

Superlatives (the longest / the most enjoyable etc.)

A

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
<i>but</i> 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.

B

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

- ☐ Yesterday was **the hottest** day of the year.
- ☐ The movie was really boring. It's **the most boring** movie 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 time?

Compare superlative and 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** (*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*)

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