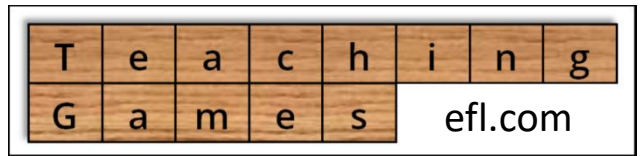


# Chapter 1

## The comparatives game



This chapter includes several versions of a cooperative sentence making game. There are also lots of ideas for follow up activities and adaptations.

You can mix and match the various activities to fit the stages of your lesson plan.



To support this ongoing project go to [www.patreon.com/teachinggamesefl](http://www.patreon.com/teachinggamesefl)

---

### Animals – elementary / younger learners

Instructions	page 2
Animal cards	page 3
Comparative cards	page 4

---

### Activities – elementary / intermediate

Instructions	page 5
Activities cards	page 6
Comparative cards	page 7

---

### Any topic – upper intermediate / advanced

Instructions	page 8
Singular comparative cards	page 9
Plural comparative cards	page 10

---

Additional ideas and activities	page 11
Blank cards small	page 12
Blank cards large	page 13

---

# Animal Comparatives Game – elementary / younger learners

## Preparation

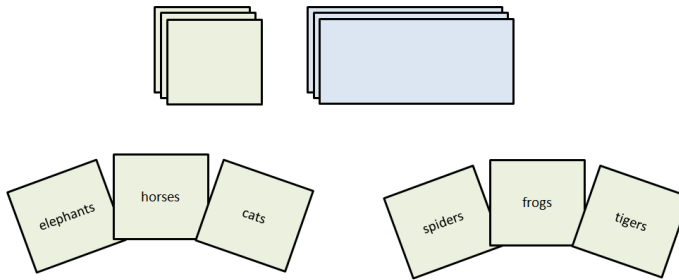
This is a cooperative game, where the objective is to make logical sentences using the cards that are drawn.

Pre-teach any new vocabulary before you start the game.

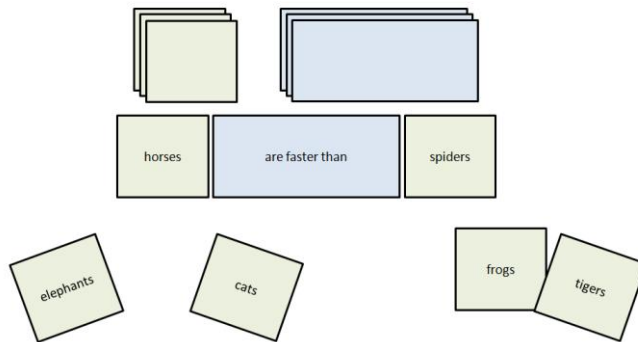
Students play in pairs, so you need one set of cards for every two students. In larger classes, or if table space is an issue, students can play in groups of four with two teams working together instead.

## How to play

Students shuffle both sets of cards and place them face down in front of them. They each draw three of the smaller 'animal' cards and look at them together.



They turn over the first 'comparative' card and make a sentence that uses one card from each of their hands.



They both draw new cards and turn over the next comparative card. They keep making new sentences until they've used all of the cards, ending up with fifteen comparative sentences spread out in front of them. Monitor as they play and ask questions about their choices, especially any combinations that seem out of place. Next, students turn all of their comparative cards face down. Now they work together to recall the full sentences, one by one, turning the cards over to check.

## Feedback

Students stand up and swap places with their neighbours, reading the other group's sentences and looking for any that are similar to their own or that they disagree with. In open feedback ask students for their favourite sentences. You can then use your students' sentences as the foundation for drilling.

## Follow up

Students play the game again, this time making silly sentences like, "Sharks are friendlier than butterflies." Feedback as before, but this time students are looking for the funniest and strangest sentences.

Finally, students write their favourite sentences (from either the first or the second game) and draw pictures to go with them. This could be done straight in their books or they could work in pairs on 'comparative posters' to put up in the classroom. You can collect the cards before this stage to add an additional challenge, or let students copy a couple of examples first. If you do collect the cards, elicit some adjectives from the students and write them on the board. Otherwise students may resort to only using the adjectives they're most familiar with; smaller, bigger, longer etc.

Once students have finished, spread their work out and ask students to walk around, look at their classmates posters and talk about which ones they like the most.

snakes	dogs	kangaroos	bees	ducks	penguins
crocodiles	cats	camels	polar bears	parrots	chickens
giraffes	horses	mice	pandas	tigers	goldfish
monkeys	elephants	spiders	frogs	turtles	sharks
lions	zebras	dolphins	owls	hippos	butterflies

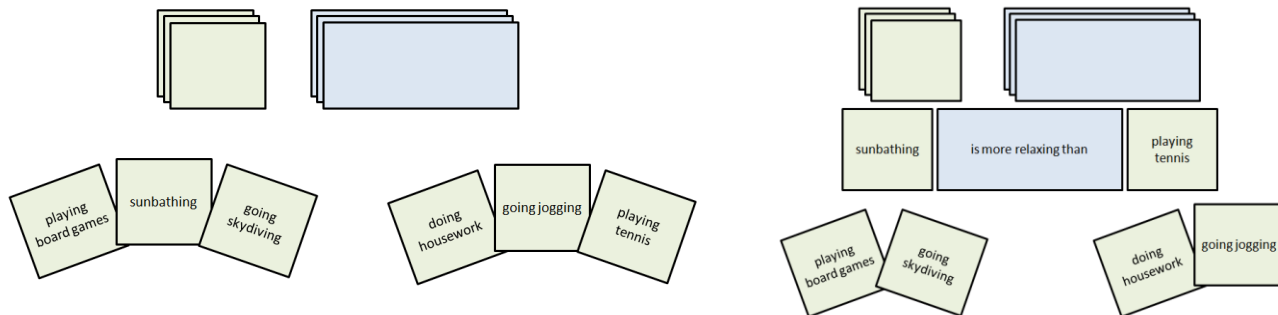
are more interesting than	are more dangerous than	are more beautiful than
are thinner than	are friendlier than	are scarier than
are bigger than	are shorter than	are more colourful than
are slower than	are taller than	are stronger than
are faster than	are smaller than	are longer than

# Activities Comparatives Game – elementary / intermediate

## Preparation and How to play

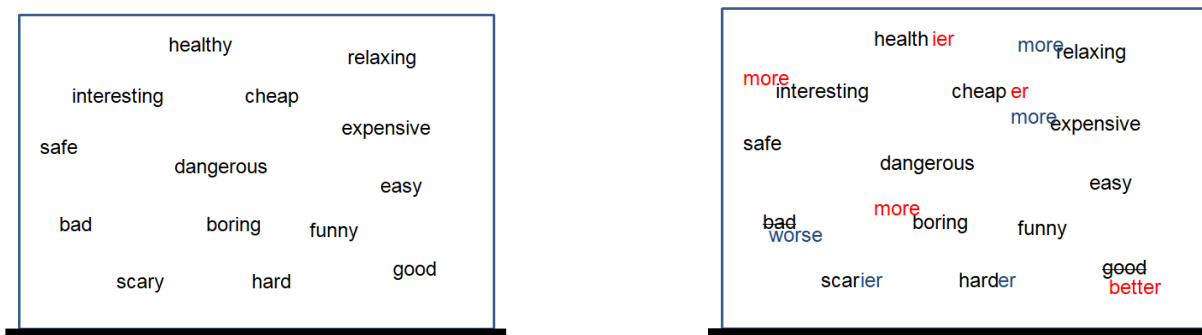
The basic game instructions are the same as the 'Animal comparatives game' on page 1.

For elementary level students, remove some of the words that they don't know so they can focus on the language structure. To keep the same ratio of cards, remove two 'activity' cards for every 'comparative' card.



## Game two

While students are playing the game, write a selection of adjectives on the board. You could use adjectives that aren't in the game but you've already covered in your syllabus. Once students have finished every stage of the game (play once, recall and feedback) collect the cards and ask them to look at the board.



With stronger classes, put students into two teams and give one team a red marker and the other a blue marker. They take turns changing the adjectives into comparatives. For weaker classes, elicit the changes from students in open feedback. In either case, afterwards elicit the rules for -er, -ier etc. Also, add 'less' as the opposite to 'more' for longer adjectives.

For the next round, hand out the activities cards but not the comparatives. Students play the game again, drawing three cards each and working together to make sentences, but this time they write sentences using the adjectives on the board. For an added challenge, revert the adjectives on the board to their original form so that students have to change the words themselves.

## Feedback

Students stand up and mingle, sharing their sentences with each other. Students should take it in turns to read their sentences while the other listens. Intermediate level students should also discuss their sentences, justifying their opinions and asking follow up questions. After students have talked to a couple of partners, stop them and give them some supporting language on the board. This could be based on repeated errors you've encountered in your monitoring or some language input to help upgrade their language.

After talking to another two or three partners students sit back down and talk in pairs about the sentences they heard from others.

## Follow up

For a final activity you can transition into superlatives. Elicit the superlative forms for the adjectives on the board. Students can discuss in pairs, and then in small groups, which activities are the most expensive, cheapest etc. Each group could write down their 'winners' in each category, then students return to their original pairs and discuss the decisions their group made.

going shopping	going skydiving	going horse riding	going swimming	going bowling	going fishing
doing ballet	doing gymnastics	doing housework	going skiing	going jogging	going to the cinema
doing exercise	doing yoga	doing homework	doing martial arts	taking photos	sunbathing
playing football	playing basketball	playing the guitar	playing tennis	cooking	drawing
playing computer games	playing board games	playing the piano	playing golf	reading a book	dancing

is easier to learn than	is more relaxing than	is more useful than
is cheaper than	is harder to do well than	is more expensive than
is more entertaining for spectators than	is safer than	is more dangerous than
is more exciting than	is more stressful than	is healthier than
is more interesting than	is more fun than	is more complicated than

# Comparatives Game (any topic) – upper intermediate / advanced

## Preparation

For this game you need one set of comparative cards for every three students. There are two different sets to use depending on whether you're comparing plural or singular nouns. In this example we're comparing cities.

Write some famous cities on the board and elicit more from the class. They should be cities that everyone is familiar with and from a variety of different countries. Include a couple of local towns too. Next, ask students to discuss the cities in pairs and write down as many adjectives as they can to describe these cities. Pick a few volunteers to write these adjectives on the board.

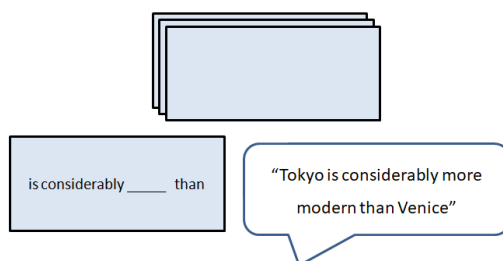
Paris	New York	ancient	fascinating
London	Dubai	touristy	industrial
Tokyo	Seoul	crowded	lively
Prague	Bangkok	modern	polluted
Venice	Krakow	densely populated	
Milan	Berlin	exciting	mysterious
Istanbul	Amsterdam	fashionable	romantic
Sidney	Barcelona	affluent	diverse
		enormous / vast	
		relaxing	quaint

Encourage students to use more adventurous language and ask them to replace simple words with more exciting synonyms. For example, swap rich for affluent, old for ancient and interesting for fascinating.

You can allow adjectives that describe elements of a city, like 'tasty' for food or 'rude' for people but ensure that students are aware of how they need to change the sentence structures: "Food in Paris is twice as tasty as food in Berlin." rather than, "Paris is twice as tasty as Berlin."

## How to play

Put students into groups of three and give them a set of comparative cards. They take it in turns to draw a card and use it to make a sentence. If the other two students agree that it's a logical sentence the first student keeps the card and places it in front of them. Then it's the next student's turn. Adjectives can't be used more than once, so if a student repeats an adjective they lose a turn. Students keep playing until all of the cards have been used.



Once they've finished playing, ask students to look at the cards and use them to help remember all of their group's sentences. In this next round of the game, students take it in turns to try and recall each other's sentences. If they get one right, they take the card. After five or six minutes the player with the most cards wins.

## Follow up

Collect the cards and ask students to mingle. They should discuss what sentences they came up with and which cities they talked about most. You could extend this mingle to include superlatives, wider debate about their favourite and least favourite cities, as well as any other aspects that relate to your current topic.

## Extension – writing task

Students have been asked by their local tourism board to promote their town. This could be in the form of a travel brochure, magazine article or holiday review. They should favourably compare their town to the most famous cities in the world using the comparative structures from the game.



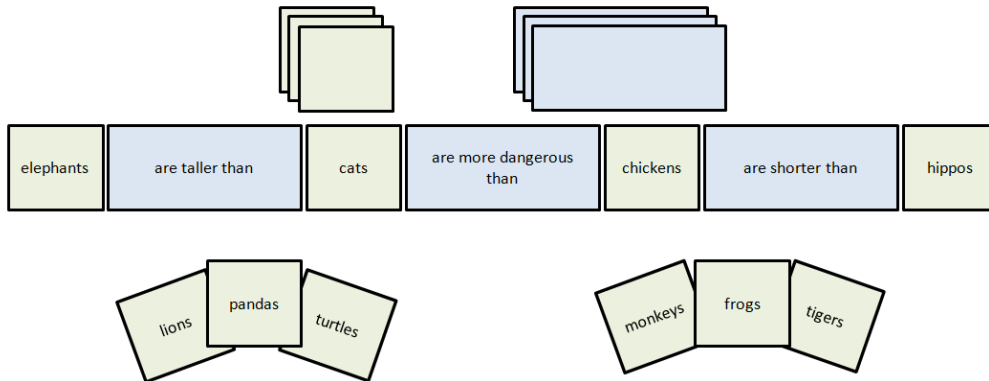
is five times _____ than	is ten times _____ than	is nowhere near as _____ as
isn't nearly as _____ as	is twice as _____ as	is every bit as _____ as
is way _____ than	is a little _____ than	is considerably _____ than
is far _____ than	is a bit _____ than	is much _____ than
is just as _____ as	isn't as _____ as	is nothing like as _____ as

are five times _____ than	are ten times _____ than	are nowhere near as _____ as
aren't nearly as _____ as	are twice as _____ as	are every bit as _____ as
are way _____ than	are a little _____ than	are considerably _____ than
are far _____ than	are a bit _____ than	are much _____ than
are just as _____ as	aren't as _____ as	are nothing like as _____ as

## Comparatives Game – additional ideas and activities

### Chain Game

This game could be played using the cards from the animals or the activities game. Students draw three cards each and reveal the first comparative card. The first player picks a card to start the sentence and the second player finishes it. They draw new cards, reveal the next comparative card, and play it next to the sentence. The first player has to play a card to make a new logical sentence. This continues, with the players taking turns adding to the chain until they run out of cards.

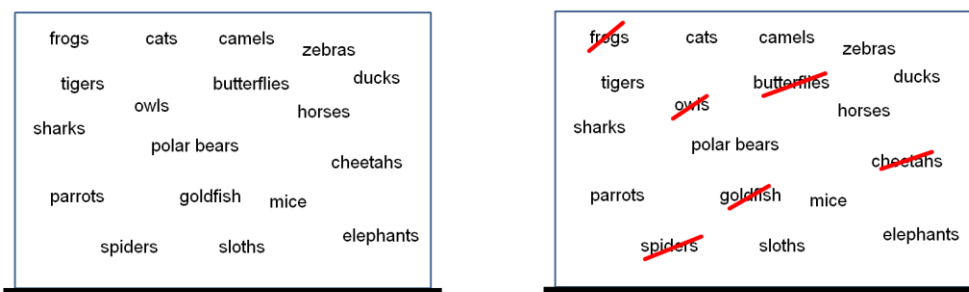


This is a great way to revise and recycle the language. You can extend the game in the same way as the original version by asking students to turn the comparative cards face down and then trying to recall the chain. For an added challenge they have to remember the entire chain, and if they get one wrong start again.

### Production / revision

This works as either a production stage for a comparatives lesson or as revision later in the year. Do a quick board race\* to get a list of items to be compared. Next, students talk in pairs and think of as many sentences as they can comparing the items. Give students two minutes and help any students who are struggling to think of ideas.

The next stage can be played as a class or in small groups. One pair has to pick any two items and make a comparative sentence. If they make a logical and correct sentence they get a point and the two words they used in their sentence are crossed off the board. The next pair have to make a sentence but can't use any words that have been crossed out.



### Custom cards and student generated expansions

Print some blank copies and make additional cards of your own. You could also get students to contribute, either to add some additional cards to the games they've played already or they could make their own games. The adaptation could go further, as there is no reason to restrict these sentence making games to comparatives. Experiment with other language structures and see what works.

*\*In a board race, split your class into two teams and give each team a coloured marker. They have to write as many items of a particular vocabulary group as they can, without writing any duplicates or copying from the other team. This is a great way to quickly revise vocabulary or elicit some words to use in an activity.*



## The comparatives game

To support this ongoing project go to [www.patreon.com/teachingamesefl](http://www.patreon.com/teachingamesefl)

For more games and activities go to [www.teachingamesefl.com](http://www.teachingamesefl.com)



**Mike Astbury**

[teachingamesefl@gmail.com](mailto:teachingamesefl@gmail.com)

[Twitter: @TeachingGamesUK](https://twitter.com/TeachingGamesUK)

[www.facebook.com/teachingamesefl/](http://www.facebook.com/teachingamesefl/)

