COMPARATIVE CLAUSES

CEFR Level B2 — Upper-Intermediate

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Proportional & Progressive Comparison

the ... the ... , comparative + and + comparative

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

Structure	Meaning	Example
the + comp., the + comp.	two variables move together	The harder you work, the more you earn.
comp. + and + comp.	progressive change	The queue grew longer and longer.
more and more + adj.	progressive (long adjectives)	It became more and more difficult.
the + comp. + the better	fixed idiom	The sooner, the better.
all the + comp.	even more so, because of this	The delay made her all the angrier.

In 'the … the …' both halves are clauses. The first is subordinate; the second is main. A comma separates them.

PART B — **Complete the proportional clause**

Complete each sentence with a comparative form.

1. The _____ you practise, the _____ you become. *(much / fluent)*
2. The _____ the deadline approached, the _____ he panicked. *(near / much)*
3. The _____ the room, the _____ it costs to heat. *(large / much)*
4. The _____ we waited, the _____ we felt. *(long / anxious)*

PART C — **Rewrite as a proportional clause**

Rewrite each sentence using 'the … the …'

1. As renewable energy becomes cheaper, its adoption increases.
   → _____
2. If you sleep more, you will feel better.
   → _____
3. As the evidence accumulated, the defence grew weaker.
   → _____
4. When prices rise, demand usually falls.
   → _____

Score: _____ / 12

Worksheet 2: Degree, Emphasis & Idiom

far more, nothing like as, no less ... than, twice as ... as

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

Structure	Function	Example
far / considerably / slightly + comp.	degree modifier	The result was considerably worse than expected.
nothing like as … as	emphatic negative	The sequel was nothing like as good as the original.
no + comparative + than	surprising equivalence	She is no wiser than she was at twenty.
no less … than	asserts equality, often ironic	The reforms proved no less controversial than the old law.
twice / half as … as	multiples	This flat is twice as expensive as mine.
not so much X as Y	corrective comparison	It was not so much a debate as a shouting match.

far • no less • not so much • nothing like • no wiser • twice

Complete each sentence with a phrase from the box. Use each once.

1. The second album was _____ as compelling as the first.
2. Their new house is _____ as large as their old one.
3. After thirty years in politics he is _____ than when he began.
4. The outcome was _____ more damaging than anyone predicted.
5. It was _____ a negotiation _____ an ultimatum.
6. The compromise proved _____ contentious than the original bill.

PART B — **What is implied?**

Explain what each sentence implies about the speaker's attitude.

1. “Her second novel was no better than her first.”
   Implies: _____
2. “The meeting was no less tedious than usual.”
   Implies: _____
3. “It was not so much a review as a demolition.”
   Implies: _____

Score: _____ / 12

Worksheet 3: Precision & Common Errors

Ambiguity, ellipsis failure and the illogical comparison.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — Repair the comparison

Each sentence is faulty. Name the fault, then rewrite it.

1. "The salaries at our firm are higher than our competitors."
   Fault: _____
   Rewrite: _____

2. "She respects her colleagues more than her manager." (ambiguous)
   Fault: _____
   Rewrite: _____

3. "He is the most tallest player in the squad."
   Fault: _____
   Rewrite: _____

4. "This engine is more efficient than any engine we produce."
   Fault: _____
   Rewrite: _____

5. "She drives as carefully, if not more carefully than, her father."
   Fault: _____
   Rewrite: _____

PART B — Formal or informal?

Rewrite each sentence in the register indicated.

1. She's a lot better at this than me. *(formal)*
   → _____

2. The costs exceeded those which had been anticipated. *(informal)*
   → _____

3. Nobody works harder than him. *(formal)*
   → _____

4. The report was way less useful than we'd hoped. *(formal)*
   → _____

Score: _____ / 13

Worksheet 4: Reading & Writing

Comparison as an instrument of argument.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *The gap between the two economies is now wider than it has been at any point since reunification. Wages in the north remain considerably lower than those in the south, and productivity growth is nothing like as rapid as ministers had promised. The more the government invests in headline projects, the less it appears to spend on the unglamorous infrastructure that regional firms actually need. Critics argue that the strategy is not so much a plan for growth as a programme of public relations — and that the north, thirty years on, is no better served than it was at the beginning.*

1. Identify SIX comparative structures and name each.

_____

_____

_____

2. ‘lower than those in the south’ — what does ‘those’ replace, and what error does it prevent?

_____

_____

3. Analyse the proportional clause. What relationship does it assert, and why is it rhetorically effective?

_____

_____

4. ‘no better served than it was at the beginning’ — explain the force of ‘no’ here compared with ‘not better’.

_____

_____

PART B — **Write an argument**

Write a paragraph (120–150 words) arguing that one thing has failed to improve. Include: ONE proportional clause, ONE ‘nothing like as … as’, ONE ‘no + comparative + than’, ONE degree modifier, and ONE comparison using ‘that of / those of’. Underline each.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____ Structures underlined: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 17

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

For teacher use only — B2 Level Worksheets

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Worksheet 1 – Proportional & Progressive

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	Gaps 1–4	**1 the more … the more fluent; 2 the nearer … the more; 3 the larger … the more; 4 the longer … the more anxious**
C1	renewable energy	**The cheaper renewable energy becomes, the more its adoption increases.**
C2	sleep	**The more you sleep, the better you will feel.**
C3	evidence	**The more the evidence accumulated, the weaker the defence grew.**
C4	prices	**The higher prices rise, the more demand usually falls.**

Worksheet 2 – Degree, Emphasis & Idiom

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Gaps 1–6 in order	**nothing like, twice, no wiser, far, not so much … as, no less**
B1	no better than	**The speaker expected an improvement and is disappointed; 'no better' asserts a surprising equivalence, more damning than 'not better'.**
B2	no less tedious than usual	**Ironic: the meeting was tedious, as always. 'No less' emphasises the depressing constancy.**
B3	not so much a review as a demolition	**The speaker corrects the description: what was called a review was in fact an attack.**

Worksheet 3 – Precision & Errors

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	illogical comparison	**Comparing salaries with competitors. → '… higher than those of our competitors.'**
A2	ambiguity	**'than her manager (respects them)' or 'than (she respects) her manager'. → 'She respects her colleagues more than she respects her manager.'**
A3	double superlative	**He is the tallest player in the squad.**
A4	'any' includes the subject	**… more efficient than any other engine we produce.**
A5	broken parallel / stranded 'than'	**She drives as carefully as her father, if not more carefully.**

Worksheet 3 – Part B (Register)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B1	formal	**She is considerably better at this than I am.**
B2	informal	**The costs were higher than we expected.**

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B3	formal	**Nobody works harder than he does.**
B4	formal	**The report was far less useful than we had hoped.**

Worksheet 4 – Reading & Writing

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	Six structures	**‘wider than it has been at any point’ (comparative clause); ‘considerably lower than’ (degree modifier); ‘those in the south’ (pro-form comparison); ‘nothing like as rapid as’ (emphatic negative); ‘The more …, the less …’ (proportional); ‘not so much a plan … as a programme’ (corrective); ‘no better served than’ (surprising equivalence)**
A2	‘those’	**It replaces ‘the wages’. Without it the sentence would compare wages with the south itself — an illogical comparison.**
A3	the proportional clause	**It asserts an inverse relation: investment in showpiece projects goes up as spending on necessary infrastructure goes down. Effective because it converts a contested claim into an apparent law, and the syntax makes the trade-off feel automatic.**
A4	‘no better’ vs ‘not better’	**‘Not better’ merely denies improvement. ‘No better’ asserts equivalence and implies that improvement was expected and owed — it carries reproach as well as measurement.**
B	Argument (120–150 words)	**Up to 10 marks: 5 for the five required structures used correctly, 3 for argument and register, 2 for accuracy.**