

Compare two things before buying

HSK 2

Original teaching practice. Read one pattern, cover its model and try the questions before checking the separate answer section. Examples adapted from Chinese Grammar Wiki (AllSet Learning, CC BY-NC-SA) retain the course-reference provenance.

Describe a difference and ask about the preferred item.

Before you start: Recall prices and familiar adjectives such as 贵, expensive, and 便宜, inexpensive. A comparison describes a difference; a preference belongs to a particular person.

■ Build the meaning

A 比 B + adjective compares A with B: 这个比那个贵. Do not add 很 immediately after 比 in this basic pattern.

Use 更 to say even more: 这个更便宜. A comparison describes the two things; which one is better depends on what you need.

A 比 B + adjective



no 很 inside a 比 sentence: 这个比那个贵 (not 很贵)

■ Work through a decision

A red cup costs eighteen yuan and a blue cup twelve. 红色的比蓝色的贵 follows because eighteen exceeds twelve. 蓝色的比红色的便宜 describes the same price relation from the other side. Neither sentence tells you which colour a customer likes or whether either cup is affordable for them.

Compare: 更喜欢红色 says someone prefers red; 红色的更贵 says red is more expensive in the comparison context. Cost and preference are different claims. In the basic A 比 B 贵 pattern, do not insert 很 immediately after 比 to imitate very in English.

■ Useful words in context

- 比 bǐ – than, comparison. 这个比那个贵。
- 贵 guì – expensive. 这个很贵。
- 便宜 piányi – cheap / inexpensive. 那个更便宜。
- 颜色 yánsè – colour. 你喜欢什么颜色?
- 但是 dànshì – but. 便宜, 但是太小。

■ Listen before reading the script

Ask a partner to read the listening script from the answer section while you keep it covered. Then attempt the listening question. If you work alone without audio, use the script for reading practice; it is not a listening test.

■ Read a different account

红色的杯子二十块钱, 蓝色的杯子十五块钱。红色的比蓝色的贵, 但是林安更喜欢红色。

Try the reading question before checking the English meaning in the answer section.

■ Speak with a partner

Compare two fictional cups by price. Ask which colour a partner prefers.

Check the distinction: A 比 B 贵 means A costs more than B. Reversing A and B reverses the comparison.

Learn step by step · Practise and review.

Practice without the models

Choose a pattern, cover its teaching examples, and attempt its questions. Use the labels to find feedback in the separate key.

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0201.1 Listening. Which is cheaper in the recording?

- A. That cup
- B. They cost the same
- C. This cup

0201.2 Reading. Why might Lin An still choose the red cup?

- A. She prefers its colour
- B. The text says blue is broken
- C. It is cheaper

0201.3 Complete “This is more expensive than that”: 这个 那个贵。

0201.4 Match each word with its meaning in this unit.

- 1. 比
- 1. 贵
- 1. 便宜
- 1. 颜色
- 1. 但是
- A. but
- B. colour
- C. cheap / inexpensive
- D. than, comparison
- E. expensive

0201.5 Write a comparison and then a preference.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

0201.6 红色的比蓝色的贵。红色 means red, 蓝色 blue and 贵 expensive. Which cup costs more?

- A. They must cost the same
- B. The blue cup
- C. The red cup

0201.7 A red notebook costs thirty yuan and a blue notebook twenty. First identify the higher price. Which sentence preserves the relation? 贵 means expensive and 便宜 inexpensive.

- A. 红色的比蓝色的便宜。
- B. 红色的比蓝色的贵。
- C. 蓝色的比红色的贵。

0201.8 Read: 大杯子二十块钱, 小杯子十五块钱。林安更喜欢小杯子。杯子 means cup. Which account preserves cost and preference?

- A. The small cup costs less; Lin An prefers the small cup.
- B. The small cup costs more; Lin An prefers the small cup.
- C. The small cup costs less; Lin An prefers the large cup.

0201.9 Use Mandarin for the new sentences or dialogue. You may explain your reasoning in English. Invent two items with different prices. Write one 比 comparison and a fictional customer's preference. Ask which item costs more and which the customer prefers. Give a possible preference that does not simply follow the price. Speak the questions and replies or write both roles.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

A fresh situation

R1. Interpret and repair. A seller offers a large bag for eighty yuan and a small bag for fifty. A learner says 小的比大的贵. Repair the comparison.

R2. Use it yourself. Choose one bag and justify the choice using price and one stated drawback.

Write your responses before opening the key. Compare meaning as well as form; a different valid answer need not copy the model.

Answers and explanations

Check after your attempt. For open tasks, compare the message and the stated criteria, then revise one detail.

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0201.1 C. This cup

十块 is less than 十五块, so 这个 is cheaper.

0201.2 A. She prefers its colour

更喜欢红色 states a preference despite the higher price.

0201.3 比

比 introduces the comparison standard.

0201.4 1-D: 比 = than, comparison; 2-E: 贵 = expensive; 3-C: 便宜 = cheap / inexpensive; 4-B: 颜色 = colour; 5-A: 但是 = but

Use the example sentences to check each word's meaning in context.

0201.5 One possible response: 红色的比蓝色的贵, 但是我更喜欢红色。

Check meaning and form:

- Make the comparison direction clear.
- Give a preference separately.
- Use 但是 only where it marks a contrast.

Compare the meaning and structure with the checklist. Your own response may differ from the model.

0201.6 C. The red cup

The item before 比 is described as more expensive than the comparison item after 比. Reversing them reverses the claim; the sentence does not establish anyone's preference.

0201.7 B. 红色的比蓝色的贵。

Thirty exceeds twenty, so the red notebook is more expensive. The other options reverse the price relation. Check both the order of the items and the adjective.

0201.8 A. The small cup costs less; Lin An prefers the small cup.

The small cup costs fifteen versus twenty for the large one, so it costs less. 更喜欢小杯子 names Lin An's preference for the small cup. The other choices change either the price relation or the preferred item; her reason is not stated.

0201.9 One possible response: Possible account: 红色的杯子二十块钱, 蓝色的十五块钱。红色的比蓝色的贵, 但是我更喜欢红色。The red cup costs more but the speaker prefers it. The preference may differ for another person; the account does not state why.

How to revise: If your adjective contradicts the prices, compare the numbers again and reverse either the item order or the adjective as needed. If you inferred preference from price, add an explicit preference statement instead.

Check meaning and form:

- Keep both prices and the comparison consistent.
- Put the compared items in the intended order around 比.
- Name whose preference is being described.
- Avoid inventing a reason or a rule for all customers.
- Write or speak the requested sentences, questions or dialogue in Mandarin; optional English reasoning does not replace them.

If your adjective contradicts the prices, compare the numbers again and reverse either the item order or the adjective as needed. If you inferred preference from price, add an explicit preference statement instead.

■ Listening script and meaning

这个杯子十块钱，那个十五块钱。这个比那个便宜。

This cup costs ten yuan and that one fifteen. This one is cheaper.

■ Reading meaning

The red cup costs twenty yuan and the blue one fifteen. Red is more expensive, but Lin An prefers red.

■ Speaking model

A: 红色的比蓝色的贵。你喜欢什么颜色? B: 我喜欢蓝色。

Compare the intended message first. Ask a listener to comment on intelligibility and pronunciation; matching the written model does not establish speaking accuracy.

■ Fresh-situation answers

R1. 小的比大的便宜 or 大的比小的贵。Fifty is less than eighty; the choice of subject changes the direction of the comparison.

R2. One possible response. 我要小的。小的比大的便宜，但是放不下我的书。It is cheaper, but cannot hold my books. A choice may still need reconsidering; a low price does not remove the drawback.

Recall later. Later, reverse the compared objects and check that the adjective still fits the numbers.