Comparatives and Superlatives

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Identify comparatives and superlatives that use the words **more** and **most**.
- Form comparatives and superlatives using the words **more** and **most**.
- Use comparatives and superlatives in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers
- Comparatives and Superlatives (BLM 3)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, prepare the index cards and write the sentence frames on chart paper for the activities in “Strategies to Support ELs.”

1. Focus

Explain Comparatives and Superlatives

**Say:** Comparatives are words and phrases writers use to compare two or more things. One way to form a comparative phrase is to use the word **more** before an adjective. This is often necessary for adjectives that have more than one syllable. For example, I can say, “Caesar was more powerful than his brother.” *In this sentence, the phrase more powerful compares Caesar with his brother.*

**Say:** Now listen to this sentence: “Caesar was the most powerful man in the world.” *In this sentence, the phrase most powerful compares one man with all of the other men in the world. This is called a superlative. Writers use superlatives to say that one thing is bigger or greater in some way than any other thing. We often use the word most to form a superlative with an adjective of several syllables. Comparatives and superlatives are useful to biography writers so they can compare the people they write about to other people.*

Model Identifying Comparatives and Superlatives

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Modeling Text

1. Pompey may have been the **most respected** general in Rome.
2. Caesar was **more skillful** in war tactics than the chieftain from Gaul.
3. Some people think that Cleopatra is not just fascinating, but the **most fascinating** Egyptian ruler ever.

**Read sentence 1. Say:** This sentence contains a superlative. I know this because of the word **most**. The writer uses the phrase **most respected** to compare Pompey with all of the other generals in Rome.

**Read sentence 2. Say:** The phrase **more skillful** is a comparative. The word **more** creates a comparison between Caesar and the chieftain from Gaul.

**Read sentence 3. Say:** In the first part of this sentence, the writer uses the adjective **fascinating** to describe Cleopatra. Later, the writer adds the word **most** before **fascinating** to tell that people think Cleopatra is more fascinating than any other Egyptian ruler, ever. The superlative is **most fascinating**. Superlatives such as this help biography writers describe their subjects.
2. Rehearse

Practice Identifying Comparatives and Superlatives

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to work with partners to identify each adjective and use one of the adjectives to form a comparative and a superlative (using more and most). Then invite them to use their new comparatives and superlatives in sentences.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Cleopatra was highly intelligent, courageous, and loyal to the two men she loved.

Practice Text

Share Comparatives and Superlatives

Invite pairs to share their findings with the class. Ask students the following questions:

• What adjectives did you find?
• What comparatives and superlatives did you form?
• How did you use these comparatives and superlatives in sentences?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that biography writers use the word more when comparing two or more things and the word most when comparing one thing to all others. Phrases with more are comparatives, and phrases with most are superlatives. These words are especially useful in biographies for comparing people to others. We’ll use comparatives and superlatives in our writing when we want to show comparisons between two or more things.

If you would like to give students additional practice forming comparatives and superlatives, ask them to complete BLM 3.

4. Share

Bring students together. Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 3. Ask students to share what they learned about comparatives and superlatives.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Help beginning English learners understand the concepts of comparatives and superlatives. Show three index cards: one with a single blue dot, another with a blue dot and a red dot, and a third with several dots of different colors. Hold up the card with the blue dot. Say: Colorful. Then hold up the card with the two dots. Say: More colorful. Finally, hold up the card with many dots. Say: Most colorful. Use gestures or pictures to demonstrate other adjectives and how they change with the word more or most in front.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the practice activity. Provide the following sentence frames to guide oral language:

Cleopatra was more ______ than ______.
Cleopatra was the most ______.