Unit 9 · Comparison and Contrast

STUDY NOTES

The unit in one line

- **compare**: **-er / more** for two things (*higher, more expensive*), **-est / most** for three or more (*the highest*), **as … as** for equal things
- two charts on smartphone ownership, a poem (*A Bird came down the Walk*); adjectives and adverbs compared; describing a chart and a table; similarities and differences

Getting started

- **Makalu** (8,463 m in the book; newer surveys 8,485 m) is **higher than Dhaulagiri** (8,167 m); Dhaulagiri is **lower than** Makalu
- a pen is **more expensive than** a pencil; a pencil is **cheaper**
- rock is **harder** and **heavier** than cotton; cotton is **softer**
- mountains are **high / low**; **tall / short** for people, trees, buildings
- **song** (*Stronger*, Kelly Clarkson, 2011): what doesn't kill you makes you **stronger**; she stands **taller**, walks **lighter**

Reading I: Smartphone ownership

- **Chart I**, a **line chart**: change **over time** (each year, 2011–2016)
- **Chart II**, a **bar chart**: **comparing groups** (each age group, 2011 and 2016)
- what the text says:
  - ownership **rose steadily**, from about **35%** (2011) to about **77%** (2016): up **42 percentage points**, more than double
  - mostly, **the younger** the people, **the more likely** to own one
  - **16–24**: the **highest** in both years (90% in 2016)
  - **75+**: almost nobody in 2011, **15%** in 2016 (more interested in technology)
- **check the text against the chart:** the text says 45–54 rose most (46% → 84%, 38 points), but **55–64** rose more (9% → 59%, **50 points**), and 65–74 by 45
- chart words: **rose / went up / increased**, **fell / went down / decreased**, **steadily**, **sharply**, **reached**, **about**, **the highest / the lowest**, **overall**
- comparative questions: *Which group was **more likely** to own one in 2016, 25–34 or 55–64?* → 25–34 (88% against 59%)

Reading II: A Bird came down the Walk (a poem)

- by **Emily Dickinson** (1830–1886), American; watched small things closely; dashes, odd capitals, loose rhymes
- **1:** a bird comes down the path, not knowing it is watched; bites an **angleworm** in halves, eats it **raw**
- **2:** drinks **dew** from a blade of **grass**; hops sideways to the wall to **let a beetle pass**
- **3:** quick eyes like **frightened beads**; moves its **velvet** head (as soft as velvet: really feathers)
- a **contrast**: a fierce hunter, then polite and nervous
- **rhymes:** *saw – raw*, *grass – pass*, *abroad – head* (a **half rhyme**)

Key words

illustrate: show; explain with a picture or example.
ownership: owning something.
significant: important; big enough to notice.
steadily: bit by bit, evenly.
represent: stand for; be a symbol of.
break down: split into parts.
raw: uncooked.
dew: drops of water on grass in the morning.

Pronunciation: -er words

- the **-er** is a short, weak /ə/ (the *a* in *about*); the stress is on the **first** part
- *higher* /ˈhaɪə/, *heavier* /ˈheviə/, *bigger* /ˈbɪgə/, *wiser* /ˈwaɪzə/, *taller* /ˈtɔːlə/, *smarter* /ˈsmɑːtə/, *clearer* /ˈklɪərə/
- **younger, longer, stronger** add a hard **/g/** (YUNG-guh); *singer* doesn't (SING-uh)
- British English drops the *r* of -er; American says it; both right

Grammar I: comparing with adjectives

Degree	For	Example
positive	one thing, or two equal	*Nitu is **as old as** Nima.*
comparative + than	two things	*Is Nitu **older than** Nima?*
the + superlative	one of three or more	*the **most powerful** person in your village*

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
one syllable: **-er, -est**	old → **older**	**the oldest**
ends in **e**: **-r, -st**	nice → **nicer**	**the nicest**
one vowel + one consonant: **double**	wet → **wetter**	**the wettest**
consonant + **y** → **i**	funny → **funnier**	**the funniest**
two syllables or more: **more, most**	intelligent → **more intelligent**	**the most intelligent**
irregular	good → **better**, bad → **worse**, far → **farther / further**	**best, worst, farthest**

- superlative clues: *the … **I've ever** had*, *the … **in the world***, *of the year*

- **-er** or **more**, never both
- *elder, eldest* only for family: *my elder sister*
- answers: *better · farther · the most disgusting · luckier · happier · tastier · more beautiful · the most interesting · longer · the most dangerous*

Listening: people and places

	Mother	Father
older	✓ (though dad **looks** older)	
more active (plays sports)		✓
more talkative	✓	
taller		✓

- **Los Angeles** and **San Francisco** are **both** in California
- San Francisco: **smaller**, **colder**, **more expensive**, harder to find a home; still a **better** place to live
- Los Angeles: **bigger**

Speaking

- animals: *A horse is **faster than** a bear. A dolphin is **more intelligent than** a zebra. A snail is **the slowest**. A monkey is **not as heavy as** a bear.*
- the elephant is the largest **land** animal; the largest of all is the **blue whale**
- **as + adjective + as** = equal; **not as ... as** = less:
  - *English is **as interesting as** Nepali.*
  - *A bullet train is **not as fast as** an airplane.* (about 320 against 900 km/h)
  - *The morning is **not as warm as** the afternoon.*

Grammar II: superlatives and adverbs

- superlatives from clues:
  - *froze* → **coldest**
  - *top grades* → **smartest**
  - *couldn't stop laughing* → **funniest**
  - *fell asleep* → **most boring**
  - **the longest** river (the Nile, or the Amazon by some measurements)
  - **the highest** mountain

Adverb	Comparative	Superlative
ends in **-ly**: more, most	carefully → **more carefully**	**the most carefully**
same as the adjective: -er, -est	hard → **harder**, fast → **faster**	**the hardest, the fastest**
early	**earlier**	**the earliest**
irregular	well → **better**, badly → **worse**	**the best, the worst**

- *than* → comparative; *of all, of us all, of them all* → superlative
- three things: *A papaya is **bigger than** an orange. A papaya **isn't as big as** a watermelon. A watermelon is **the biggest** of the three.*

Writing

- **describing a table or chart**:
  1. what it shows
  2. the big picture: the largest group, what rises, what falls
  3. the details, with numbers
  4. a summing-up sentence
- **Nepal's age groups** (2017–2019):
  - **15–64**: the largest, about 63–65%, **rising steadily**
  - **0–14**: second, **falling**, 31.34% → 29.57%
  - **65+**: the smallest, under 6%, **growing slightly**
  - overall: Nepal's population is **slowly growing older** (fewer babies: about 5 a woman in 1990, about 2 in 2022)
- **my friend and I**: ask the same questions of both, note the answers, then write
  - **similarities**: *both, too, also, the same, like, as ... as*
  - **differences**: *but, while, although, however, more ... than, not as ... as*, -er + *than*
- **project:** a bar chart of students per grade: axes, a **scale**, bars of **equal width** and gaps, numbers on top, a title, three comparison sentences
- **extra bit:** a dial telephone and a smartphone: *The smartphone is **smaller and lighter**. Dialing is **slower** on the old phone. The smartphone is **more useful**.*

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ more intelligenter / more happier
✓ **more intelligent** / **happier**

✗ Pokhara is more cleaner than Kathmandu.
✓ Pokhara is **cleaner** than Kathmandu.

✗ She is the most tallest girl in the class.
✓ She is **the tallest** girl in the class.

✗ Rice is as cheap than wheat.
✓ Rice is as cheap **as** wheat.

✗ An elephant is the largest animal.
✓ ... the largest **land** animal.

✗ Ownership rose by 42% (35% → 77%).
✓ It rose by 42 **percentage points**.