

Superlatives

There are two types of superlative: relative and absolute.

Relative: John is the smartest boy in the class.

Absolute: John is very smart.

The relative superlative describes a noun within the context of some larger group.

John is the smartest boy **in the class**.

Mary is the youngest person **in the room**.

Of the three, Moe is the meanest.

The absolute superlative does not describe the noun in the context of a larger group.

John is **very** smart.

The book is **extremely** expensive.

The food is **indescribably** tasty.

In English, the relative superlative is formed by using the word "most" or the ending "-est."

John is the most intelligent boy in the class.

Mary is the smartest girl in the class.

In Spanish, the relative superlative construction is similar to the comparative.

definite article + noun + más (menos) + adjective + de

Here are some superlative examples.

Juan es el chico más inteligente de la clase..... John is the smartest boy in the class.

Bill Gates es el hombre más rico de los EEUU..... Bill Gates is the richest man in the U.S.

Just like in English, the noun can be omitted. All of the following are correct.

María es la chica más delgada de la clase Mary is the thinnest girl in the class.

María es la más delgada de la clase Mary is the thinnest in the class.

The absolute superlative for adjectives has three possible forms.

muy + adjective

sumamente + adjective

adjective + ísimo (-a, -os, -as)

The following translations are somewhat arbitrary. Each superlative statement is a little stronger than the one that precedes it.

muy guapo very handsome

sumamente guapo extremely handsome

guapísimo indescribably handsome