

Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today we're going to be making comparisons, and looking at some tricky prepositions of time.

But first, let's listen to an academic talking about the Australian economy and the Australian dollar. See if you can hear him use some comparative adjectives.

It couldn't have come at a worse time, in the sense that with business investment weakening, and with the housing market, at least in activity terms, having turned, that's where the timing is unfortunate for us.

The stronger the value of the Australian dollar and the longer it stays strong, the weaker our economic activity will be next year.

I think growth in 2004 will be comparatively weak. My own prediction is that throughout the year growth will be around about 2 per cent.

Being around the Reserve Bank's board table at this time I think would not be a comfortable place to be. The bank is probably in a bigger dilemma over what to do with interest rates with monetary policy than at any time that I can remember.

Dr Ian Harper is discussing the value of the Australian dollar, and the growth of the Australian economy, including interest rates.

He describes all these factors by comparing information. Listen to him talk about the value of the dollar.

The stronger the value of the Australian dollar and the longer it stays strong, the weaker our economic activity will be next year.

The stronger the value of the dollar, and the longer it stays strong, the weaker our economic activity.

The adjectives used in the clip are strong, weak and long.

The Australian dollar is strong.
It is stronger than it used to be.
It has been strong for a long time.
It is making economic activity weak.
The longer it stays strong, the weaker the economic activity.

Let's look at comparative adjectives a bit more closely.

With single syllable words, we add -er':

strong	stronger
long	longer
weak	weaker
big	bigger

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long	longer
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big	bigger

But not all adjectives follow this simple pattern. Some are irregular.

It couldn't have come at a worse time.

It couldn't have come at a worse time.

Worse.

Worse comes from the adjective bad:

bad, worse.

Irregular adjectives are often best learnt with the superlative or 'most' form:

bad, worse, worst

and

good, better, best.

When comparing, there are 2 ways to do it.

To say 2 things are the same, we use as _____ as.

Growth is as slow as it was last year.

When saying one thing is more than the other, we use the comparative form. We usually use the word 'than' when comparing.

Growth is *slower than* last year.

The superlative form, the 'most' or '-est' form, is used with the word 'the' -

Growth is the *slowest* it's ever been.

Notice that we usually use 'more' and 'most' with adjectives that have more than 2 syllables.

So we have:

slow, slower, slowest,

but

beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful.

OK, now we're going to look at some prepositions of time.

Listen for one in this clip...

I think growth in 2004 will be comparatively weak.

He says 'in 2004'. 'In' is a preposition of time.

The prepositions of time are: at, on and in.

Let's look at how they're all used.

At is used for times. For example:

The lecture is *at* 7 o'clock.

'On' is used for days and dates:

The lecture is *on* Thursday.

The lecture is *on* the 27th of October.

'In' is for periods of time, and for months, years and seasons:

The lecture is *in* the morning, *in* June, *in* 2004, *in* winter.

So we'd say:

The lecture is *at* 7 o'clock, *in* the morning, *on* Thursday, *on* the 27th October, *in* 2004.

Notice that we say:
in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening,
but we say:
at night.

Now let's test you on these prepositions

I saw her _ _ _ _ Tuesday, _ _ _ _ 3 o'clock _ _ _ _ the afternoon.

We've got the choice of in, at, or on.

I saw her on Tuesday, at 3 o'clock, in the afternoon.

Here's another one...

They went shopping _ _ _ _ night _ _ _ _ Friday last week. Shops are open late
_ _ _ _ summer.

They went shopping at night, on Friday last week. Shops are open late in summer.

OK, now let's listen to the whole clip again. See if you can hear how much he thinks the Australian economy will grow...

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I think growth in 2004 will be comparatively weak.

My own prediction is that throughout the year growth will be around about 2 per cent.

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His prediction is for growth to be about 2 percent.

We write 2 percent like this: 2%

Percent comes from the Latin phrase per centum, by the hundred or in every hundred.

It's used to express proportions out of a hundred, including rates of interest.

Percent is always used with a number.

So we say:

Twenty percent of students attended the lecture.

That means: 20 out of every hundred students attended.

Or 'She got 90 percent in the test.' means she got 90 out of every hundred questions right.

Or: Growth will be around 2 per cent.

We also have the word percentage. Percentage is a noun. It means the portion or amount of something.

So we say:

What was the percentage of students who attended the lecture?
20 percent of students attended the lecture.

She got 90% in her test.
That is a high percentage.

OK. Now let's test you using percent or percentage.

The _ _ _ _ _ of high school students that go to university is about twenty _ _ _ _ _.

The percentage of high school students that go to university is about twenty percent.

The bank has raised the interest rate by two _ _ _ _ _.

The bank has raised the interest rate by two percent.

The _ _ _ _ _ of married women in the workforce rose from 50 to 60 _ _ _ _ _.

The percentage of married women in the workforce rose from 50 to 60 percent.

If his answers are all correct, he'll get 100 _ _ _ _ _ on the test.

If his answers are all correct, he'll get 100 percent on the test.

So you should notice that the signal for using percent is that there's always a number first. And of course, you can always use the percent sign [%] instead of writing out the words.

And that's all we've got time for today.

I'll see you next time on Study English!