

26. GRAMMAR: Comparison (La comparaison). Degrees of comparison: comparative and superlative [*comparatif, superlatif*]; use of 'mieux', 'meilleur'.

Read the following English sentences.

(a) Luc is taller than Marie.

(b) Luc is the tallest (of the class).

In sentence (a), we compare the size (a quality expressed by an adjective) of two people. For this, we use the comparative (*comparatif*). In the next sentence, (b), we state who or what has the highest level of a quality/characteristic. For this, we use the superlative (*superlatif*). Both sentences are translated into French as follows:

(a') Luc est plus grand que Marie.

(b') Luc est le plus grand (de la classe)

(1) The comparative (comparative degree):

Adjectives or adverbs ¹	
-Jean est <u>plus rapide que</u> Jules. → (« rapide » = adjectif)	- Jean <u>is faster than</u> Jules.
-Jean mange <u>plus rapidement que</u> Jules. → (« rapidement » = adverb)	- Jean <u>eats faster than</u> Jules.
-Jean est <u>aussi rapide que</u> Jules.	- Jean <u>is as fast as</u> Jules.
-Jean mange <u>aussi rapidement que</u> Jules.	- Jean <u>eats as fast as</u> Jules.
-Jean est <u>moins rapide que</u> Jules.	- Jean <u>is less fast than</u> Jules.
-Jean mange <u>plus rapidement que</u> Jules.	- Jean <u>eats less fast than</u> Jules.

¹. « rapide » the adjective ; « rapidement » is the adverb

Nouns or verbs ¹

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jean a <u>plus d'argent que</u> Jules- Jean <u>mange plus que</u> Jules. - Jean a <u>autant d'argent que</u> Luc.- Jean <u>mange autant que</u> Jules..- Jean a <u>moins d'argent que</u> Jules.- Jean <u>mange moins que</u> Jules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jean has <u>more money than</u> Jules.- Jean <u>eats more than</u> Luc. - Jean has <u>as much money as</u> Jules.- Jean <u>eats as much as</u> Luc. - Jean has <u>Less money than</u> Jules.- Jean <u>eats Less than</u> Luc.
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1. The first sentences express the superlative of a noun; don't forget to add 'de' [article after quantity]: *plus de, moins de, autant de.*

(2) the superlative (Le superlatif) :

Adjectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Marie est <u>La plus/moins belle</u> (de toute la classe).- Jean est <u>Le plus/moins beau</u> (de toute la classe).- Marie et Jean sont <u>Les plus/moins beaux</u> (de toute la classe).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Marie is the most beautiful / the least beautiful (in the class).- Jean is the most handsome / the least handsome (in the class).- Marie and Jean are the most beautiful / the least attractive (in the class).
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1. Be careful: **your article (Le, La, Les) and your adjective must agree in gender and number with the noun they refer to !** In the examples above, these are Marie, Jean, and Jean and Marie.

Adverbs

<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Marie roule LE plus/ LE moins prudemment (de toute sa famille).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Marie drives the most carefully / the least carefully (in the family).
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1. **Be careful:** An adverb refers to a verb, so here you should always use **Le plus / Le moins**, always with the article "Le"

Nouns and verbs	
-Marie a LE plus/ LE moins d'argent de toute la classe.	Marie has the most / the least money (in the class).
-Marie travaille LE plus/ LE moins de toute la classe.	-Marie works the most / the least of the entire class.
<hr/> <p>1. Here again, we use the article « LE ».</p>	

* Then there is one very tricky point left: in French, the forms **plus bon* (better) or **plus bien* (better) are never used. These forms are replaced by *meilleur* and *mieux*, respectively.

- Ses résultats sont ~~*plus bons~~ que les miens.
→ Ses résultats sont **meilleurs** que les miens.
- Elle a ~~*les plus bons~~ résultats de la classe.
→ Elle a les **meilleurs** résultats de la classe.
- Elle roule ~~*plus bien~~ que moi.
→ Elle roule **mieux** que moi.
- Elle roule ~~*le plus bien~~ de la classe.
→ Elle roule **le mieux** de la classe. (superlatif)