

Superlative (**the longest / the most enjoyable** etc.)

A

Look at these examples:

What is **the longest** river in the world?

What was **the most enjoyable** holiday you've ever had?

Longest and **most enjoyable** are *superlative* forms.

The superlative form is **-est** or **most** In general, we use **-est** for short words and **most** ... for longer words.

long → longest	hot → hottest	easy → easiest	hard → hardest
but most famous	most boring	most enjoyable	most difficult

A few superlative forms are irregular:

good → **best** bad → **worst** far → **furthest** or **farthest**

The rules are the same as those for the comparative – see Unit 105.

For spelling, see Appendix 6.

B

We normally use **the** (or **my/your** etc.) with a superlative:

- ☐ Yesterday was **the hottest** day of the year.
- ☐ The Louvre in Paris is one of **the most famous** museums in the world.
- ☐ She is really nice – one of **the nicest** people I know.
- ☐ What's **the best** movie you've ever seen, and what's **the worst**?
- ☐ How old is **your youngest** child?

Compare the superlative and the comparative:

- ☐ This hotel is **the cheapest** in town. (*superlative*)
It's **cheaper** than all the others in town. (*comparative*)
- ☐ He's **the most patient** person I've ever met.
He's much **more patient** than I am.

C

oldest and **eldest**

The superlative of **old** is **oldest**:

- ☐ That church is **the oldest** building in the town. (*not* the eldest)

We use **eldest** only when we talk about people in a family (you can also use **oldest**):

- ☐ **Their eldest son** is 13 years old. (*or* Their **oldest** son)
- ☐ Are you **the eldest** in your family? (*or* the **oldest**)

D

After superlatives we normally use **in** with places:

- ☐ What's the longest river **in the world**? (*not* of the world)
- ☐ We had a nice room. It was one of the best **in the hotel**. (*not* of the hotel)

We also use **in** for organisations and groups of people (a class / a company etc.):

- ☐ Who is the youngest student **in the class**? (*not* of the class)

For a period of time (**day, year** etc.), we normally use **of**:

- ☐ Yesterday was the hottest day **of the year**.
- ☐ What was the happiest day **of your life**?

E

We often use the *present perfect* (I **have done**) after a superlative (see also Unit 8A):

- ☐ What's **the most important** decision **you've ever made**?
- ☐ That was **the best** holiday **I've had** for a long time.

Exercises

108.1 Complete the sentences. Use the superlative forms (**-est** or **most ...**) of the words in the box.

bad cheap good honest popular short tall

- We didn't have much money, so we stayed at the cheapest hotel in the town.
- This building is 250 metres high, but it's not in the city.
- It was an awful day. It was day of my life.
- What is sport in your country?
- I like the morning. For me it's part of the day.
- Sarah always tells the truth. She's one of people I know.
- A straight line is distance between two points.

108.2 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (**-est** or **most ...**) or a comparative (**-er** or **more ...**).

- We stayed at the cheapest hotel in the town. (cheap)
- Our hotel was cheaper than all the others in the town. (cheap)
- I wasn't feeling well yesterday, but I feel a bit today. (good)
- What's thing you've ever bought? (expensive)
- I prefer this chair to the other one. It's (comfortable)
- Amy and Ben have three daughters. is 14 years old. (old)
- Who is the person you know? (old)
- What's way to get to the station? (quick)
- Which is – the bus or the train? (quick)
- I can remember when I was three years old. It's memory. (early)
- Everest is mountain in the world. It is than any other mountain. (high)
- A: This knife isn't very sharp. Do you have a one?
B: No, it's one I have. (sharp)

108.3 Complete the sentences. Use a superlative (**-est** or **most ...**) + a preposition (**of** or **in**).

- It's a very good room. It's the best room in the hotel.
- Brazil is a very large country. It's South America.
- It was a very happy day. It was my life.
- This is a very valuable painting. It's the museum.
- Spring is a very busy time for me. It's the year.

In the following sentences use **one of** + a superlative + a preposition.

- It's a very good room. It's one of the best rooms in the hotel.
- He's a very rich man. He's one the country.
- She's a very good student. She's the class.
- It was a very bad experience. It was my life.
- It's a very famous university. It's the world.

108.4 What do you say in these situations? Use a superlative + **ever**.

- You've just been to the cinema. The movie was extremely boring. You tell your friend:
(boring / movie / ever / see) That's the most boring movie I've ever seen.
- Someone has just told you a joke which you think is very funny. You say:
(funny / joke / ever / hear) That's
- You're drinking coffee with a friend. It's really good coffee. You say:
(good / coffee / ever / taste) This
- You have just run ten kilometres. You've never run further than this. You say:
(far / ever / run) That
- You gave up your job. Now you think this was a very bad mistake. You say:
(bad / mistake / ever / make) It
- Your friend meets a lot of people, some of them famous. You ask your friend:
(famous / person / ever / meet?) Who?