COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

CEFR Level C2 — Mastery

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Rhetorical & Idiomatic Comparison

At C2 level, comparative structures serve rhetorical and stylistic purposes beyond grammar.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Rhetorical uses of comparison at C2

Device	Effect	Example
Ironic comparison	Undermines the subject by feigned praise	"He is no less brilliant than a stopped clock."
Litotes (understatement via negation)	Implies the opposite through denial	"This was not the least of their errors."
Superlative + qualifier	Introduces nuance or irony	"The most successful failure in the company's history."
Inverted superlative	Highlights inferiority pointedly	"Of all the strategies proposed, this is the least likely to succeed."
Comparative in periodic sentence	Builds argumentative tension	"While others grew richer, the poorest communities grew poorer still."
Stacked comparatives	Creates rhetorical momentum	"More ambitious, more costly, and ultimately more contentious than anything before it."

PART A — **Identify the device**

Identify the rhetorical device used in each sentence from the table above. Then explain the intended effect in the context given.

1. "The government's response was, if anything, even less decisive than its predecessor's."

Context: Context: a political editorial

Device: _____ Effect: _____

2. "No investment has proved more expensive than the one we didn't make."

Context: Context: a keynote speech

Device: _____ Effect: _____

3. "It was, by some distance, the most ambitious under-achievement of his career."

Context: Context: a satirical biography

Device: _____ Effect: _____

4. "Bolder in vision, weaker in execution, and costlier than any comparable initiative."

Context: Context: a policy review

Device: _____ Effect: _____

PART B **Transform for effect**

Rewrite each sentence using the rhetorical device indicated. The core meaning may shift slightly but the rhetorical effect must be deliberate.

1. Original: The new policy is better than the old one.

Device: Ironic comparison — imply they are equally poor

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2. Original: These results are disappointing.

Device: Litotes — use a superlative structure

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3. Original: The reform succeeded despite many setbacks.

Device: Superlative + qualifier — add a paradox

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4. Original: Inequality grew while prosperity increased.

Device: Comparative in periodic sentence

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Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Critical Discourse Analysis

Analyse how comparative language constructs arguments, authority, and bias.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A **Discourse analysis**

Read the two texts on the same topic. Answer the questions that follow, focusing on how comparative language is used to construct different arguments.

Text A (newspaper editorial): "The latest economic figures are, by almost any measure, more alarming than those of the previous quarter. Unemployment is climbing faster than at any point since the 2008 crisis, and the most vulnerable households are bearing a disproportionately greater burden than any other demographic group. The government's response has been no more adequate than a sticking plaster."

Text B (government press release): "The most recent data reflects a somewhat slower rate of growth than forecast, though fundamentals remain considerably stronger than in comparable economies. Targeted support measures have proved more effective than initial projections suggested, and the long-term outlook is no less positive than it was twelve months ago."

1. Identify all comparative and superlative structures in both texts. Which uses more, and what does this imply about each writer's rhetorical strategy?

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2. Text A uses 'no more adequate than a sticking plaster'. Analyse the metaphorical and rhetorical effect of combining the 'no + comparative' structure with this particular image.

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3. Text B uses 'no less positive than it was twelve months ago'. How does this differ semantically and rhetorically from simply saying 'as positive as'? What is the writer implying?

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4. Both texts compare to a benchmark (e.g. 'comparable economies', '2008 crisis'). How does the choice of benchmark affect the persuasive force of each comparison?

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5. Write a neutral, objective summary (80–100 words) of the economic situation described, using only comparative structures that avoid bias. Note which structures you use.

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Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 3: Stylistic Range & Register Mastery

Demonstrate mastery by adapting comparative language across registers and genres.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Register transformation**

Rewrite each sentence in the register indicated. Keep the core meaning but adapt ALL aspects of register: vocabulary, syntax, hedging, and the form of comparative structures used.

1. "The new app is way better than the old one — it's the best thing ever!"

From: Informal/spoken → To: Academic journal

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2. "It may be observed that urban environments tend to present considerably more complex socioeconomic challenges than rural counterparts."

From: Academic → To: Journalistic/accessible

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3. "His record is, by any rational measure, the most fraudulent in the institution's history."

From: Formal/polemical → To: Neutral/objective

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PART B — **Creative-analytical paragraph**

Write a paragraph of 150–180 words on the following prompt. You must demonstrate at least FIVE distinct comparative/superlative devices from Worksheet 1, use AT LEAST ONE rhetorical device deliberately, and maintain a consistent register of your choice. State your register at the top.

Prompt: "The comparison between past and present is the oldest intellectual habit, and the most dangerous — for it is the one most likely to distort what we see." Discuss.

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Word count: _____ Devices: _____ / 5 Rhetorical device used: _____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Extended Critical Writing

Produce sustained, sophisticated comparative argumentation across extended written forms.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Close reading**

Read the passage and complete the tasks that follow.

> To compare is, in one sense, to simplify — to flatten the irreducible complexity of phenomena into a single axis of measurement. And yet no intellectual act is more fundamental to our understanding of the world. The most powerful comparisons are those that are least expected: the juxtaposition of unlike things that reveals, more clearly than any direct description could, something true about both. Less skilled writers use comparison as a crutch; the most accomplished deploy it as a scalpel — to cut, to illuminate, and occasionally to wound. The difference between these two uses is no smaller than the difference between a map and the territory it claims to represent.

1. Identify and classify all comparative structures in the passage (comparative / superlative / rhetorical device). Comment on how each contributes to the writer's argument.

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2. The final sentence uses 'no smaller than'. Explain the double-negative construction and its rhetorical effect. How would the meaning and register change if the writer had written 'as large as'?

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3. The writer says 'less skilled writers use comparison as a crutch'. What is the implicit comparative claim here? What does the 'most accomplished' contrast reveal about the writer's values?

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4. Write a counter-argument (120–150 words) to the passage's opening claim, using at least four distinct comparative structures. Engage directly with the writer's language.

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PART B — **Extended essay introduction**

Write an essay introduction (220–260 words) in response to: "The most dangerous comparisons are those we make unconsciously." Your introduction must: (1) engage directly with the proposition using precise comparative language; (2) deploy at least TWO rhetorical devices from Worksheet 1; (3) use at least SIX distinct comparative/superlative structures (underline them); (4) maintain a consistent, sophisticated register; (5) clearly signal a line of argument.

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Word count: _____ Structures underlined: _____ / 6 Rhetorical devices: _____

Score: _____ / 40

Assessment Rubric — C2 Level

For teacher use only — extended tasks are assessed holistically against the rubric below

Criterion	C2 Descriptor	Marks
Structural Range	Uses 5+ distinct comparative/superlative devices accurately and flexibly; deploys rhetorical devices deliberately	0–5
Register Mastery	Consistent, appropriate register; adapts forms to audience and purpose; no inadvertent slippage	0–4
Rhetorical Sophistication	Comparisons serve a clear argumentative or stylistic purpose; evidence of deliberate craft	0–4
Critical Engagement	Engages with nuance, ambiguity, and counter-argument; does not oversimplify	0–4
Accuracy	Zero errors in comparative/superlative formation; punctuation and syntax fully controlled	0–3
Coherence & Voice	Sustained, distinctive voice; comparisons integrated naturally into argument	0–4