Comparing Adjectives in Year 2: Spot the Pattern with -er and -est

Key points

- Comparing adjectives are words that help describe which thing is bigger, prettier, faster—they let us say one thing has more of a quality than another.
- When we compare two things, we usually add -er to an adjective (tall becomes taller); when we compare more than two, we add -est (tall becomes tallest).
- The tricky part: sometimes you need to double the last letter before adding -er or -est, like big becoming bigger or biggest.
- Sometimes you swap the letter y for i before adding the suffix—happy becomes happier or happiest.
- Sometimes there's a silent e at the end that drops away before you add the suffix, like large becoming larger or largest.
- These patterns are part of the Year 2 spelling curriculum, and noticing them helps children write more interesting descriptions.

Things to try at home

- Play a spotting game around the house: find two similar items and compare them out loud using -er words ("This cushion is softer than that one"), then three items using -est ("This is the softest cushion of all").
- During snack time or meals, talk naturally about food using comparing words: "These grapes are sweeter than those ones" or "This is the crunchiest apple."
- Read favourite picture books together and pause to ask, "Which character is braver?" or "Can you find someone taller?" to help your child spot comparisons in real stories.
- Keep a simple list on the fridge of -er and -est words your child notices or uses—not to test them, just to celebrate the patterns they're discovering.
- When your child uses a comparing word naturally in chat, pause and say, "I heard you say 'bigger'—that's how we compare!" Light, no pressure.

Find out more

- Chat with your child's teacher—they can share examples of the words and patterns their class is working on right now.
- Department for Education: Key Stage 1 English curriculum (gov.uk), which lists word-formation expectations.
- Your child's school may have guidance for parents on phonics and spelling resources they recommend.