COMPARATIVE CLAUSES

CEFR Level C1 — Advanced

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Advanced Comparative Structures

At C1, the basics are assumed. Focus: ellipsis, subdeletion, correlatives.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Key structures at C1

Structure	Function & Notes	Example
comparative ellipsis	Delete recoverable material after than/as	“She earns more than he (does).”
subdeletion	Delete a quantity, not a whole phrase	“They built more houses than they sold flats.”
‘than’ + clause vs preposition	‘than I am’ (clause) vs ‘than me’ (prep.)	“She likes him more than I.” ≠ “… than me.”
comparative correlative	‘the … the …’; first clause subordinate	“The more we learn, the less we know.”
no + comparative + than	Surprising equivalence, often reproachful	“He is no wiser than he was.”
not so much X as Y	Corrective: rejects one label for another	“It was not a debate so much as a rout.”
‘that of / those of’	Pro-form: prevents illogical comparison	“The climate is milder than that of Norway.”
inversion in than-clause	Formal; auxiliary before subject	“She spoke better than did any other delegate.”

PART A — **Complete the sentences**

Fill in each gap with an appropriate word or phrase. More than one answer may be possible.

1. The output of the northern plants exceeds _____ of the southern ones.
2. The _____ the inquiry pressed, the _____ evasive the witness became.
3. He is _____ more qualified than his predecessor was.
4. It was not so much an apology _____ an act of damage limitation.
5. After a decade of reform, the service is _____ better than it was.
6. Rarely has a policy been criticised more sharply than _____ this one.
7. She published more articles _____ her colleagues did books.
8. The delay made the shareholders _____ the angrier.

PART B — **Error analysis**

Identify and correct the error in each sentence. Then note the rule violated.

1. “The rainfall in Ireland is heavier than Spain.”
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

2. “She is as competent, if not more competent than, her predecessor.”
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

3. “The more you practise, the more fluent you will became.”
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

4. “This compound is more stable than any compound in the series.”
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Register, Implicature & Precision

What a comparison asserts, and what it merely lets you infer.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — The register spectrum

Comparative forms vary sharply by register. Study the tables.

Informal	Neutral	Formal / academic
way better than us	much better than we are	considerably superior to ours
than me	than I am	than I
loads more than last year	much more than last year	markedly more than in the preceding year
not nearly as good	not as good	nothing like as satisfactory

Form	What it asserts	What it implicates
not better than X	denies superiority	may be equal, may be worse
no better than X	asserts equivalence	improvement was expected: reproach
no less … than X	asserts equivalence	the equivalence is surprising or ironic
as good as X, if not better	at least equal	hedged praise; the writer suspects better

PART B — Register transformation

Rewrite each sentence in the register indicated.

1. Their profits were way higher than ours. *(formal, with 'those of')*
   → _____

2. Nothing like as many students applied as last year. *(neutral)*
   → _____

3. She performed better than every other candidate. *(formal, inversion in the than-clause)*
   → _____

4. The situation is not any better than before. *(formal, 'no' + comparative)*
   → _____

PART C — Verdicts

Decide whether each sentence is (a) standard, (b) acceptable but marked/stylistic, or (c) a genuine error. Justify in one sentence.

1. "She is taller than am I."
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

2. "The results were no less disappointing than we had feared."
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

3. "He wrote more books than she wrote articles."
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

4	“The more richer he became, the more lonelier he felt.” Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____
5	“She likes him more than I.” Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Academic Writing & Critical Analysis

How comparison establishes, and disguises, a claim.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *No claim in public argument is more common, or less examined, than the comparative. To say that a policy has made a country safer is to invite the question: safer than what? Safer than it was; safer than it would have been; safer than some other country whose circumstances are nothing like as comparable as the speaker implies. The rhetorical utility of the incomplete comparison is precisely that the missing clause cannot be contested, for it has never been stated. The more confidently a politician asserts an improvement, the less often the baseline is supplied — and a claim that is no more falsifiable than a wish is, in the end, no more useful than one.*

1. Identify SIX comparative structures and name each.

_____

_____

_____

2. 'more common, or less examined, than the comparative' — analyse the coordination of the two comparatives and their shared than-clause.

_____

_____

3. Explain the writer's point about the incomplete comparison. Why is it rhetorically useful?

_____

_____

4. 'no more falsifiable than a wish … no more useful than one' — analyse both. What does 'one' refer to, and what is the effect of the repetition?

_____

_____

PART B — **Sentence transformation**

Rewrite each sentence according to the instruction. Preserve the meaning.

1. Original: "The emissions of the older plants exceed the newer plants."
   Task: repair the illogical comparison.
   → _____

2. Original: "As the sample size grew, the confidence interval narrowed."
   Task: rewrite as a comparative correlative.
   → _____

3. Original: "The revised model is not an improvement; it is a simplification."
   Task: rewrite with 'not so much … as …'
   → _____

4. Original: "The second trial was just as inconclusive as the first."
   Task: rewrite with 'no less … than' and comment on the change in tone.
   → _____

5 Original: “She answered the question better than any other witness answered it.”
Task: reduce by ellipsis, then again with inversion.
→ _____

PART C **Guided essay paragraph**

Write a paragraph of 120–150 words arguing ONE position below. Include at least FOUR distinct structures from Worksheets 1–2; keep the register formal-academic.

Position A: The incomplete comparison should be treated as a form of dishonesty.
Position B: All comparison is partial; demanding a stated baseline is pedantry.

My position: ___ A ___ B

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Synthesis, Data Interpretation & Argumentation

Deploy comparative clauses to interpret evidence and rebut claims.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Interpreting complex data**

Study the table comparing five national health systems. Higher access score = easier to see a doctor.

System	Spend (% GDP)	Life expectancy	Access score	Wait (days)	Satisfaction (/10)
Aldenia	11.2	82.4	71	18	7.4
Beraque	17.8	78.9	54	9	6.1
Castile	9.6	83.1	88	31	8.2
Dunmark	10.8	81.7	79	14	8.0
Estovia	6.2	76.3	42	47	5.3

Write six analytical sentences using the data. Apply the constraints below.

1. [Use 'that of' or 'those of' to compare like with like.]

_____

_____

2. [Use a comparative correlative (the … the …).]

_____

_____

3. [Use 'nothing like as … as'.]

_____

_____

4. [Use 'no + comparative + than' to assert a reproachful equivalence.]

_____

_____

5. [Use a degree modifier with a comparative (considerably, markedly, slightly).]

_____

_____

6. [Acknowledge a limitation using 'not so much … as …' or a hedged comparison.]

_____

_____

PART B — **Adversarial comparison (debate format)**

Write a two-sentence counter-argument that concedes part of each claim but challenges it from another angle. Use formal register and at least one advanced comparative structure per response.

1. Claim: "Beraque spends far more than any other system, so it must deliver the best care."

Hint: compare its life expectancy and satisfaction.

Counter-argument:

_____

2. Claim: “Castile proves that spending less produces better outcomes.”
Hint: consider the waiting times.

Counter-argument:

3. Claim: “Estovia's poor results are no worse than one would expect from its spending.”
Hint: is spending the only variable in play?

Counter-argument:

PART C — Extended writing task

Write a discursive essay introduction (180–220 words) on the proposition below. Use at least FIVE distinct comparative structures from this unit (underline them). Maintain a formal-academic register; present the proposition, acknowledge its complexity, and signal your line of argument.

“A comparison without a stated baseline is not an argument but an advertisement.”

Word count: _____ Structures underlined: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

For teacher use only — C1 Level Worksheets

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Worksheet 1 – Gap Fill

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	exceeds ___ of the southern ones	**that (pro-form: 'the output of')**
2	The ___ the inquiry pressed, the ___ evasive	**more … more (comparative correlative)**
3	___ more qualified than his predecessor	**far / considerably (degree modifier)**
4	not so much an apology ___ an act	**as**
5	the service is ___ better than it was	**no (reproachful equivalence)**
6	more sharply than ___ this one	**has (inversion in the than-clause)**
7	more articles ___ her colleagues did books	**than (subdeletion)**
8	made the shareholders ___ the angrier	**all**

Worksheet 1 – Error Analysis

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	heavier than Spain	**… heavier than that of Spain. — illogical comparison: rainfall must be compared with rainfall**
2	as competent, if not more competent than	**She is as competent as her predecessor, if not more competent. — the first comparison needs its own 'as'; 'than' cannot be stranded**
3	you will became	**… the more fluent you will become. — the base form follows 'will'**
4	than any compound in the series	**… than any other compound in the series. — the subject belongs to the set it is compared with**

Worksheet 2 – Parts B & C

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B1	formal + those of	**Their profits were considerably higher than those of our firm.**
B2	neutral	**Far fewer students applied than last year. / Not nearly as many students applied …**
B3	formal + inversion	**She performed better than did any other candidate.**
B4	no + comparative	**The situation is no better than it was before.**
C1	than am I	**(b) Marked — inversion after 'than' is grammatical but archaic/literary with a pronoun; 'than I am' is unmarked**
C2	no less disappointing than we had feared	**(a) Standard — asserts a grim equivalence**
C3	more books than she wrote articles	**(a) Standard — subdeletion: the compared quantities differ, so the second clause is retained**
C4	more richer … more lonelier	**(c) Error — double comparatives: 'The richer he became, the lonelier he felt.'**

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
C5	She likes him more than I	**(a) Standard, though formal — it means 'more than I like him', a different claim from 'than me'**

Worksheet 3 – Part A (Passage Analysis)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
Q1	Six structures	**'more common, or less examined, than the comparative' (coordinated comparatives, shared than-clause); 'safer than it was' (ellipted than-clause); 'safer than it would have been' (counterfactual than-clause); 'nothing like as comparable as' (emphatic negative); 'The more …, the less …' (comparative correlative); 'no more falsifiable than a wish' / 'no more useful than one' (no + comparative + than)**
Q2	the coordinated comparatives	**'more common' and 'less examined' share a single than-clause ('than the comparative'). The coordination is economical but also rhetorical: frequency and scrutiny are set in inverse relation, so ubiquity itself becomes evidence of neglect.**
Q3	the incomplete comparison	**Because the than-clause is never supplied, no baseline exists against which the claim could be tested. The assertion enjoys the persuasive force of a comparison while incurring none of its evidential obligations — it cannot be refuted because it has not been made.**
Q4	'no more … than' twice	**'One' is a pro-form for 'a wish'. Each 'no more X than' asserts equivalence with reproach: the claim is as untestable as a wish, and as useless. The repetition converts a measurement into a judgement, and the final 'one' closes the sentence on the very word it began by dismissing.**

Worksheet 3 – Part B (Transformations)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	repair	**The emissions of the older plants exceed those of the newer ones.**
2	correlative	**The larger the sample size grew, the narrower the confidence interval became.**
3	not so much … as	**The revised model is not so much an improvement as a simplification.**
4	no less … than	**The second trial was no less inconclusive than the first. — 'just as' merely measures; 'no less' adds disappointment and implies a second failure was not expected**
5	ellipsis, then inversion	**Ellipsis: '… better than any other witness (did).' Inversion: '… better than did any other witness.'**

Worksheets 3–4: Extended & Creative Tasks — Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Structural range	Uses 4–5 distinct comparative structures accurately	0–4
Register	Consistently formal-academic; degree modifiers well chosen	0–3
Argumentation	Clear line of argument; comparisons serve the reasoning	0–3
Accuracy	No illogical comparisons, double comparatives, or stranded 'than'	0–2

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Coherence	Baselines stated; comparisons complete and testable	0–3

Worksheet 4 – Part A (Model sentences)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	that of	**Castile's life expectancy exceeds that of Beraque by more than four years.**
2	correlative	**The more a system spends, the less, apparently, its patients are satisfied.**
3	nothing like as	**Estovia's access score is nothing like as high as Castile's.**
4	no + comparative	**Despite spending nearly twice as much, Beraque is no healthier than Estovia is.**
5	degree modifier	**Dunmark waits considerably less than Castile does for markedly similar satisfaction.**
6	limitation	**The table is not so much a ranking as a snapshot: it says nothing of the demographics against which each system must be judged.**