

Superlatives (the longest / the most enjoyable etc.)

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

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

A few adjectives are irregular:

good → best bad → worst far → furthest/farthest

For spelling, see Appendix 6.

We normally use **the** before a superlative (the longest / the most famous etc.):

- Yesterday was the hottest day of the year.
- The film was really boring. It was the most boring film I've ever seen.
- She is a really nice person – one of the nicest people I know.
- Why does he always come to see me at the worst possible moment?

Compare superlative and comparative:

- This hotel is the cheapest in town. (*superlative*)
This hotel is 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.

Oldest and eldest

The superlative of old is **oldest**:

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

We use **eldest** (*or* **oldest**) when we are talking about people in a family:

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

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, we normally use **of**:

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

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 had to make?
- That was the best holiday I've had for a long time.

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

- 1 It's a very good room. It is the best room in the hotel.
- 2 It's a very cheap restaurant. It's the town.
- 3 It was a very happy day. It was my life.
- 4 She's a very intelligent student. She the class.
- 5 It's a very valuable painting. It the gallery.
- 6 Spring is a very busy time for me. It the year.

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

- 7 It's a very good room. It is one of the best rooms in the hotel.
- 8 He's a very rich man. He's one the world.
- 9 It's a very big castle. It Britain.
- 10 She's a very good player. She the team.
- 11 It was a very bad experience. It my life.
- 12 He's a very dangerous criminal. He the country.

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

- 1 We stayed at the cheapest hotel in the town. (cheap)
- 2 Our hotel was cheaper than all the others in the town. (cheap)
- 3 The United States is very large, but Canada is (large)
- 4 What's country in the world? (small)
- 5 I wasn't feeling well yesterday, but I feel a bit today. (good)
- 6 It was an awful day. It was day of my life. (bad)
- 7 What is sport in your country? (popular)
- 8 Everest is mountain in the world. It is than any other mountain. (high)
- 9 We had a great holiday. It was one of holidays we've ever had. (enjoyable)
- 10 I prefer this chair to the other one. It's (comfortable)
- 11 What's way of getting from here to the station? (quick)
- 12 Sue and Kevin have got three daughters. is 14 years old. (old)

108.3 What do you say in these situations? Use a superlative + **ever**. Use the words in brackets (in the correct form).

- 1 You've just been to the cinema. The film was extremely boring. You tell your friend: (boring / film / see) That's the most boring film I've ever seen.
- 2 Your friend has just told you a joke, which you think is very funny. You say: (funny / joke / hear) That's
- 3 You're drinking coffee with a friend. It's really good coffee. You say: (good / coffee / taste) This.....
- 4 You are talking to a friend about Mary. Mary is very generous. You tell your friend about her: (generous / person / meet) She.....
- 5 You have just run ten kilometres. You've never run further than this. You say to your friend: (far / run) That
- 6 You decided to give up your job. Now you think this was a bad mistake. You say to your friend: (bad / mistake / make) It
- 7 Your friend meets a lot of people, some of them famous. You ask your friend: (famous / person / meet?) Who