CAPITOLO

10

Bigger, Better, Best

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" — Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

OBIETTIVI

1. I can name features of the natural world (*valley, waterfall, coast, cliff, desert...*) and talk about heights, lengths and depths in metres and feet.
2. I can form comparative and superlative adjectives with the correct spelling, including *better, worse, further*, and use *than* and *the ... in / of*.
3. I can compare things with *(not) as ... as, less / the least* and comparative adverbs such as *faster* and *more carefully*.
4. I can say that something is *too big* or *not big enough*.
5. I can compare two options and express preferences with *I prefer X to Y* and *I'd rather...*.
6. I can write a paragraph comparing two places, and explain where English is spoken in the world.

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Which is the highest mountain in the British Isles? Which river is longer, the Thames or the Po? Is London bigger than Rome? Is a trip to Edinburgh better than a trip to Dublin? Every day we compare things: prices, phones, football teams, cities, holidays. In this unit you learn the language of comparison — the forms that make *big* into *bigger* and *the biggest*, and *good* into *better* and *the best*. Callum climbs the highest mountain in Britain, the class chooses a destination for the Year 10 trip, Giulia compares her two cities, and you travel round the English-speaking world, from Canada to New Zealand. Charles Dickens begins his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* with two superlatives: “the best of times” and “the worst of times”. By the end of this unit you can use both.

10.1 Vocabulary: geography, the natural world and measurements

10.1.1 Landscapes and natural features

Geography gives us many of the words we need for comparing. Look at Figura 10.1: it shows the main *features* of a landscape in a schematic cross-section, as if you cut through the land with a knife and looked at it from the side. Then study Tabella 10.1.

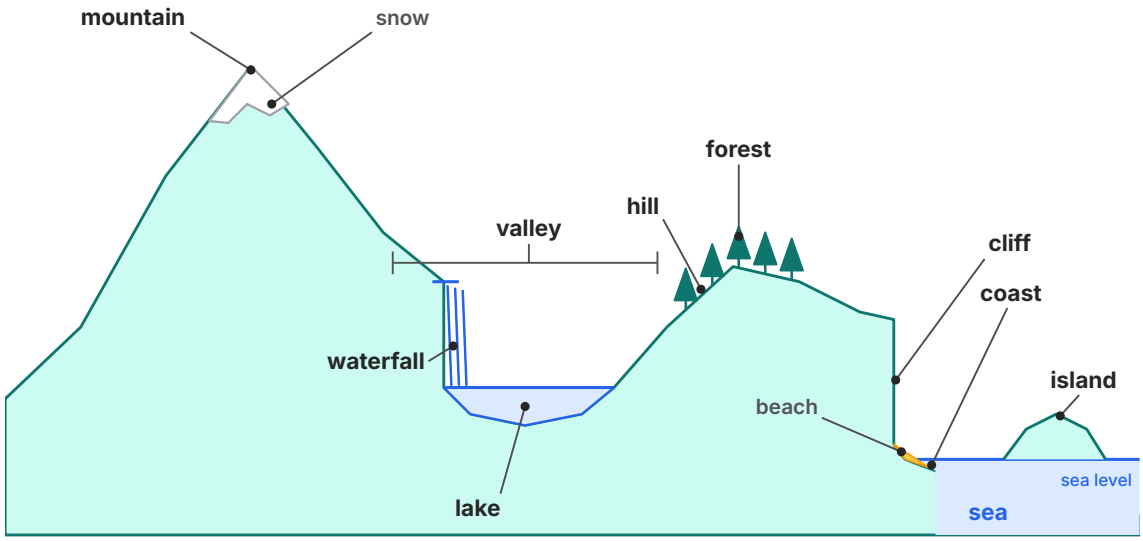


Figura 10.1 Features of the natural world in a schematic cross-section (not to scale): a snow-capped mountain, a waterfall falling into a lake in a valley, a hill with a forest, and a cliff on the coast, with a small beach, the sea and an island.

Tabella 10.1 Natural features

Word	Meaning	Example
mountain / hill	very high land / lower, rounder high land	Ben Nevis is a mountain; there are seven hills in Rome.
valley	low land between hills or mountains, often with a river	Glen Nevis is a long, green valley.
river / stream	a long, natural flow of water / a very small river	The Thames flows through London.
lake	a large area of water with land all around it	Lake Garda is the largest lake in Italy.
waterfall	a place where a river falls from a high place	Niagara Falls is between Canada and the USA.
forest	a large area covered with trees	Sherwood Forest is in the Midlands of England.
coast / beach	the land next to the sea / an area of sand or small stones by the sea	Cornwall has a long coast with beautiful beaches.
cliff	a high, very steep wall of rock, often by the sea	You can see the white cliffs of Dover from the ferry.
island	land with water all around it	Ireland and Great Britain are islands.
sea / ocean	a large area of salt water / a very large one	The Atlantic Ocean is west of Ireland.
desert	a very dry area with very little rain and few plants	Much of central Australia is desert.

A **valley** *(ita: valle)* is the low land between hills or mountains; in Scotland it is often called a *glen*, and a lake is a *loch* (in Ireland, a *lough*). A **waterfall** *(ita: cascata)* can be small or enormous: *Niagara Falls* is plural because it is a group of three waterfalls. The **coast** *(ita: costa)* is the land along the sea; a **cliff** *(ita: scogliera, parete rocciosa)* is a steep wall of rock, like the famous white cliffs near Dover. A **desert** *(ita: deserto)* is a place with very little rain: be careful with the spelling, because *dessert*, with double *s*, is the sweet course at the end of a meal!

Two more words are essential when you compare places. The **capital** *(ita: capitale)* of a country is the city where its government is (*Canberra is the capital of Australia*), and the **population** *(ita: popolazione)* of a place is the number of people who live there (*Bristol has a population of nearly half a million*). Notice the questions: *What's the capital of Canada? — It's Ottawa. What's the population of your town? — About 20,000.*

10.1.2 Animals and their records

The natural world is full of record-breakers, and they are perfect for practising comparisons. Each country in the English-speaking world has animals that are famous symbols: the *kangaroo*

and the *koala* in Australia, the *kiwi* (a bird that cannot fly) in New Zealand, the *bald eagle* in the USA, the *beaver* in Canada and the *red deer*, the largest native land mammal in the UK. Tabella 10.2 shows some world records. You will meet the grammar in section 10.3, but you can probably already understand the sentences.

Tabella 10.2 Animal records

Animal	Record
blue whale *(balenottera azzurra)*	the largest animal alive today
African elephant	the largest and heaviest animal on land
giraffe	the tallest animal: an adult male can be more than five metres tall
cheetah *(ghepardo)*	the fastest animal on land
peregrine falcon *(falco pellegrino)*	the fastest bird when it dives from the sky

10.1.3 Measurements: how high, how long, how deep?

To give the size of something, English uses an adjective after the measurement: *Ben Nevis is 1,345 metres **high**. The Thames is about 346 kilometres **long**. The river is 50 metres **wide**. The lake is 30 metres **deep**.* To ask, use *How* + adjective: *How high is it? How long is the river? How deep is the lake?* Each adjective has a noun, which you use with *What's the...?* (Tabella 10.3).

Tabella 10.3 Measurement adjectives and nouns

Adjective	Noun	Question	Answer
high (mountains, buildings) / tall (people, trees, towers)	**height** /haɪt/	How high is Ben Nevis?	It's 1,345 metres high.
long	**length** /leŋθ/	What's the length of the Thames?	About 346 kilometres.
wide	**width** /wɪdθ/	How wide is the road?	It's about ten metres wide.
deep	**depth** /depθ/	How deep is Loch Ness?	About 230 metres at its deepest point.
heavy	weight /weɪt/	How heavy is your bag?	It's six kilos.
far	distance	How far is it to the station?	About two kilometres.

The UK officially uses the metric system, but in everyday life people still use some *imperial* units. Road signs show distances in *miles* (1 mile = about 1.6 km), and many people say their

height in *feet* and *inches*. One **foot***(ita: piede, unità di misura)* — plural *feet* — is exactly 0.3048 metres, so Ben Nevis is about 4,413 feet high. In the USA, similar non-metric units (called *US customary units*) are the normal ones in everyday life: Americans give distances in miles, buy petrol (AmE *gas*) in gallons and give temperatures in degrees Fahrenheit.

COLLEGAMENTI

Maths: numbers in English. English uses a comma to separate thousands and a point for decimals — the opposite of Italian. *1,345 m* (English) = *1.345 m* (Italian); *0.3048* (English) = *0,3048* (Italian). Say *one thousand three hundred and forty-five* (BrE always has *and* before the tens) and *nought point three oh four eight* or *zero point three zero four eight*. Read decimals digit by digit: *2.75 = two point seven five*, never ✗ *two point seventy-five*.

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

From metres to feet. How high is Snowdon in feet? 1 foot = 0.3048 m, so divide the height in metres by 0.3048.

1. Height in metres: 1,085 m. 2. 1,085 ÷ 0.3048 = 3,559.7. 3. Round: about 3,560 feet. 4. Say it: *Snowdon is about three thousand, five hundred and sixty feet high.*

Check with Ben Nevis: 1,345 ÷ 0.3048 = 4,412.7, about 4,413 feet. The answer must be a bigger number than the metres, because a foot is shorter than a metre.

10.2 Reading: The roof of Britain

Before you read. What is the highest mountain in Italy? Do you like walking in the mountains? What do you need to take with you for a long walk in the mountains? Make a list of five things.

Callum keeps a blog about his weekends and holidays. In August he travelled north to the Scottish Highlands with his mum. Here is his post.

The roof of Britain

by Callum Reid · posted on 2 September

Last month my mum and I finally did it: we climbed Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the British Isles. It was the hardest day of my summer, and also the best. Here's the story.

Ben Nevis is near the town of Fort William, in the west of the Scottish Highlands. It's 1,345 metres high. That isn't very high compared with the Alps — Mont Blanc is more than three times as high — but the path starts only a few metres above sea level, so you climb almost all of those 1,345 metres on your own two feet.

We started at eight in the morning from the visitor centre in Glen Nevis, a long green valley at the foot of the mountain. The first part of the path was steep and rocky, but the sun was shi-

ning and the views were getting better and better. After about two and a half hours we reached a small lake, halfway up. We stopped there for a sandwich and a rest.

The second half was much harder than the first. The path was rockier, the air was colder and the wind was stronger. Then the clouds came down, and suddenly we couldn't see further than twenty metres. Mum walked more slowly and more carefully than before, and I stayed close to her. On a mountain, the cloud is often more dangerous than the cold.

At the top there was snow — in August! It wasn't very deep, but it was the strangest thing of the whole day. The summit is a wide, stony plateau with the ruins of an old weather observatory. Scientists lived and worked there from 1883 to 1904, all year round. In my opinion, that was the coldest, windiest and loneliest job in Britain. On the north side of the summit there are huge cliffs, about 600 metres high, so we stayed well away from the edge.

Going down was easier for my lungs but worse for my knees! We were back at the visitor centre at about five o'clock: nine hours in total. I was more tired than ever, but I was happier than ever too.

Next summer Mum wants to climb Snowdon, or Yr Wyddfa in Welsh, the highest mountain in Wales. It's 260 metres lower than Ben Nevis, and it's much busier, because there's a railway to the top. It opened in 1896, so lazy walkers can take the train! I'd rather walk, of course. And one day I want to do the Three Peaks Challenge: you climb the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales — Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon — in less than 24 hours. Mum says I'm not old enough yet. I say I'm fit enough. Who's right?

My top tips

1. Start early. The days are longer in summer, but the walk is longer than you think.
2. Take more clothes than you need. The weather at the top is colder, windier and wetter than at the bottom.
3. Check the forecast. A cloudy day is not just a worse day for photos: it's a more dangerous day for walkers.

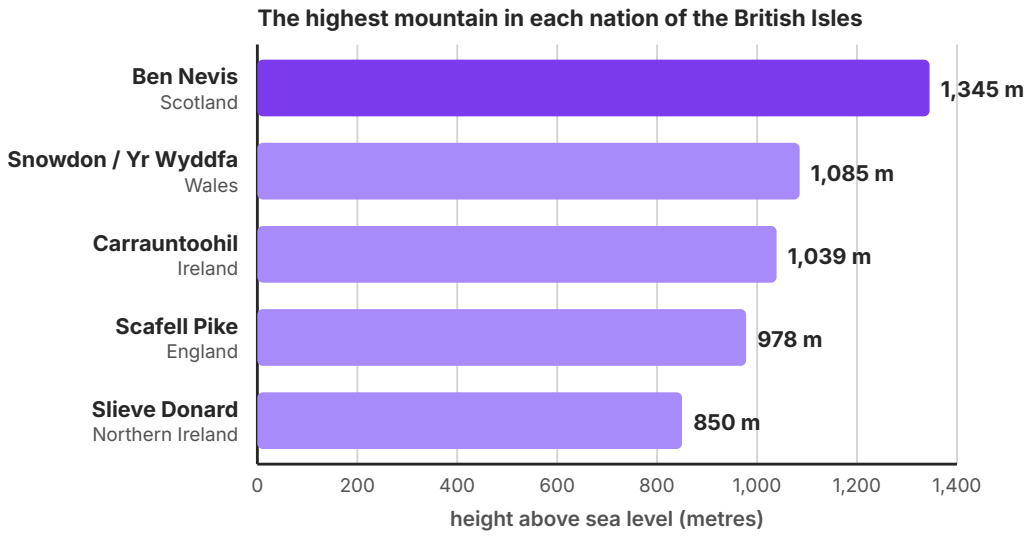


Figura 10.2 The highest mountain in each nation of the British Isles, in metres (rounded): Ben Nevis 1,345 m, Snowdon / Yr Wyddfa 1,085 m, Carrauntoohil 1,039 m, Scafell Pike 978 m, Slieve Donard 850 m. Ben Nevis is the highest of the five.

Language in context. Callum's post is full of comparisons. Find comparative adjectives with *than* (*much harder than the first, 260 metres lower than Ben Nevis*), superlatives (*the highest mountain in the British Isles, the hardest day of my summer, the strangest thing of the whole day*), irregular forms (*better, worse, the best, further*), *as … as* (*three times as high*), comparative adverbs (*more slowly and more carefully*) and *enough* after adjectives (*not old enough, fit enough*). Look also at Figura 10.2: it compares Ben Nevis with the highest mountains of the other nations of the British Isles. You study all these structures in section 10.3.

10.2.1 Media text: an infographic

An **infographic** *(ita: infografica)* shows information with numbers, pictures and very few words. Year 10 at Hillside made this one for the school website from a survey of their own class (30 students).

Media text — Infographic: How does Year 10 get to school?

How?	Students (out of 30)	Average journey
on foot	11	15 minutes
by bus	9	25 minutes
by bike	6	12 minutes
by car	4	20 minutes

Walking is the most popular way to school! · The bus is the slowest way: 25 minutes. · Cyclists have the shortest journey. · Only 4 of us come by car.

Infographics are quick to read, but read them carefully. Who made it? Where do the numbers come from? How many people answered? Here the answer is clear: one class of thirty students — so the infographic tells us about Year 10 at Hillside, not about all British teenagers.

10.3 Grammar: comparatives and superlatives, *(not) as … as*, *less*, comparative adverbs, *too* and *enough*

10.3.1 Comparative adjectives and *than*

We use a **comparative** *(ita: comparativo)* adjective to compare two people, things or places. The second term of the comparison comes after **than**: *The Severn is longer **than** the Thames. Maths is more difficult **than** art for me.* How do you form the comparative? It depends on the length of the adjective, as Figura 10.3 and Tabella 10.4 show.

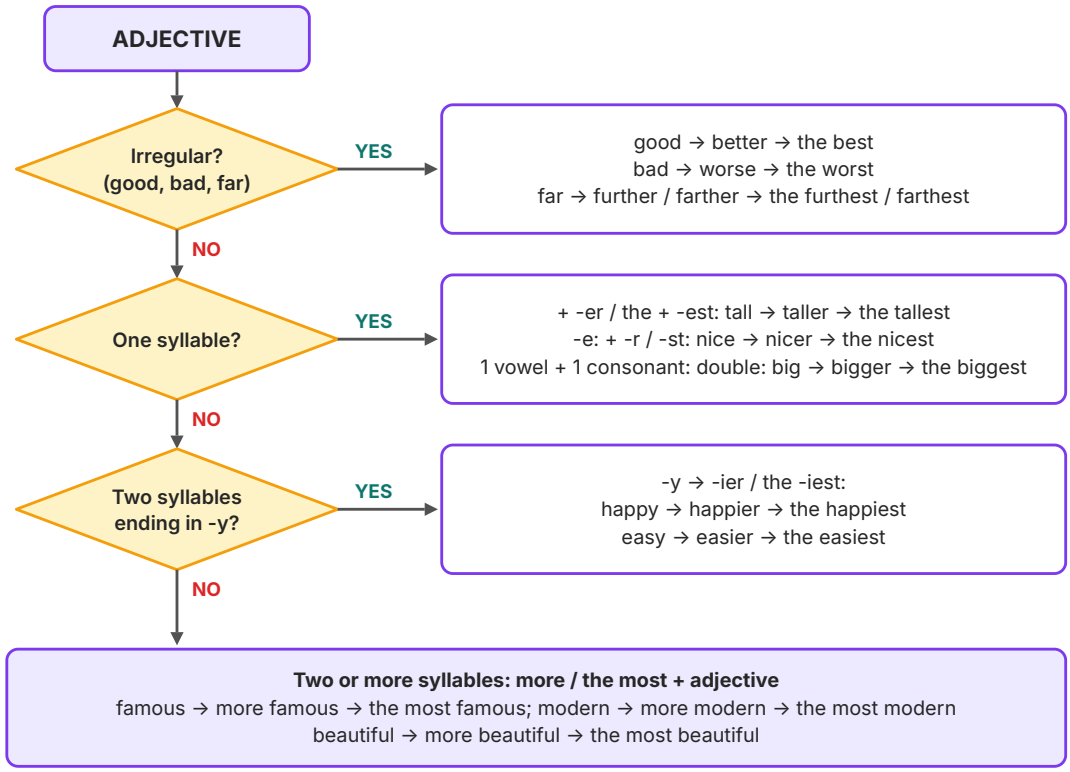


Figura 10.3 How to form the comparative and the superlative of an adjective: ask the questions in order, from the top. Irregular adjectives come first; one-syllable adjectives take *-er / -est*; two-syllable adjectives in *-y* take *-ier / -iest*; the others take *more / the most*. Two details are in Tabella 10.4: a one-syllable adjective in consonant + *-y* also changes *-y* to *-ier* (*dry → drier*), and final *w* or *y* is never doubled (*new → newer*).

Tabella 10.4 Comparative and superlative adjectives: form and spelling

Adjective	Rule	Comparative	Superlative
One syllable	+ *-er* / + *-est*	tall → taller, cold → colder, long → longer	the tallest, the coldest, the longest
One syllable ending in *-e*	+ *-r* / + *-st*	nice → nicer, large → larger, wide → wider	the nicest, the largest, the widest
One syllable: one vowel + one consonant	double the consonant	big → bigger, hot → hotter, thin → thinner, wet → wetter	the biggest, the hottest, the thinnest, the wettest
… but never double *w* or *y*	+ *-er* / + *-est*	slow → slower, new → newer, grey → greyer	the slowest, the newest, the greyest
Consonant + *-y* (mostly two syllables)	*-y* → *-ier* / *-iest*	happy → happier, easy → easier, dry → drier	the happiest, the easiest, the driest
Two or more syllables	*more* / *the most*	famous → more famous, beautiful → more beautiful	the most famous, the most beautiful
Irregular	learn them!	good → better, bad → worse, far → further / farther	the best, the worst, the furthest / farthest

A few two-syllable adjectives can take both forms: *quiet → quieter / more quiet, clever → cleverer / more clever, simple → simpler / more simple*. The *-er* form is more common for these; if you are not sure, *more* is the safe choice with two syllables. Two words of warning. First, *far* has two comparatives: *further* and *farther* both mean "more far" when you talk about distance (*Edinburgh is further / farther from London than Bristol*), but only *further* also means "more, additional" (*for further information, call this number*). Second, to make a difference bigger or smaller you can put **much**, **a lot**, **far** or **a bit**, **a little** before the comparative: *The second half was **much** harder. Snowdon is **a bit** higher than Carrauntoohil.* To show that something changes over time, repeat the comparative with *and*: *The views were getting **better and better**. The exam is getting **more and more** difficult.*

After *than* we normally use an object pronoun in everyday English (*He's taller than **me***), or a subject pronoun with a verb, which is more formal (*He's taller than **I am***). Both are correct. *He's taller than I*, without a verb, is very formal and rare in conversation.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Il comparativo di maggioranza. L'italiano usa sempre *più* + aggettivo (*più alto, più famoso*); l'inglese ha due costruzioni. Gli aggettivi **di una sillaba** aggiungono il suffisso *-er* (*tall → taller*), con le stesse regole di ortografia di *-ed* e *-ing*: raddoppio della consonante finale dopo una sola vocale (*big → bigger*), *-y → -ier* dopo consonante (*happy → happier*), *-e* finale che non si raddoppia (*nice → nicer*). Gli aggettivi **di due o più sillabe** (tranne quelli in *-y*) usano *more* (*more famous*). Tre aggettivi sono irregolari: *good → better, bad → worse, far → further / farther*.

Il secondo termine di paragone. Dove l'italiano usa *di* o *che* (*più alto **di** me, più facile parlare **che** scrivere*), l'inglese usa sempre e solo **than**: *taller than me, easier to speak than to write*. Per rafforzare il comparativo: *much / a lot / far* (= molto) e *a bit / a little* (= un po'): *much bigger = molto più grande*.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

Due comparativi in uno, e il *che* italiano. Chi parla italiano tende a mettere *more* davanti a un comparativo che è già formato con *-er* (o è già irregolare), e a tradurre *di / che* con *of / that*.

✗ *Your pizza is more better than mine.* → ✓ *Your pizza is better than mine.*
✗ *Ben Nevis is more high than Snowdon.* → ✓ *Ben Nevis is higher than Snowdon.*
✗ *My brother is taller of me.* ✗ *...taller that me.* → ✓ *My brother is taller than me.*

10.3.2 Superlative adjectives: *the ... in / of*

We use a **superlative** *(ita: superlativo relativo)* adjective to compare one person or thing with all the others in a group: *Ben Nevis is **the highest** mountain in the British Isles.* The superlative is formed like the comparative, with *-est* or *most* (Tabella 10.4), and it almost always has **the** in front of it — or a possessive: *my best friend, Scotland's highest mountain*.

After a superlative, use **in** with places and groups of people (*the longest river **in** Italy, the tallest girl **in** the class, the oldest person **in** my family*) and **of** with periods of time and with a number or list of things (*the hardest day **of** my summer, the best **of** the three, the coldest month **of** the year*). A very common pattern is superlative + present perfect with *ever* (*the best film I've ever seen*): you study it in Unit 13.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Il superlativo relativo. Corrisponde all'italiano *il più / il meno* + aggettivo + *di*: *il fiume più lungo d'Italia = the longest river in Italy*. Si forma con *the* + aggettivo in *-est* (una sillaba: *the tallest*; due sillabe in *-y*: *the happiest*) oppure *the most* + aggettivo (*the most beautiful*). Irregolari: *the best, the worst, the furthest / farthest*. Attenzione all'ordine: in inglese il superlativo precede il nome (*the highest mountain*), in italiano lo segue (*la montagna più alta*).

Il complemento. L'italiano usa sempre *di*; l'inglese usa *in* per luoghi e gruppi (*in the world, in the class, in my family*) e *of* per periodi di tempo e insiemi numerati (*of the year, of all, of the three*). Il **superlativo assoluto** italiano (*altissimo, bellissimo*) non ha un suffisso in inglese: si dice *very high, really beautiful*, oppure si usa un aggettivo forte (*huge, enormous, amazing*).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

Superlativo: *the*, *in* e niente doppioni.

✗ *It's the biggest city of the world.* → ✓ *It's the biggest city in the world.*
✗ *She is most intelligent student in the class.* → ✓ *She is the most intelligent student in the class.*
✗ *This is the most best day of my life.* → ✓ *This is the best day of my life.*
✗ *The view is beautifullest.* → ✓ *The view is the most beautiful. / The view is really beautiful.*

10.3.3 *(not) as ... as, less* and *the least*

When two things are equal, use **as** + adjective + **as**: *Sam is **as tall as** Callum* (they are the same height). The negative **not as ... as** means that the first thing is smaller, lower or less in some way: *The Thames **isn't as long as** the Severn* = the Severn is longer. With *just* and *almost / nearly* you can be more precise: *The Thames is **almost as long as** the Severn. My sister is **just as** stubborn **as** me.* And with numbers you can multiply: *Mont Blanc is more than three times as high as Ben Nevis. The Po is almost twice as long as the Thames.* Look at Figura 10.4 and check these sentences.

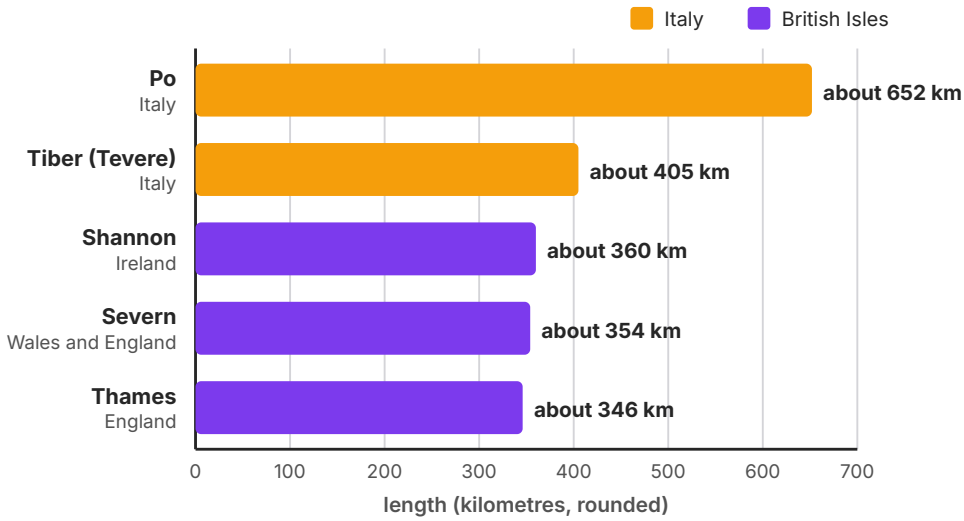


Figura 10.4 The lengths of five rivers, rounded: the Po about 652 km, the Tiber about 405 km, the Shannon about 360 km, the Severn about 354 km and the Thames about 346 km. The Shannon is the longest river in the British Isles; the Thames is almost as long as the Severn.

The opposite of *more* is **less**, and the opposite of *the most* is **the least**: *Bristol is **less expensive than** London. For me, history is **the least difficult** subject **of** all.* In everyday English, *less* is used mainly with long adjectives; with short adjectives people prefer *not as ... as* or the opposite adjective: *Snowdon is lower than Ben Nevis* or *Snowdon isn't as high as Ben Nevis* sound natural, while ✗ *Snowdon is less high than Ben Nevis* sounds strange to a native speaker.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Comparativo di uguaglianza e di minoranza. *As* + aggettivo + *as* = *(così) ... come / (tanto) ... quanto*: *Sam is as tall as Callum* = *Sam è alto come Callum*. Nella forma negativa *not as ... as* (= *non così ... come*) esprime una minoranza: *Turin isn't as big as Rome* = *Torino non è grande come Roma*. L'aggettivo resta nella forma base: ✗ *as taller as*. Il secondo *as* non si traduce con *than* né con *like*: ✗ *as tall than me*, ✗ *as tall like me*.

Less / the least = *meno / il meno*: *less expensive than* = *meno caro di*; *the least expensive* = *il meno caro*. Con gli aggettivi brevi l'inglese preferisce *not as ... as* o il contrario dell'aggettivo (*cheaper* invece di *less expensive* va bene; *lower* invece di *less high* è molto più naturale). Per dire che due cose sono uguali in generale si usa *the same as*: *My phone is the same as yours* (✗ *the same of yours*).

IN SINTESI

Comparing two things: taller / more famous / better **than** · **(not) as** tall **as** · **less** famous **than**
Comparing one thing with a group: the tallest / **the most** famous / **the best in** (places, groups) / **of** (time, lists) · **the least** famous
Changing the size of the difference: much / a lot / far bigger · **a bit / a little** bigger · **almost / just as** big as · **twice / three times as** big as · bigger **and** bigger

10.3.4 Comparative adverbs

Adverbs of manner (Unit 6) tell us *how* somebody does something. To compare actions, we use a **comparative adverb** *(ita: avverbio comparativo)*. The rules are simple (Tabella 10.5): adverbs that have the same form as the adjective add *-er*; adverbs ending in *-ly* take *more*; *well* and *badly* are irregular.

Tabella 10.5 Comparative and superlative adverbs

Adverb	Comparative	Superlative	Example
fast, hard, late, early	faster, harder, later, earlier	(the) fastest, hardest, latest, earliest	Callum runs faster than Sam.
slowly, carefully, quietly	more slowly, more carefully, more quietly	(the) most slowly, most carefully…	Mum walked more carefully than before.
well	better	(the) best	Giulia sings better than me.
badly	worse	(the) worst	Our team played worse than last week.
far	further / farther	(the) furthest / farthest	Who can throw the ball furthest?

Notice that *early* is both an adjective and an adverb, and it follows the *-y → -ier* rule: *earlier, the earliest*. In informal speech you sometimes hear *slower* and *quicker* as adverbs (*Can you speak slower?*), but *more slowly* and *more quickly* are the forms to use in writing and in exams.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Il comparativo degli avverbi. Come in italiano (*più velocemente, meglio, peggio*), anche gli avverbi hanno il comparativo e il superlativo. Gli avverbi che hanno la stessa forma dell'aggettivo (*fast, hard, late, early*) prendono *-er / -est*: *faster = più veloce(mente)*. Gli avverbi in *-ly* usano *more / most*: *more slowly = più lentamente*. Irregolari: *well → better → best* (= *bene → meglio → nel modo migliore*), *badly → worse → worst* (= *male → peggio*). Attenzione: in inglese *better* e *worse* sono sia aggettivi (*migliore, peggiore*) sia avverbi (*meglio, peggio*): *a better player* (un giocatore migliore), *he plays better* (gioca meglio).

10.3.5 *too* + adjective and adjective + *enough*

When something is more than we want or need, we use **too** *(ita: troppo)* before the adjective: *This coffee is **too hot**. I can't drink it.* When something is the right amount, we use **enough** *(ita: abbastanza)* — and with an adjective, *enough* comes **after** it: *Josh is seventeen, so he's **old enough** to drive a car in the UK.* The negative **not** + adjective + **enough** means "less than necessary": *The water **isn't warm enough** for swimming.* Often the sentence continues with *to* + infinitive or *for* + noun: *too cold **to** swim, not old enough **to** vote, too expensive **for** us.*

Remember Unit 7: with nouns *enough* comes before the noun (*enough money, enough time*). With adjectives and adverbs it comes after (*big enough, fast enough*). And don't confuse *too* with *very*: *very* only makes the adjective stronger, while *too* means there is a problem. *The bag is very heavy, but I can carry it. ≠ The bag is too heavy: I can't carry it.*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

***Too* e *enough* con gli aggettivi.** *Too* + aggettivo = *troppo* + aggettivo: *too small = troppo piccolo*; indica un eccesso che crea un problema (diverso da *very*, *molto*). Aggettivo + *enough* = *abbastanza* + aggettivo, ma in inglese *enough* va **dopo** l'aggettivo: *old enough = abbastanza grande* (✗ *enough old*). Con i nomi, invece, *enough* va prima: *enough time*. Spesso segue *to* + infinito: *too tired to walk = troppo stanco per camminare*; *not tall enough to reach the shelf = non abbastanza alto per arrivare allo scaffale*. Non confondere *too* (troppo) con *too* a fine frase (anche: *I'm hungry too*) né con *to*.

APPROFONDIMENTO

"Curiouser and curiouser!" In Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Alice drinks from a bottle and becomes tiny; then she eats a cake and starts to grow very fast. "'Curiouser and curiouser!' cried Alice", and Carroll explains that she was so surprised that for a moment she forgot how to speak good English. The correct form, of course, is *more and more curious*, because *curious* has three syllables. Carroll's deliberate mistake is now a famous phrase, and English speakers use it as a joke when a situation gets stranger and stranger.

10.4 Listening and Speaking: comparing and expressing preferences

Mrs Hill has asked Year 10 to vote for the destination of the spring school trip. There are two options, Edinburgh and Dublin. After school, Sam, Giulia, Aoife and Callum discuss them in the library.

Tabella 10.6 Listening script — Edinburgh or Dublin?

Sam	OK, we have to vote by Friday. Edinburgh or Dublin? Which do you prefer?
Callum	Edinburgh, obviously! It's the most beautiful city in the world.
Aoife	You're from Edinburgh, Callum. You're not exactly neutral! I prefer Dublin. It's smaller than Edinburgh, but it's livelier, and the people are friendlier.
Callum	Friendlier than in Edinburgh? I don't think so!
Giulia	I don't know either city, so I don't mind. What's the difference for the trip?
Sam	Well, for Edinburgh we go by train. It's a long journey, but it's cheaper than flying. For Dublin we fly from Bristol. The plane is much faster, but the trip is more expensive.
Aoife	Only a bit more expensive. And a train journey is far more boring than a flight.
Callum	Boring? The views from the train are amazing! And Edinburgh has more things to do. There's the castle, the museums, Arthur's Seat — that's a hill in the middle of the city...
Giulia	A hill in the middle of a city? That sounds great. Is it high?
Callum	It's not as high as Ben Nevis, don't worry! You can walk to the top in less than an hour.
Aoife	Dublin has a castle too, and a lot of great museums. And Trinity College library is one of the most beautiful libraries in the world. I'd rather see that than climb a hill in the rain.
Sam	Hmm. Giulia, what would you rather do?
Giulia	Honestly, I'd rather go to Edinburgh. I love walking, and I prefer trains to planes: you see more. But Dublin sounds good too.
Sam	I agree with Giulia. The train is better for me, because my mum thinks flights are too expensive.
Aoife	Three against one! OK, OK. But next year, Dublin. And I'm the guide!

To compare two options and say which one you like more, English has several fixed expressions. **Prefer** *(ita: preferire)* is followed by *to* before the second option (*I prefer trains* ***to*** *planes*), not ✗ *than*. **I'd rather** *(ita: preferirei)* — the short form of *I would rather* — is followed by the base form of a verb, without *to* (*I'd rather* ***walk***), and the second option comes after *than* (*I'd rather see the library than climb a hill*). When you discuss two options with friends, you also need to agree

and disagree politely: begin with *I see what you mean, but…* rather than a direct *No!*, and always give a reason. Study Tabella 10.7.

Tabella 10.7 Useful language — comparing and preferring

Function	Expressions
Asking about preferences	Which do you prefer, X or Y? · Would you rather (go to X or Y)? · What would you rather do?
General preferences	I prefer trains to planes. · I prefer walking to cycling. · I like X more than Y.
Preferences now / in a situation	I'd rather go to Edinburgh. · I'd rather not fly. · I'd rather walk than take the train. · I'd prefer to stay at home.
Comparing options	X is cheaper / more interesting than Y. · Y isn't as expensive as X. · X is the best option.
Giving reasons	…because… · The problem with X is that… · The good thing about Y is that…
Agreeing and disagreeing	I agree (with you). · You're right. · That's true. · I'm not sure. · I see what you mean, but… · I don't agree, because… / I disagree.
Having no preference	I don't mind. · Both are fine with me. · It's all the same to me.

DA RICORDARE

Weak forms. In connected speech *than* and *as* are usually unstressed, with the weak vowel /ə/: *taller than me* /ˈtɔːlə ðən miː/, *as tall as* /əz ˈtɔːl əz/. The ending *-er* is also /ə/ in British English: *bigger* /ˈbɪgə/. Note also the extra /g/ in *longer* /ˈlɒŋgə/ and *stronger* /ˈstrɒŋgə/, which is not in *singer* /ˈsɪŋə/.

Speaking. Work in pairs or small groups.

1. Would you rather…? Take turns to ask and answer. Give a reason with a comparative. *Would you rather live in a big city or in a small village? — I'd rather live in a big city, because it's more exciting.* Ideas: the mountains or the sea · a cat or a dog · summer or winter · a long book or a film · travel by train or by plane.

2. Choose a trip. Your class can go on a one-day trip. Student A wants to go to a big city (a museum, shops, a famous building); Student B wants to go to a natural place (a lake, a forest, a mountain). Compare the two options — price, distance, activities, weather — and agree on one. Use the expressions for agreeing and disagreeing in Tabella 10.7.

3. Class records. Ask questions in your group and find the records: *Who has got the longest name? Who lives the furthest from school? Who gets up the earliest?* Report to the class: *Marta lives the furthest from school: about ten kilometres.*

10.5 Writing: comparing two places

For the school website, Mrs Hill asked the exchange students to write a short text comparing their home town with Bristol. Here is Giulia's.

Turin and Bristol: my two cities

Turin, my home town, and Bristol, my home this year, are very different, but they also have a lot in common.

First of all, Turin is much bigger than Bristol. It has a population of about 850,000, while Bristol has nearly half a million. Turin is also more elegant: its streets are wider and straighter, and it has long arcades where you can walk in the rain. Bristol, on the other hand, is hillier and more colourful, with rows of bright houses on its hills. The weather is very different too. In summer Turin is much hotter than Bristol, and in winter it can be colder, but Bristol is windier.

However, both cities have a river — the Po in Turin and the Avon in Bristol — and both are near beautiful countryside. Turin is not as close to the sea as Bristol, but from Turin you can see the Alps on a clear day.

Which do I prefer? That's the hardest question of all! I love both, but if I have to choose, I'd rather live in Turin. It's my home.

The structure. Giulia's text has four short paragraphs. The first one introduces the two places in one sentence. The second paragraph is about the **differences**, with comparatives and a linker of contrast (*while, on the other hand*). The third paragraph is about the **similarities** (*both... , too*) and adds one more difference with *not as ... as*. The last paragraph gives a personal opinion with *I'd rather*. The register is neutral: no contractions in the facts, a friendly question at the end.

Linkers for comparing. Differences: *but, while, however, on the other hand*. Similarities: *both ... and, both (cities) have..., too, also, (just) like*. Note the punctuation: *However,* and *On the other hand,* usually start a new sentence and take a comma; *while* joins two clauses in one sentence: *Turin is big, while Bristol is smaller.*

Checklist

- Have you introduced the two places in the first paragraph?
- Have you got one paragraph for differences and one for similarities?
- Have you used at least four comparatives (*-er / more ... than*), one superlative and one *(not) as ... as*?
- Have you used linkers of contrast (*while, however, on the other hand*) and similarity (*both, too, also*)?
- Have you checked your facts and written numbers with a comma (*850,000*) and the word *about* for rounded figures?

- Have you finished with your opinion or preference (*I prefer..., I'd rather...*)?

Writing task. Write a text (100–120 words) comparing your town with another town or city that you know well — or two places you have visited on holiday. Follow Giulia's plan and the checklist.

10.6 Culture: the English-speaking world

English began as the language of a few groups of people in Britain about 1,500 years ago. Today it is spoken on every continent. Estimates say that around 1.5 billion people speak English, but only about a quarter of them speak it as their **first language** *(ita: lingua madre)*, the language they learnt as babies. All the others speak it as a **second language** *(ita: seconda lingua)*, which they use every day at school, at work or with the government, or as a foreign language for international communication, like you. For this reason English is often called a *global language* or an **international language** *(ita: lingua internazionale)*.

Tabella 10.8 Some countries where English is spoken

Country	Capital	Languages
the United States	Washington, D.C.	English is the main language; Spanish is widely spoken. 50 states.
Canada	Ottawa	English and French are both official at federal level.
Australia	Canberra	English is the national language; there are also many Aboriginal languages.
New Zealand	Wellington	English is the main language; Māori is official.
Ireland	Dublin	Irish and English are both official.
South Africa	Pretoria (government)	Several official languages, including English, Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans.
India	New Delhi	Hindi is the official language; English is an associate official language.

Look at the capitals carefully, because they are a common trap. The capital of the USA is not New York but Washington, D.C. (D.C. means *District of Columbia*, and it is not the same place as Washington State, on the Pacific coast). Canada's capital is Ottawa, not Toronto; Australia's is Canberra, not Sydney; and New Zealand's is Wellington, not Auckland. In each case the capital is not the biggest city in the country.

People speak English in three different ways around the world, and we can draw them as **three circles** *(ita: tre cerchi)* (Figura 10.5). In the **inner circle** are the countries where most people speak English as their first language: the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New

Zealand. In the **outer circle** are countries such as India, Nigeria, Kenya and Singapore, where English arrived with the British Empire and is still a second or official language in schools, courts and government. The **expanding circle** includes all the countries where people learn English as a foreign language — Italy, China, Brazil, Japan and many more. It is by far the largest circle, and it is still growing.

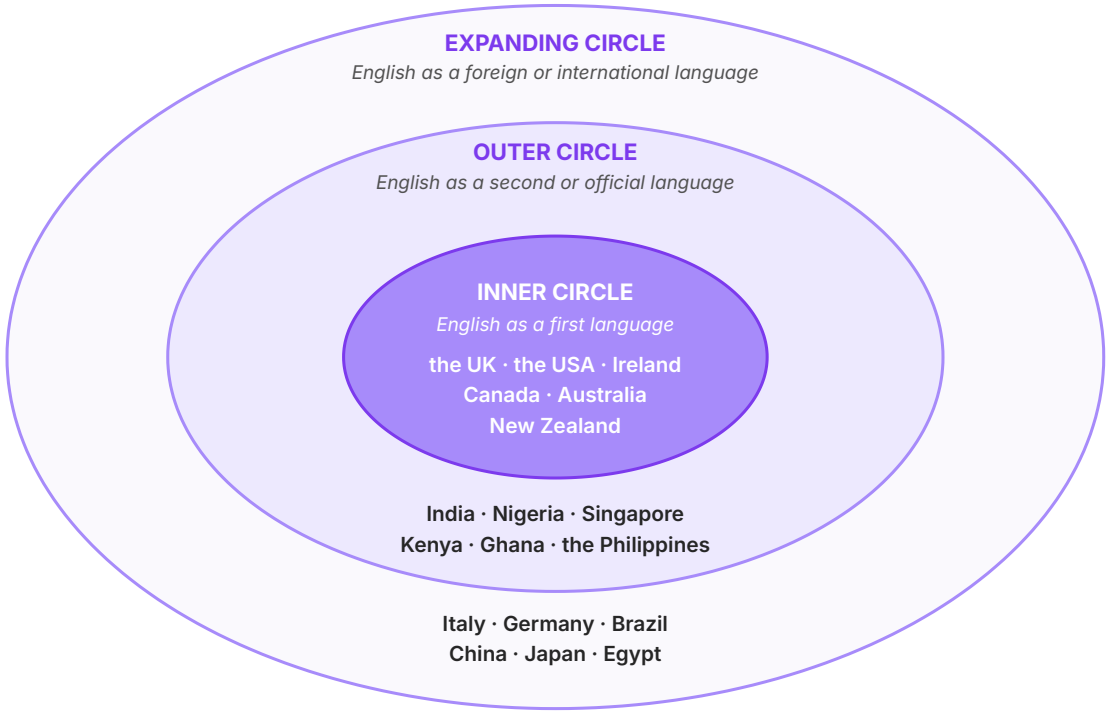


Figura 10.5 Three ways of speaking English, with some example countries. The inner circle is where most people speak English as their first language; in the outer circle English is a second or official language; in the expanding circle people learn it as a foreign language for international communication.

The circles show an important fact: today, most conversations in English take place between people who are not native speakers. When an Italian engineer talks to a Japanese colleague, or a Brazilian student writes to a German friend, English is their common language, or **lingua franca**. So there isn't one "correct" English: British, American, Irish, Australian and Indian English are all different, and all correct.

Compare with Italy. In which countries outside Italy is Italian an official language? Is Italian a global language like English? Why do you think so many people in the world learn English as a foreign language?

SINTESI

- Natural features: *mountain, hill, valley, river, lake, waterfall, forest, coast, beach, cliff, island, sea, ocean, desert* (≠ *dessert*).
- Measurements: *1,345 metres high / 346 km long / 50 m wide / 230 m deep*; nouns *height, length, width, depth*; 1 foot = 0.3048 m.
- Comparatives: one syllable + *-er* (*taller, bigger, nicer*), consonant + *-y* → *-ier* (*happier*), two or more syllables *more* (*more famous*), followed by *than* (= *di / che*) before the second term.
- Superlatives: *the tallest, the happiest, the most famous*; *in* + places and groups, *of* + periods and lists.
- Irregular: *good* → *better* → *the best, bad* → *worse* → *the worst, far* → *further / farther* → *the furthest / farthest*; never ✗ *more better*.
- *(not) as … as* (= *(non) così … come*), *almost as … as, twice as … as*; *less / the least* with long adjectives.
- *much / a lot / far* + comparative (= *molto più*); *a bit / a little* + comparative (= *un po' più*); *better and better*.
- Comparative adverbs: *faster, harder, earlier, more slowly, more carefully, better, worse*.
- *too* + adjective (= *troppo*, a problem); adjective + *enough* (= *abbastanza*, after the adjective): *old enough to drive*.
- Preferences: *I prefer X to Y*; *I'd rather* + base form (+ *than*): *I'd rather walk than take the train*.
- Three circles of English: inner (first language), outer (second / official language), expanding (foreign / international language).
- Capitals: Washington, D.C., Ottawa, Canberra, Wellington, Dublin, New Delhi — often not the biggest city.

ESERCIZI

Vocabulary

1. ● Match the words (a–f) with the definitions (1–6). a waterfall · b island · c desert · d valley · e coast · f cliff — 1 land with water all around it · 2 a place where a river falls from a high place · 3 low land between hills or mountains · 4 a very dry area with little rain and few plants · 5 the land next to the sea · 6 a high, very steep wall of rock

2. ● Find the odd one out and say why. a lake · river · sea · desert — b high · long · deep · width — c Canberra · Ottawa · Wellington · Sydney — d metre · kilometre · foot · kilogram

3. ● Ben Nevis is 1,345 metres _____ .

   A. wide
   B. deep
   C. high
   D. long

4. ● What's the _____ of Loch Ness? — It's about 230 metres at its deepest point.

   A. height
   B. depth
   C. width
   D. length

5. ●● Word formation. Complete each sentence with a word formed from the word in CAPITALS. a The _____ of Ben Nevis is 1,345 m. (HIGH) b The _____ of the Thames is about 346 km. (LONG) c The _____ of the road is ten metres. (WIDE) d The _____ of the pool is two metres. (DEEP) e New Zealand has a _____ of more than five million people. (POPULATE)

6. ●● Complete the sentences with the words in the box: *cliffs · coast · island · lake · population · valley · waterfall*. a Ireland is an _____ in the Atlantic Ocean. b The white _____ of Dover are famous: you can see them from the sea. c Lough Neagh, in Northern Ireland, is the biggest _____ in the UK. d Bristol has a _____ of nearly half a million people. e A small river runs along the bottom of the _____ . f Niagara Falls is a famous _____ between Canada and the USA. g Cornwall has a long, beautiful _____ with many beaches.

7. ●● Match the animals (a–d) with their records (1–4). a blue whale · b cheetah · c giraffe · d African elephant — 1 the largest animal on land · 2 the fastest animal on land · 3 the largest animal in the world · 4 the tallest animal

Grammar

8. ● Write the comparative and the superlative. a cold · b big · c happy · d beautiful · e good · f bad · g far · h nice · i thin · j dry · k interesting · l famous

9. ● Complete with the comparative form of the adjective in brackets and *than*. a Ben Nevis is _____ (high) Snowdon. b The Po is _____ (long) the Tiber. c Today is _____ (hot) yesterday. d For me, maths is _____ (difficult) art. e Callum's marks are _____ (good) mine. f Edinburgh is _____ (far) from London _____ Bristol is.

10. ● Complete with *the* + superlative and *in* or *of*. a Ben Nevis is _____ (high) mountain _____ the UK. b The blue whale is _____ (large) animal _____ the world. c Lily is _____ (young) person _____ Sam's family. d Friday is _____ (good) day _____ the week. e This is _____ (expensive) café _____ the city. f July was _____ (hot) month _____ the year.

11. ●● The Thames isn't _____ the Severn.

A. as long than
B. so long that
C. as long as
D. longer as

12. ●● Callum runs _____ than Sam.

A. more fast
B. fastly
C. more faster
D. faster

13. ●● Rewrite the sentences with *(not) as ... as*. Keep the same meaning. a The Severn is longer than the Thames. b Sam is fifteen and Callum is fifteen too. (old) c My bag is heavier than yours. d Snowdon is higher than Scafell Pike. e Turin is bigger than Bristol.

14. ●● Rewrite the sentences with *less* or *the least*. a In India cricket is more popular than football. → Football ... b London is more expensive than Bristol. → Bristol ... c All the other films were more exciting than this one. → This film ...

15. ●● Complete with the comparative of the adverb in brackets. a Can you speak _____ (slowly), please? b Aoife works _____ (hard) than anyone in the class. c Giulia sings _____ (well) than me. d The train arrived _____ (late) than usual. e You need to write _____ (carefully): there are a lot of mistakes. f My new phone charges _____ (fast) than the old one.

16. ●● Complete with *too* + adjective or adjective + *enough*. Use the adjective in brackets. a Lily can't go on the roller coaster: she's _____ . (young) b Josh is seventeen, so he's _____ to drive a car in the UK. (old) c This tea is _____ to drink. Wait a minute. (hot) d The water isn't _____ for swimming. Let's go back. (warm) e The suitcase is _____ : I can't carry it. (heavy) f Is your English _____ for the B1 exam? (good)

17. ●●● Each sentence has a mistake. Find it and correct it. a ✗ Ben Nevis is more high than Snowdon. b ✗ My sister is taller that me. c ✗ This is the most good pizza in Turin. d ✗ Rome is the biggest city of Italy. e ✗ She isn't enough old to drive. f ✗ Today is more hotter than yesterday. g ✗ I'm not as tall than my brother.

18. ●●● Translate into English. a Il Po è il fiume più lungo d'Italia. b Mio fratello è più alto di me, ma io corro più veloce di lui. c Questa valigia è troppo pesante: non sono abbastanza forte.

19. ●●● Look at Figura 10.4. Write five true sentences about the rivers. Use at least one comparative, one superlative, one *(not) as … as* and one *twice as … as*.

Reading and Listening

20. ● Read Callum's blog in 10.2. Are the sentences true (T), false (F) or doesn't say (DS)? a Fort William is in the east of Scotland. b Callum and his mum started their walk at eight o'clock. c They had lunch at the top. d There was some snow on the summit. e Scientists worked at the observatory only in summer. f Snowdon is lower than Ben Nevis.

21. ●● Answer the questions about the blog. a Why do walkers climb almost all of the 1,345 metres of Ben Nevis? b Why was the second half of the walk harder? Give three reasons. c Why did Callum and his mum stay away from the edge on the summit? d How long did the whole walk take? e Why is Snowdon busier than Ben Nevis?

22. ●● Find words or phrases in the blog that mean: a the bottom of a mountain (2 words) · b a high, flat area of land · c what is left of an old building · d a place where scientists study the weather · e the weather report for the next days

23. ●● Read the listening script in 10.4 and answer. a Which two cities can Year 10 visit? b How do they travel to each city? c What is Arthur's Seat? d Why does Giulia prefer Edinburgh? Give two reasons. e What is Aoife's idea for next year?

24. ● Who says it — Sam, Giulia, Aoife or Callum? a “It's the most beautiful city in the world.” b “The people are friendlier.” c “I don't know either city.” d “The plane is much faster.” e “I'd rather see that than climb a hill in the rain.”

25. ●● Read the infographic in Section 10.2. a What is the most popular way to get to school in Year 10? b How many more students walk than cycle? c Which is faster on average, the car or the bike? By how many minutes? d Write two more sentences about the data with a comparative or a superlative. e Can we say that most teenagers in Britain walk to school? Why or why not?

Writing and Speaking

26. ● Complete the sentences so that they are true for you. a My town is bigger / smaller than… b The best place in my town is… because… c I'd rather… than… d I prefer… to… e I'm not old enough to…

27. ●● Speaking. Look at two places you know — a city and a village, two holiday places or two parks — and compare them for a partner. Talk for one minute. Use at least four comparatives or superlatives and finish with *I'd rather…* or *I prefer…*.

28. ●●● Write an informative leaflet for visitors (100–120 words) comparing two places in your region: two towns, two lakes, two mountains or two beaches. Give facts (with *about* for rounded numbers), compare them and recommend one. Use the checklist in 10.5.

29. ●● Agree or disagree politely. Answer each opinion with an expression from Tabella 10.7 and give a reason with a comparative. a Edinburgh is more interesting than Dublin. b Trains are better than planes for short journeys. c Summer is the best season of the year. d Cats are easier to look after than dogs.

Towards B1

30. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for each gap.
Australia is the sixth (1) ___ country in the world, but it has a population of only about 27 million people. Most Australians live on the coast, because the centre of the country is much (2) ___ than the coast: a lot of it is desert. Canberra is the capital, but it isn't (3) ___ big as Sydney or Melbourne. Australia is famous for its animals. Kangaroos can travel very fast, and the red kangaroo is the (4) ___ of all kangaroos. The weather is (5) ___ hot in summer for some tourists, so many people prefer to visit in spring. For a lot of young British people, Australia is the most exciting place (6) ___ the world for a working holiday.
(1) A large · B larger · C largest · D most large
(2) A dry · B drier · C more dry · D driest
(3) A so · B than · C more · D as
(4) A big · B bigger · C most big · D biggest
(5) A too · B enough · C very much · D more
(6) A of · B in · C at · D on

31. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap.
Last weekend Sam and Giulia went to Bath. It is smaller (1) ___ Bristol, but it is one of the (2) ___ beautiful cities in England. "The buildings here are (3) ___ beautiful as the buildings in Turin!" said Giulia. They visited the Roman Baths. The water in the baths is warm, but it isn't clean (4) ___ for swimming. It was the (5) ___ day of the week: the sun was shining and it was 25 degrees. "Which do you prefer, Bath or Bristol?" asked Sam. "I'd (6) ___ live in Bristol," said Giulia. "Bath is too quiet for me."

32. ●●● Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Use the word in CAPITALS and two to five words in total (contractions count as two words). a Sam is taller than Josh. AS → Josh _____ Sam. b No mountain in the UK is higher than Ben Nevis. HIGHEST → Ben Nevis is _____ in the UK. c I'm too young to vote. OLD → I'm not _____ vote. d I like trains more than planes. PREFER → I _____ planes. e Callum swims better than me. WELL → I don't swim _____ Callum.

33. ●● Your English friend wants to visit you next summer and asks: "The mountains or the sea — which is better?" Write a message (35–45 words). Compare the two options, say which you'd rather do and why.

34. ●● Read the notice. What does it say?

BEN NEVIS VISITOR CENTRE — The summit is about 9°C colder than Glen Nevis. Even in summer, take warm clothes. Not sure? Ask our staff before you start.

A. It is colder at the top, so take warm clothes.

B. The summit is warmer than the valley in summer.

C. You only need warm clothes in winter.

D. The staff can lend you warm clothes.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- MUR — R. Murphy, *Essential Grammar in Use*: the units on comparatives, superlatives, *not as … as* and *too / enough*, with extra practice.
- SWA — M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: entries on comparison, *as … as*, *further / farther*, *prefer* and *would rather*.
- CGE — R. Carter, M. McCarthy, *Cambridge Grammar of English*: how comparatives and superlatives are really used in spoken and written English.
- CED — D. Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*: the spread of English round the world and the varieties of English.
- ROA — P. Roach, *English Phonetics and Phonology*: weak forms such as *than* and *as*.

Glossario del capitolo

Cliff
scogliera, parete rocciosa — a high, very steep wall of rock, often by the sea

Coast
costa — the land next to the sea: *Cornwall has a beautiful coast.*

Comparative
comparativo — the form used to compare two things: *taller, more famous, better than*

Depth / deep
profondità / profondo — The lake is 30 metres deep.

Desert
deserto — a very dry area with little rain and few plants (≠ *dessert*, the sweet course)

First language
lingua madre — the language you learn as a baby (≠ second / foreign language)

Foot (pl. feet)
piede (unità di misura) — a unit of length: 1 foot = 0.3048 metres

Height / high
altezza / alto — How high is Ben Nevis? It's 1,345 metres high.

I'd rather
preferirei — + base form (+ *than*): *I'd rather walk than take the train.*

Length / long
lunghezza / lungo — The Thames is about 346 km long.

Less / the least
meno / il meno — less expensive than, the least difficult subject

Lingua franca
lingua veicolare — a common language between people with different first languages

(not) as … as
(non) così … come — The Thames isn't as long as the Severn.

Population
popolazione — the number of people who live in a place: *a population of about 850,000*

Prefer … to …
preferire … a … — I prefer trains to planes.

Superlative
superlativo relativo — the form used to compare one thing with a group: *the tallest, the most famous, the best*

Than
di, che (nei paragoni) — *She's older than me. It's easier to speak than to write.*

Too + adjective
troppo — more than you want or need: *too hot to drink*

Valley
valle — low land between hills or mountains, often with a river: *Glen Nevis is a long valley.*

Waterfall
cascata — a place where a river falls from a high place: *Niagara Falls*

Soluzioni

1. a 2 · b 1 · c 4 · d 3 · e 5 · f 6.

2. a desert (it has very little water; the others are areas of water) · b width (it's a noun; the others are adjectives) · c Sydney (it isn't a capital; the others are the capitals of Australia, Canada and New Zealand) · d kilogram (it measures weight; the others measure length or distance).

3. C (high). *Con le montagne si usa high, non tall.*

4. B (depth). *deep → depth (profondità).*

5. a height · b length · c width · d depth · e population.

6. a island · b cliffs · c lake · d population · e valley · f waterfall · g coast.

7. a 3 · b 2 · c 4 · d 1.

8. a colder, the coldest · b bigger, the biggest · c happier, the happiest · d more beautiful, the most beautiful · e better, the best · f worse, the worst · g further / farther, the furthest / farthest · h nicer, the nicest · i thinner, the thinnest · j drier, the driest · k more interesting, the most interesting · l more famous, the most famous.

9. a higher than · b longer than · c hotter than · d more difficult than · e better than · f further / farther ... than.

10. a the highest ... in · b the largest ... in · c the youngest ... in · d the best ... of · e the most expensive ... in · f the hottest ... of. *In con luoghi e gruppi (the UK, the world, the family, the city); of con periodi di tempo (the week, the year).*

11. C (as long as). *Comparativo di uguaglianza: as + aggettivo + as.*

12. D (faster). *Fast è un avverbio di una sillaba: + -er; mai more con -er.*

13. a The Thames isn't (is not) as long as the Severn. · b Sam is as old as Callum. / Callum is as old as Sam. · c Your bag isn't as heavy as mine. · d Scafell Pike isn't as high as Snowdon. · e Bristol isn't as big as Turin.

14. a Football is less popular than cricket in India. · b Bristol is less expensive than London. · c This film was the least exciting (of all).

15. a more slowly · b harder · c better · d later · e more carefully · f faster.

16. a too young · b old enough · c too hot · d warm enough · e too heavy · f good enough.

17. a Ben Nevis is higher than Snowdon. · b My sister is taller than me (than I am). · c This is the best pizza in Turin. · d Rome is the biggest city in Italy. · e She isn't old enough to drive. · f Today is hotter than yesterday. · g I'm not as tall as my brother.

18. a The Po is the longest river in Italy. · b My brother is taller than me (than I am), but I run faster than him (than he does). · c This suitcase is too heavy: I'm not strong enough.

19. Model answers: The Po is the longest of the five rivers. · The Severn is longer than the Thames. · The Thames isn't as long as the Shannon. · The Thames is almost as long as the Severn. · The Po is almost twice as long as the Thames (652 km vs 346 km). · The Tiber is longer than the three rivers of the British Isles. · The Shannon is the longest river in the British Isles.

20. a F (it's in the west of the Scottish Highlands) · b T · c DS (they had a sandwich halfway up; the blog doesn't say what they ate at the top) · d T · e F (they worked there all year round) · f T (260 metres lower).

21. a Because the path starts only a few metres above sea level. · b The path was rockier, the air was colder and the wind was stronger (and then the clouds came down). · c Because there are huge cliffs, about 600 metres high, on the north side, and it was cloudy. · d About nine hours (from eight in

the morning to about five o'clock). · e Because there's a railway to the top, so people can take the train.

22. a the foot · b plateau · c ruins · d (weather) observatory · e forecast.

23. a Edinburgh and Dublin. · b By train to Edinburgh; by plane from Bristol to Dublin. · c A hill in the middle of Edinburgh; you can walk to the top in less than an hour. · d She loves walking, and she prefers trains to planes because you see more. · e To go to Dublin next year, with Aoife as the guide.

24. a Callum · b Aoife · c Giulia · d Sam · e Aoife.

25. a Walking (11 students). · b 5 (11 – 6). · c The bike, by 8 minutes (12 against 20). · d For example: *The bus is slower than the car. More students come by bus than by bike. The car is the least popular way.* · e No: the data come from one class of 30 students, not from all British teenagers.

26. Personal answers. Check the structures: *bigger / smaller than*; *the best place in my town is... because...*; *I'd rather* + base form + *than* + base form (*I'd rather read than watch TV*); *I prefer* + noun / *-ing* + *to* + noun / *-ing* (*I prefer swimming to running*); *I'm not old enough to* + base form (*...to drive a car*).

27. Model answer: *I want to compare my town, Chieri, with Turin. Turin is much bigger and busier than Chieri, and it has more shops, museums and cinemas. Chieri is quieter and safer, and the air is cleaner. The best thing about Turin is that there's always something to do, but it's more expensive and the traffic is worse. Chieri is the friendliest place I know: everybody knows everybody. I'd rather live in Chieri, but I prefer Turin for a Saturday afternoon with friends.*

28. Model answer (about 115 words): *LAKE GARDA OR LAKE COMO? Two lakes, two different holidays. Lake Garda is the largest lake in Italy. It is wider than Lake Como, especially in the south, and it has long beaches, campsites and theme parks, so it is the best choice for families with young children. Lake Como is smaller, but it is deeper and narrower, with steep mountains on both sides. Its villages are quieter and more elegant, and the views from the ferries are some of the most beautiful in the Alps. Both lakes have good trains and ferries, and both are less crowded in spring than in summer. Our advice: Garda for fun, Como for peace and quiet!* Assessment: facts and comparisons (comparatives, superlatives, *as ... as*, *less*), linkers, a clear recommendation.

29. Model answers: a *I'm not sure. Edinburgh has got a castle, but Dublin is bigger and more lively.* · b *I agree. Trains are more comfortable, and you don't have to wait at the airport.* · c *I see what you mean, but I think autumn is better: it's cooler and the colours are more beautiful.* · d *That's true: cats are more independent, and you don't have to take them for a walk.*

30. 1 C (largest) · 2 B (drier) · 3 D (as) · 4 D (biggest) · 5 A (too) · 6 B (in).

31. 1 than · 2 most · 3 as · 4 enough · 5 best / hottest / warmest / nicest / sunniest / loveliest · 6 rather.

32. a isn't as tall as / is not as tall as · b the highest mountain · c old enough to · d prefer trains to · e as well as.

33. Model answer (about 40 words): *Hi Tom! Good question! The sea is warmer and more relaxing, but the beaches are very crowded in August. The mountains are cooler and quieter, and the walks are amazing. I'd rather go to the mountains — it's the best place for a summer adventure! Ciao, Luca*

34. A. *Il cartello dice che in cima fa circa 9 °C in meno che a Glen Nevis, quindi servono vestiti caldi anche d'estate.*