LATIN GRAMMAR
Wheelock 27: Irregular Comparison of Adjs

In this chapter we are not learning any new syntax for adjectives; what we learned in Ch. 26 still applies here. The focus in Ch. 27 is on alternate ways to *form* certain comparative and superlative adjectives.

1. The Superlatives of <u>Some</u> Adjectives Ending in *-lis*
1.1. There are many adjectives in Latin that end with **–lis** in the positive form and have regular comparatives and superlatives. For ex.:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
fidēlis, –e, (*faithful*)	fidēlior, –ius (*more faithful*)	fidēlissimus, –a, –um (*most faithful*)

1.2. However, 6 **–lis** adjectives form their superlatives differently: **–limus, –lima, –limum** are added to the base (instead of **–issimus, –a, –um**).

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
facilis, –e, (*easy*)	facilior, –ius (*easier*)	facil-limus, –a, –um (*easiest*)
similis, –e, (*like*)	similior, –ius (*more like*)	simillimus, –a, –um (*most like*)

The other 4 **–lis** adjectives are as follows: **difficilis** (*difficult*), **dissimilis** (*dissimilar*), **gracilis** (*slender, thin*), **humilis** (*low, humble*).

2. The Comparatives and Superlatives of Adjectives Ending in *-er*

2.1. **Comparatives are Normal**: If the masc lexical form of the adj ends in **–er** (any declension), you form the comparative normally: BASE/STEM of the positive adj. + -**ior** (m/f), **–ius** (n); **–iōris** gen. Don't forget that sometimes the **e** of **–er** is part of the stem, and sometimes it has been added for the masc. form (you'll know by looking at the fem/neut forms; see below).

Decl/ –e– in Stem?	Positive	Comparative
2-1-2/yes	līber, –bera, –berum (*free*)	līberior, –ius (*freer*)
2-1-2/no	pulcher, –chra, –chrum (*beautiful*)	pulchrior, –ius (*more beautiful*)
3-3-3/no	ācer, ācris, ācre (*keen*)	ācrior, ācrius (*keener*)

2.2. **Superlatives are Irregular in 2 ways:** (1) Use the masc form ending in **–er** (NOT the base/stem), and (2) then add **–rimus, –a, –um.**

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
līber, –bera, –berum	līberior	līber-rimus, –a, –um (*freest*)
pulcher, –chra, –chrum	pulchrior	pulcher-rimus, –a, –um (*most beautiful*)
ācer, ācris, ācre	ācrior	ācer-rimus, –a, –um (*keenest*)

3. Especially Irregular Comparative and Superlative Adjs

These are common (so you'll get used to them!) but initially hard to recognize because many of these types of adjs have suppletive forms (suppletion involves using a different stem to create a word's paradigm, like 'go, went' for verbs and 'good, better, best' for adjs). You should memorize the basic forms below.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
bonus, –a, –um (*good*)	melior, –ius (*better*)	optimus, –a, –um (*best*)
magnus, –a, –um (*great*)	maior, –ius (*greater*)	maximus, –a, –um (*greatest*)
malus, –a, –um (*bad*)	peior, –ius (*worse*)	pessimus, –a, –um (*worst*)
multus, –a, –um (*much*)	———, plūs (*more*)	plūrimus, –a, –um (*most*)
parvus, –a, –um (*small*)	minor, minus (*smaller*)	minimus, –a, –um (*smallest*)
(prae, prō) (*in front of, before*)	prior, –ius (*former*)	primus, –a, –um (*first*)
superus, –a, –um (*that above*)	superior, –ius (*higher*)	summus, –a, –um (*highest, furthest*) suprēmus, –a, –um (*highest, last*)

Note: technically prae, prō are not positive adjs, but they are related to the comparative and superlative forms in the row above.

4. Declension of *Plūs*

4.1. When the comparative **plūs** is singular, it occurs only in the neuter form (not m/f) and functions substantivally as a noun (with an genitive of the whole following): **plūs pecūniae** = more [of] money.

4.2. When the comparative **plūs** is plural, it functions as a normal adjective (agreeing in case/gen/num with the noun if it's attributive). However, its form is unusual, as a mixture of

i-stem (gen pl only) and consonant-stems (everywhere else, meaning Nom/Acc neut pl does not have –ia).

	SING. M/F	SING. N	PL. M/F	PL. N
NOM	——	plūs	plūrēs	plūra
GEN	——	plūris	plūrium	plūrium
DAT	——	——	plūribus	plūribus
ACC	——	plūs	plūrēs	plūra
ABL	——	plūre	plūribus	plūribus