

COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are compared in Latin in the same manner as in English. There are three degrees of comparison: 1) Positive; 2) Comparative; 3) Superlative:

1) Positive:	long	short	tall
2) Comparative:	longer	shorter	taller
3) Superlative:	longest	shortest	tallest

1. Positive Adjectives:

The Positive Degree of Adjectives is the normal form: *longus, -a, -um*.

2. Comparative Adjectives

Adjectives are compared by adding *-ior* (M.&F.) or *-ius* (N.) to the base. The base is taken from the genitive singular of the adjective. The comparative adjective is then declined as a regular third declension (*i.e.*, not *i*-stems).

		Masc. & Fem.		Neuter
Nom.	longiōr	longiōrēs	longius	longiōra
Gen.	longiōris	longiōrum	longiōris	longiōrum
Dat.	longiōrī	longiōribus	longiōri	longiōribus
Acc.	longiōrem	longiōrēs	longius	longiōra
Abl.	longiōre	longiōribus	longiōre	longiōribus

3. Superlative Adjectives:

Superlative adjectives are formed by adding normal 1st and 2nd declension endings (*-us, -a, -um*) to the base. The stem is taken from the genitive singular:

longissimus, -a, -um brevissimus, -a, -um felicissimus, -a, -um

Translation of the Superlative:

In Latin the superlative is broader in meaning than in English. It can mean *longest* (as in English); but also *rather long, too long, very long*.

4. Comparison with *Quam*:

Latin can use *quam* (than) to compare two words. If *quam* is used, the words compared are in the same case: *Puellae diligentiores quam pueri sunt*.

5. Ablative of Comparison:

If the word to be compared is in the nominative or accusative, *quam* may be omitted and the second word put in the ablative: *Puellae diligentiores pueris sunt*.

6. Comparison in *-er*:

All adjectives ending in *-er* form the superlative by adding *-rimus*, *-rima*, *rimum* to the nominative. The comparative is regular.

pulcher, pulchra, pulchrum	pulchrior, -ius	pulcherrimus, -a, -um
celer, celeris, celere	celerior, -ius	celerrimus, -a, -um

7. Comparison of Adjectives in *-eus* or *-ius*:

Adjectives of the 1st and 2nd declension ending in *-eus* or *-ius* form the comparative with *magis* and the superlative with *maxime*:

idoneus, -a, -um	magis idoneus, -a, -um	maxime idoneus, -a, -um
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8. Adjectives in *-ilis*:

A few adjectives ending in *-ilis* form their superlative with *-limus*, *-a*, *-um*:

facilis, -e (<i>easy</i>)	facilior, -ius	facillimus, -a, -um
difficilis, -e (<i>difficult</i>)	difficilior, -ius	difficillimus, -a, -um
similis, -e (<i>similar, like</i>)	similior, -ius	simillimus, -a, -um
dissimilis, -e (<i>unlike</i>)	dissimilior, -ius	dissimillimus, -a, -um
gracilis, -e (<i>slender</i>)	gracilior, -ius	gracillimus, -a, -um
humilis, -e (<i>humble, lowly</i>)	humilior, -ius	humillimus, -a, -um

9. Irregular Adjectives:

Some adjectives (as in English) are simply irregular and must be memorized:

bonus, -a, -um	melior, melius	optimus, -a, -um
malus, -a, -um	peior, peius	pessimus, -a, -um
māgnus, -a, -um	maior, maius	maximus, -a, -um
parvus, -a, -um	minor, minus	minimus, -a, -um
multī, -ae, -a	plūrēs, plura	plūrimī, -ae, -a
-----	exterior, exterius	extrēmus, -a, -um
-----	inferior, inferius	infimus, -a, -um (imus)
-----	interior, interius	intimus, -a, -um
-----	prior, prius	prīmus, -a, -um
-----	proprior, propius	proximus, -a, -um
-----	superior, superius	summus, -a, -um
-----	ulterior, ulterius	ultimus, -a, -um
multus, -a, -um	-----	plūrimus, -a, -um
senex, senis	senior	-----