

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

**Comparative adjectives** are used to compare two people, places, things, or groups. Add *-er* to most short adjectives to make their comparative forms. Use *more* with longer adjectives.

**Superlative adjectives** are used to compare three or more people, places, things, or groups. Add *-est* to most short adjectives to make their superlative forms. Use *most* with longer adjectives.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
great	greater	greatest
enormous	more enormous	most enormous

- Adjectives such as *good* and *bad* have irregular comparative and superlative forms: *good, better, best; bad, worse, worst*.
- Never use *more* or *most* with *-er* and *-est*.  
**No:** more sillier, most ancientest  
**Yes:** sillier, most ancient

**Directions** Complete the table. Add *-er*, *-est*, *more*, or *most* as needed.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
primitive	1. _____	2. _____
great	3. _____	4. _____
calm	5. _____	6. _____
wet	7. _____	8. _____
frightening	9. _____	10. _____
exciting	11. _____	12. _____

**Directions** Write the correct forms of the adjectives in ( ) to complete the sentences.

- Is Ray Bradbury \_\_\_\_\_ (famous) than Jules Verne was?
- Readers might think Jules Verne was the \_\_\_\_\_ (lucky) science fiction writer of all.
- Did Verne write \_\_\_\_\_ (good) fiction than Lewis Carroll?
- His \_\_\_\_\_ (important) legacy of all was his influence on twentieth-century scientists, inventors, and explorers.



**Home Activity** Your child learned about comparative and superlative adjectives. Ask your child to use these forms to expand these sentences: *Science fiction is fascinating. Reading is fun. \_\_\_\_\_ is a good book.*

# Directions

Read this passage. Then answer questions 1 through 5.



## Talking Birds

by M.G. Merfeld

*“Polly wanna cracker!”*

You may have heard a bird on television, in a movie, or in real life say these words. Does the bird really want to eat a cracker? The answer is yes . . . and no. Polly probably will eat a cracker, but what she really wants is some attention.

Certain kinds of birds are excellent talkers. They like to copy the sounds they hear around them. They also like the attention that people give them when they talk.

### Best Talking Birds

Many wild birds have the ability to mimic, or copy, sounds. Crows, jays, and starlings all can do it. But these birds rarely make good pets because they need lots of room, and they are not often comfortable around people.

Some pet birds, such as parrots, can be great talkers. Among the large parrots, the best talkers are African greys and Amazons. The most popular smaller parrots are the budgies, otherwise known as parakeets.

One should remember that just because a certain kind of bird *can* talk does not mean it *will* talk. Each bird has a different personality. Some birds never learn to talk. Some may learn only a few words or sounds. Others seem to learn a large vocabulary easily, soaking up new words like some sort of feathered sponge.

Although each bird is different, younger birds are more likely to learn to talk than older birds. Also, male birds are usually better talkers than females. However, if you teach a bird to whistle before it learns to talk, it may never learn to talk. This might be because whistling is easier for the bird.

### Teaching Your Bird to Talk

Pet birds often learn to talk just as a child does. They babble first, and then speak more clearly later. The easiest words for a bird to learn are short words with a strong consonant sound, such as “cracker” or “pretty bird.”

It is important to repeat the word or phrase often when you are teaching a bird to talk. One way is to buy a tape that has words and phrases repeated on it and play the tape for your bird when you leave the house. You can also make a tape of your own to play when you are not around.

Some birds learn by “association,” which means they connect a word with something they see or hear. For example, many birds will say “hello” when they hear a telephone ring. Some may say “goodbye” when they hear keys jingle. One bird owner always said “Good morning” when she removed the sheet covering her bird’s cage every morning. Soon the bird began saying “Good morning” as soon as she began to remove the cover—even before the owner had said a word!

### Warning: Bird Listening

If you are training your bird to talk, be careful what your bird hears. Birds can copy more than just words. They imitate the sounds they hear, too. Those sounds could be annoying noises like a baby crying, the ringing of a telephone, or the clatter of a computer printer. One bird owner left his bird in front of a television all day. The TV was on a sports channel. After several football games, the pet was squawking “charge,” “defense,” and other football cheers.

Even if you’re a sports fan, squawks of “defense” probably will not be as comforting as hearing your feathered friend say “I love you” as you enter the room.

- 1** According to the passage, a bird is **more likely** to learn a word if
- A** it listens to another bird
  - B** it learns how to whistle first
  - C** it hears the word many times
  - D** it knows what the word means

- 2** According to the passage, which of these birds will **most likely** learn to talk?
- A** an old male bird
  - B** a young male bird
  - C** an old female bird
  - D** a young female bird

**Go On**

**3**

What type of information is **mainly** given in the section under the heading “Warning: Bird Listening”?

- A** how birds enjoy attention
- B** how birds tend to copy sounds
- C** how wild birds make good pets
- D** how to choose a bird that will talk

**4**

Read this sentence from the passage.

**Those sounds could be annoying noises like a baby crying, the ringing of a telephone, or the clatter of a computer printer.**

In this sentence, “annoying” means that the noises

- A** bother people
- B** confuse people
- C** sound like birds
- D** sound like music

**5**

If a bird says “hello” as soon as it hears a telephone ring, this is an example of

- A** imitating sounds
- B** repeating short words
- C** soaking up new words
- D** learning by association

# Directions

Read “I’ve Got Fire!” Then answer questions 6 through 10.

## “I’ve Got Fire!”

by Gary Paulsen

In Gary Paulsen’s book *Hatchet*, a 13-year-old boy named Brian crash-lands a plane in a forest in the Canadian mountains. In this excerpt, Brian tries to make a fire with a hatchet, a rock, and thin shreds of bark.

What makes fire? He thought back to school. To all those science classes. Had he ever learned what made a fire? Did a teacher ever stand up there and say, “This is what makes a fire . . .”

He shook his head, tried to focus his thoughts. What did it take? You have to have fuel, he thought—and he had that. The bark was fuel. Oxygen—there had to be air.

He needed to add air. He had to fan on it, blow on it.

He made the nest ready again, held the hatchet backward, tensed, and struck four quick blows. Sparks came down and he leaned forward as fast as he could and blew.

Too hard. There was a bright, almost intense glow, then it was gone. He had blown it out.

Another set of strikes, more sparks. He leaned and blew, but gently this time, holding back and aiming the stream of air from his mouth to hit the brightest spot. Five or six sparks had fallen in a tight mass of bark hair and Brian centered his efforts there.

The sparks grew with his gentle breath. The red glow moved from the sparks themselves into the bark, moved and grew and became worms, glowing red worms that crawled up the bark hairs and caught other threads of bark and grew until there was a pocket of red as big as a quarter, a glowing red coal of heat.



**Go On**

And when he ran out of breath and paused to inhale, the red ball suddenly burst into flame.

“Fire!” He yelled. “I’ve got fire! I’ve got it, I’ve got it, I’ve got it . . .”

But the flames were thick and oily and burning fast, consuming the ball of bark as fast as if it were gasoline. He had to feed the flames, keep them going. Working as fast as he could he carefully placed the dried grass and wood pieces he had tried at first on top of the bark and was gratified to see them take.

But they would go fast. He needed more, and more. He could not let the flames go out.

He ran from the shelter to the pines and started breaking off the low, dead small limbs. These he threw in the shelter, went back for more, threw those in, and squatted to break and feed the hungry flames. When the small wood was going well he went out and found larger

wood and did not relax until that was going. Then he leaned back against the wood brace of his door opening and smiled.

I have a friend, he thought—I have a friend now. A hungry friend, but a good one. I have a friend named fire.

“Hello, fire . . .”

The curve of the rock back made an almost perfect drawing flue that carried the smoke up through the cracks of the roof but held the heat. If he kept the fire small it would be perfect and would keep anything like the porcupine from coming through the door again.

flue = passage through which smoke can escape

A friend and a guard, he thought.

So much from a little spark. A friend and a guard from a tiny spark.

- 6** What is the passage **mainly** about?
- A** a boy’s memories of his science class
  - B** a boy’s successful attempt to start a fire
  - C** the things that are needed to build a fire
  - D** the best way to build a shelter in the woods

- 7** Where does this passage take place?
- A** at a park
  - B** at a school
  - C** in the backyard
  - D** in the wilderness

**8** “I’ve Got Fire!” is most like

- A** a folktale
- B** a news article
- C** a fictional story
- D** an autobiography

**9** Brian yells “Fire!” because

- A** he is angry that he cannot light a fire
- B** he is worried that the fire will go out soon
- C** he is excited that the sparks produced flames
- D** he is concerned that the flames are too big to control

**10** Read this sentence from the passage.

**These he threw in the shelter, went back for more, threw those in, and squatted to break and feed the hungry flames.**

In this context, to “feed the hungry flames” means

- A** to blow onto the fire to make it burn hotter
- B** to add more wood to keep the fire burning
- C** to prepare some food to roast over the fire
- D** to spread the burning wood so the fire cools

***Go On***