
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The Grammar Gameshow

Comparatives

Will

Hello, and welcome to today's Grammar Gameshow! I'm your host, Will! This is my game show. There are many like it, but this one is mine. And of course let's not forget Leslie, our all-knowing voice in the sky.

Leslie

Hello, everyone!

Will

Tonight, we're going to ask you three questions about...

Leslie

Comparatives! Those useful words and expressions for measuring one thing against another!

Will

OK! Now, let's meet our contestants!

Selene

Hello, all. My name's Selene!

Will

And contestant number two?

June

It's nice to meet you. I'm June!

Will

Great! Nice to see you again, Selene. How are you feeling?

Selene

I'm doing OK. Why?

Will

Well, you know... that tragic accident that happened to Mark.

Selene

Oh, Mark! Why? Why?

Will

Well, just don't think about him, and you'll be fine. It's only true love, it's not that important. OK. Let's get going, and don't forget you can play along at home too. Now, our first round is a grid round. Look at this grid and choose a number. Then use the revealed word to make a comparative about someone in this room. Are you ready? On your marks... Oh sorry! I shouldn't have said that! Selene, you can go first.

Selene

I'll have number three, please.

Leslie

Brainless!

Selene

Oh... Oh, my... Will is... June is more brainless than I am.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Ouch! June! Time for revenge! Choose a number.

June

I'll take number one.

Leslie

Fat!

June

Selene is fatter than me.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Are you going to take that? Quick, choose a number!

Selene

I choose six.

Leslie

Ugly!

Selene

June is uglier than I am.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

How dare she! She's gone mad with grief! Go on, get her back!

June

I'll choose number two, please.

Leslie

Bad!

June

Selene is a worse person than I am.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Don't we all know it. That's why Mark left. Don't think about him, Selene!

Selene

Number four!

Leslie

Handsome.

Selene

Will is handsomer than everyone...

Leslie

Correct!

Will

That's the kind of spirit we need.

Selene

...except Mark.

Will

Whoa. Factually incorrect there. Minus 1 point. Leslie?

Leslie

Comparatives are adjectives that allow us to compare two or more things. To make one, modify an adjective. If it has one syllable, add 'ER'. If it has two syllables, it may take 'ER' or 'more' or both! Check a dictionary. If it has three syllables or greater, we add 'more'. Lastly, the third type is irregular, such as 'good' and 'bad'. And don't forget to use 'than'!

Will

Well done! Twenty points each, minus the one Selene lost. I'll just mark that down. Oh sorry... poor choice of words. On to our second round, one syllable and two syllable adjectives ending in 'Y', change their spelling when they become comparatives. Which of these comparative spelling rules is incorrect?

- A) Basic adjective + 'ER'
- B) Ends in 'E': + 'R'
- C) Ends in vowel consonant: Double consonant + 'ER'
- D) Ends in 'Y': Change 'Y' to 'I' + 'ER'

Selene

I don't seem to remember C. I think that one is incorrect

Will

Sorry. That's wrong, I'm afraid. I'm going to have to give you a black mark. Oh! Sorry! Sorry! I put my foot in my mouth again. June?

June

This is a trick question. All of the rules are correct.

Will

Well done, June! You've beat Selene! That's bound to leave a mark. Oh sorry! Faux pas! Faux pas! Leslie?

Leslie

Excellent, June. One syllable and two syllable adjectives ending in 'Y', change their spelling when they become comparatives. We add 'ER' to the basic adjectives. If the adjective ends in 'E', we only add 'R'. If it ends in a single vowel followed by a consonant, we double the consonant and add 'ER'. Finally, if the adjective ends in 'Y', we replace the 'Y' with an 'I' and add 'ER'.

Will

Well done, June. Three points for you. You're doing quite well. Do you think you'll win?

June

Oh, I will. Mark my words.

Will

I'll have to mark that one down. Oops... sorry, sorry! OK. On to our last round.

Comparatives are not just able to communicate a difference, but also how much of a difference exists. I'm going to show you some comparatives and I want to know if there's a big difference, small difference, or no difference at all. Here we go: Mark is as nice as Mark.

June

No difference.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Wow, June. That was quick off the mark. Whoopsie! Here's the next one: Mark is twice as handsome as Mark. No. Sorry, you're well off the mark there.

June

Big difference.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Mark is a little bit less interesting than Mark.

June

Small difference.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Last one: Mark is nothing like as cool as Mark

Selene

Mark!

June

Big difference

Will

Leslie... can we?

Leslie

Well done! Comparative and comparative structures can be modified to include the size of the difference being illustrated. Words like 'much', 'not as...', 'nowhere near as...', 'a bit' and 'as... as...' are useful here!

Will

Well done, June! Six points for you. And that brings us to the end of today's Grammar Gameshow. And the winner is... Selene! Well... we could hardly send you... 'home'. Not when you're being so much fun! Besides, you're too easy a mark. Whoops! Here's what you've won!

Leslie

It's a permanent marker! So you can mark down the days since you lost your love.

Will

Oh, I love you Leslie. We'll see you again next week, where you can play for another prize. And June? You played well and really tried to make your mark... whoops! But it wasn't meant to be.

June

That's not fair. Just because she's heart-broken...

Will

Release the dolphins! Some people just have no empathy! Isn't that right, Mark? Whoops! It looks like we'll need another contestant. Thanks for joining us. Say goodbye, Leslie

Leslie

Hoşça kal, Leslie.

Will

See you next time.