60. Using comparatives

1   Definition
The **comparative** is the form of an adjective or adverb that indicates that the quality being described is possessed to a greater extent. For example in the sentence *He is taller than I am*, the word *taller* is a comparative adjective; and in the sentence *He did better than I did*, the word *better* is a comparative adverb.

2   Formation
2.1   Adjectives
Comparative adjectives are formed in French using *plus*, *moins* or *aussi*, with *que* acting as link word (equivalent of *than* in English).

> Il est **plus fort** que moi en math
> *He is better than me in maths*

Note the irregular forms:		
standard form		**comparative**
bon - *good*	⇒	meilleur - *better*
mauvais - *bad*	⇒	pire / plus mauvais - *worse*

2.2   Adverbs
As with adjectives, comparative adverbs are formed using *plus*, *moins* or *aussi*, with *que* acting as link word (equivalent of *than* in English):

> Il a réagi **plus calmement** que moi
> *He reacted more calmly than I did*

Note the irregular forms:		
standard form		**comparative**
bien - *well*	⇒	mieux - *better*
beaucoup - *many / a lot*	⇒	plus - *more*
peu - *little*	⇒	moins - *less*

3   Other points
3.1   Use of neutral pronoun *le*
Where *plus*, *moins* or *aussi* are followed by *que* plus a verb, the verb is often preceded by the neutral pronoun *le*.

> Cet étudiant est plus doué que je ne **l'**ai d'abord cru
> *This student is more gifted than I first thought*

3.2   Use of "expletive" *ne*
When using *plus ... que* or *moins ... que* followed by a verb, an "expletive" *ne* can optionally be added before the verb without any negative meaning:

> La situation est **plus** grave **que** je (**ne**) le croyais
> *The situation is more serious than I thought*
> Il a réagi **plus calmement** que je (**ne**) le craignais
> *He reacted more calmly than I expected*

3.3 Double comparisons

While English uses *the* before the comparative word in double comparisons, French doesn't:

Plus je travaille, **plus** je comprends

***The more** I work, **the more** I understand*