# 3. COMPARISON

**Comparison** is one of the ways of relating ideas and objects to each other. The comparison can either be one of **difference** or one of **similarity**. Of course, comparison is frequently expressed by means of grammatical forms such as the comparative and the superlative. However, there is also a large store of lexical items which express similar meanings. For example:

- "to accelerate" means "to go faster",
- "the two samples are **similar**" means that they have been compared.

# Self evaluation – entry test

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E	ill in the blanks, using comparatives, superlatives or other lexical forms.  Example:		
	Before building the prototype, <b>fu</b> research will be necessary. (more)  Before building the prototype, <b>further</b> research will be necessary.		
1.	In the early 1970s, <b>bo</b> the American and Russian space agencies began exploring the possibility of long-term habitation in space. <i>(the two of them)</i>		
2.	The upper salinity limit for irrigation is $le$ than 15% of the salt content of seawater. ( $\neq$ more)		
3.	Fever has a useful medical function; it not only increases the metabolic rate, but the <b>ho</b> environment facilitates the destruction of pathogens. (higher temperature)		
4.	<b>Un</b> true organisms, viruses are unable to synthesise proteins because they lack ribosome. (as opposed to)		
5.	Many of the drugs prescribed for human therapy are the <b>sa</b> those used for farm animals. (identical – 2 words)		
6.	Chemicals can be added to vary the properties of the glass. For example, the addition of lead oxide <b>en</b> the refractive index. (makes better)		
7.	Fleming noticed that a penicillin solution prevented the <b>sp</b> of bacteria. (growth, proliferation)		
8.	The smallest blood cells (averaging 2-4 micrometers in diameter) grow <b>ha</b> filaments from their membranes. (similar to hair)		
9.	<b>Im</b> production techniques have enabled industrialists to reduce the risk of fire. (better)		
10.	Wegener was able to demonstrate the movement of tectonic plates by <b>ma</b> the shapes of the five continents. (comparing, fitting together)		

#### Functions & Grammar

#### **KEY POINTS - COMPARISON**

#### 1. Irregular forms

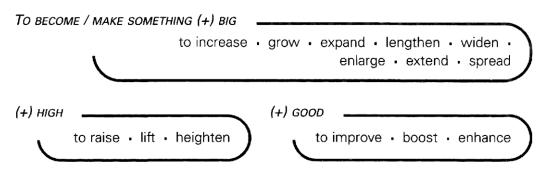
- good / better / the best
- ≠ bad / worse / the worst
- many / more / the most
- ≠ few / fewer / the fewest
- much / more / the most
- ≠ little / less / the least
- far / farther / the farthest
- far / further / the furthest

#### ■ Note

- Farther is used to indicate greater distance.
- Further often means "supplementary, additional".
  - ➤ I can go no farther.
  - > Further details can be obtained at the information office.

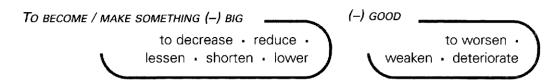
#### 2. Difference

■ Comparative (superiority)



➤ Blood transfusion is used by athletes to **enhance** performance.

#### ■ Comparative (inferiority)



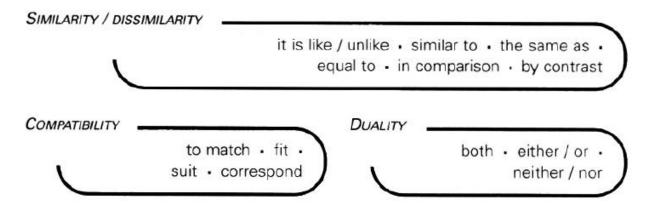
➤ Little by little the patient's condition worsened.

### Superlative meaning



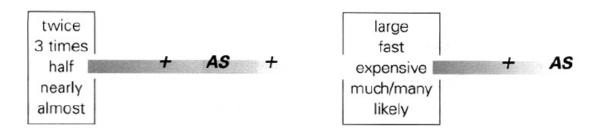
➤ The foremost concern of the government is unemployment.

## 3. Similar or equal things can be contrasted



Before transfusion the blood groups must be matched.

#### 4. As + as



- ➤ Meteorite craters are roughly **20 times as large as** the objects that caused them.
- ➤ Electrons can travel almost as fast as light.

### 5. Other comparative patterns

- ➤ The situation is getting worse and worse. (COMP + AND + COMP)
- ➤ The richer people become, the less happy they are. (COMP + S + V) + (COMP + S + V)

## 6. Word formation

Adjectives of comparison expressing similarity.

- ➤ An earth-like atmosphere (similar to the Earth)
- ➤ A **bell-shaped** curve (with the shape of)

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Comparison c	an also be expressed by prefixes.
■ Over (more	than required)
	to <b>overload</b> a circuit • to <b>overestimate</b> the results • to <b>overheat</b> an engine • to <b>overeat</b>
■ Under (less	than required)
co	the meat is <b>undercooked</b> • an <b>underdeveloped</b> untry • <b>underpaid</b> workers • an <b>understaffed</b> research project
■ Out (better o	or greater than)
, ,	to <b>outdo</b> the competitors • women <b>utnumber</b> men • the advantages <b>outweigh</b> the disadvantages