more expensive than Japanese *ones*.

But not in combination with a noun:

Family cars are cheaper than sports cars. (not sports
ones)

6. *More/less, the most/the least* (followed by adjective), *the most/
the fewest* (related to number)

Divorce is *less common* in Greece than in Britain.

The School of Education offers *the most modules*. (more
than others)

The most crowded country in Europe is Holland.

NB Superlatives (*most crowded/least visited*) must be
defined, e.g. *in Europe/in 1996*.

7. Complete the following description of the table above (one word
per gap):

According to the table, Spain is the a)
expensive country for sending a domestic letter. The USA
is b) more expensive, while the cost
in Britain is c) the same d)
in Japan. France and Germany are the e)
..... expensive countries, France being 20% cheaper
f) Germany. Overall, posting a letter costs
g) as much in Spain h) in
Germany.

cross-reference
4.5 Comparison Essay

8. Study the table and complete the text below (one word per gap).

American spending on leisure activities, 1997, \$billion

Video, audio and computers	80
Books and newspapers	51
Casino gambling	24
Lotteries	18
Recorded music	15
Theme parks	9
Video games	8.5
Spectator sports	6
Cinema tickets	5.5
Racecourse betting	2.5

The table shows that Americans spend the
 a) money (\$80 bn) on video, audio and computer equipment. They spend 40% b) on books and newspapers, while casinos, in third place, are c) popular d) lotteries or recorded music. Americans spend e) more on theme parks than f) video games, and the cinema, in ninth place, is nearly g) popular as spectator sports. The h) amount of money is spent on racecourse betting.

9. Study the table below and complete the paragraph comparing life expectancy in European countries (one word per gap).

Country	Adult alcohol intake per year (litres)	Cigarettes smoked per day per adult	Life expectancy in years – male	Life expectancy in years – female
Austria	11.9	4.6	74.2	80.5
Belgium	11.7	4.3	73.8	80.5
Britain	9.4	4.2	74.3	79.5
Denmark	12.1	4.9	73.1	78.2
Finland	8.4	2.2	73.3	80.3
France	14.1	4.0	74.2	82.1
Germany	11.8	5.0	73.7	80.0
Greece	10.4	8.3	75.1	81.4
Italy	9.4	4.2	74.9	81.3
Norway	4.8	1.7	75.4	81.0
Portugal	13.6	4.6	71.4	78.7
Sweden	6.4	2.4	76.7	81.8
Switzerland	11.8	5.6	76.1	82.2
EU average	11.1	4.5	74.1	80.5

The table a) that Swedish men have the b) life expectancy in Europe, while women live the c) in Switzerland. d) average women in Europe live 6 years longer e) men. Men in Portugal have f) lowest life expectancy (71.4 years), while the lowest for women is Denmark (78.2 years), which is g) less than in Portugal (78.7 years).

10. *Complete the following paragraph comparing cigarette smoking in Europe.*

The table shows considerable variations in cigarette smoking in Europe. The highest rate is

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11. *Write another paragraph comparing alcohol intake in Europe.*