

Comparatives and superlatives

Comparatives

To form comparatives of superiority, most adjectives add *-ior* (m. and f.) / *-ius* (n.) to the stem (genitive singular minus *-i* / *-is*).

	gen. sing.	comp.
<i>piger, -gra, -grum</i>	<i>pigri</i>	<i>pigrrior, pigrrius</i>
<i>fortis, -e</i>	<i>fortis</i>	<i>fortior, fortius</i>
<i>velox</i>	<i>velocis</i>	<i>velocior, velocius</i>

The comparative declines as a 3rd declension adjective (consonant stem).

	singular		plural	
	m./f.	n.	m./f.	n.
nom.	<i>velocior</i>	<i>velocius</i>	<i>velociores</i>	<i>velociora</i>
gen.	<i>velocioris</i>	<i>velocioris</i>	<i>velociorum</i>	<i>velociorum</i>
dat.	<i>velociori</i>	<i>velociori</i>	<i>velocioribus</i>	<i>velocioribus</i>
acc.	<i>velociorem</i>	<i>velocius</i>	<i>velociores</i>	<i>velociora</i>
voc.	<i>velocior</i>	<i>velocius</i>	<i>velociores</i>	<i>velociora</i>
abl.	<i>velociore</i>	<i>velociore</i>	<i>velocioribus</i>	<i>velocioribus</i>

The comparative usually means “more” (*pulchrior* = “more beautiful”). However, when the second item of comparison is omitted, it can also mean “quite”, “rather”, or “too”.

Lupus velocior est homine = “The wolf is faster than the human”.

Lupus velocior est = “The wolf is quite / rather / too fast”.

The second item of comparison can be expressed:

- in the ablative case, when the first item is in the nominative, or in the accusative without preposition;

Lupus velocior est homine = “The wolf is faster than the human”.

- in the same case as the first item, preceded by *quam*.

Neminem habeo clariorem quam te ipsum = “I consider nobody more famous than you”.

Comparatives of equality can be expressed in the following ways:

- *tam ... quam* = “as/so ... as”
- *non minus ... quam* = “no less ... than”
- *ita ... ut* = “just/in the same way ... as”
- *aeque ... ac* = “as much ... as”

Ubi enim praesto fuissent mihi aut tam fortes consules, quam L. Opimius? quam C. Marius? quam L. Flaccus?

“For where could I have found at hand to help me consuls as brave as Lucius Opimius, Gaius Marius, or Lucius Flaccus?”

Comparatives of inferiority are formed with *minus* followed by the adjective in the positive degree:

Canis minus velox est quam lupus = "The dog is less fast than the wolf".

Superlatives

Superlatives are formed by adding *-issimus, -issima, -issimum* to the stem of the adjective (again derived from the genitive).

	gen. sing.	comp.
<i>fortis, -e</i>	<i>fortis</i>	<i>fortissimus, -a, -um</i>
<i>velox</i>	<i>velocis</i>	<i>velocissimus, -a, -um</i>

Adjectives ending *-er* add *-rimus, -rima, -rimum* to the nominative.

<i>piger, pigra, pigrum</i>	<i>pigerrimus, pigerrima, pigerrimum</i>
<i>acer, acris, acre</i>	<i>acerrimus, acerrima, acerrimum</i>

Superlatives decline like *bonus, bona, bonum*.

	sing.			plur.		
	m.	f.	n.	m.	f.	n.
nom.	<i>fortissimus</i>	<i>fortissima</i>	<i>fortissimum</i>	<i>fortissimi</i>	<i>fortissimae</i>	<i>fortissima</i>
gen.	<i>fortissimi</i>	<i>fortissimae</i>	<i>fortissimi</i>	<i>fortissimorum</i>	<i>fortissimarum</i>	<i>fortissimorum</i>
dat.	<i>fortissimo</i>	<i>fortissimae</i>	<i>fortissimo</i>	<i>fortissimis</i>	<i>fortissimis</i>	<i>fortissimis</i>
acc.	<i>fortissimum</i>	<i>fortissimam</i>	<i>fortissimum</i>	<i>fortissimos</i>	<i>fortissimas</i>	<i>fortissima</i>
voc.	<i>fortissime</i>	<i>fortissima</i>	<i>fortissimum</i>	<i>fortissimi</i>	<i>fortissimae</i>	<i>fortissima</i>
abl.	<i>fortissimo</i>	<i>fortissima</i>	<i>fortissimo</i>	<i>fortissimis</i>	<i>fortissimis</i>	<i>fortissimis</i>

- *Quam* followed by the superlative means "as ... possible", e.g. *quam fortissimus* means "as brave as possible".
- 6 adjectives ending *-ilis* in the nominative double the *-l-* in the superlative:
 - facilis* ("easy") > *facillimus, -a, -um*
 - difficilis* ("difficult") > *difficillimus, -a, -um*
 - gracilis* ("slender") > *gracillimus, -a, -um*
 - humilis* ("low") > *humillimus, -a, -um*
 - similis* ("like") > *simillimus, -a, -um*
 - dissimilis* ("unlike") > *dissimillimus, -a, -um*

All other adjectives ending *-ilis* are regular.

Particular cases

All adjectives ending *-dicus, -ficus, -volus* end *-entior, -entius* in the comparative and *-entissimus, -a, -um* in the superlative.

positive	comparative	superlative
<i>maledicus, -a, -um</i>	<i>maledicentior, -ius</i>	<i>maledicentissimus, -a, -um</i>
<i>magnificus, -a, -um</i>	<i>magnificentior, -ius</i>	<i>magnificentissimus, -a, -um</i>
<i>benevolus, -a, -um</i>	<i>benevolentior, -ius</i>	<i>benevolentissimus, -a, -um</i>

The following adjectives have irregular comparison:

positive	comparative	superlative
<i>bonus, -a, -um</i>	<i>melior, -ius</i>	<i>optimus, -a, -um</i>
<i>malus, -a, -um</i>	<i>peior, -ius</i>	<i>pessimus, -a, -um</i>
<i>magnus, -a, -um</i>	<i>maior, -ius</i>	<i>maximus, -a, -um</i>
<i>parvus, -a, -um</i>	<i>minor, minus</i>	<i>minimus, -a, -um</i>
<i>multus, -a, -um</i>	<i>plus (n. sing.), plures, plura (pl.)</i>	<i>plurimus, -a, -um</i>

Some adjectives ending *-eus, -ius, -uus* (with the exception of *-quus*), *-alis, -andus, -aris, -endus, -icus, -idus, -ilis, -orus, -olus* use the adverbs *magis / maxime* to form comparatives / superlatives:

positive	comparative	superlative
<i>idoneus</i>	<i>magis idoneus</i>	<i>maxime idoneus</i>
<i>arduus</i>	<i>magis arduus</i>	<i>maxime arduus</i>

- *vetus, veteris* ("old") has no comparative. Its superlative is *veterrimus, -a, -um*.
- The comparatives of *iuvenis* ("young") and *senex* ("old") are *iunior* and *senior* respectively. They have no superlative.
- *Dives* ("rich") has two comparatives and two superlatives: *divitior / ditior* and *divitissimus / ditissimus*.
- Some adjectives can also form the superlative with the prefix *per* or *prae*. Here are some examples:
 - acutus* ("sharp") > *acutissimus / praeacutus / peracutus*
 - clarus* ("famous") > *clarissimus / praeclarus*
 - facilis* ("easy") > *facillimus / perfacilis*