

Comparison with *as...as*

as big as... as well as... as many as you can... just as good as... nearly as many as... as soon as possible...
as long as... not as strong as... not nearly as fast as... not quite as tall as... nowhere near as expensive as...

As...as shows that things are equal

Sally is 1 metre 65 cm tall. Her mother is also 1 metre 65 cm tall.



Sally is **as tall as** her mother.

As...as is used with adjectives, adverbs and quantity expressions

Adjectives: It's **as good as** yours.

Adverbs: I'll come **as quickly as** I can.

Quantity expressions: We ate **as much as** we could.

As...as can be followed by nouns, pronouns and clauses

He was as quiet as **a mouse**. (noun)

I can sing as well as **you**. (pronoun)

I brought as many as **I could carry**. (clause)

Just, quite and every bit give extra emphasis

The old phone is **just** as good as the new one.
(The new one is no better.)

I work **just** as hard as you do.
(Don't try and say you work harder than me!)

Her new novel is **every bit** as exciting as the first one.
(If you thought the first one was exciting, you won't be disappointed.)

Nearly and almost show small differences

She's **nearly/almost** as tall as her mother.
(= Her mum is a little taller than she is.)

My son earns **nearly/almost** as much as I do.
(= I earn a little more than my son.)

I can run **nearly/almost** as fast as my brother.
(= My brother can run a little faster than me.)



Use twice as many etc. to compare unequal numbers

It costs **twice as much as** the old one.
The old one was three dollars and this one is six dollars.

There are only **half as many students as** there were last year.
There were 40 students last year but only 20 this year

It takes **twice as long by car as** it does by train.
It takes an hour by train and two hours by car.

As...as with can / possible means the maximum possible

It's **as good as you can get**. (the best possible)
Let me know **as soon as possible**. (at the earliest possible time)
Do **as much as you can**. (the most possible)
I'll be **as quick as I can**. (in the quickest possible time)
Things are **as bad as they can be**. (very, very bad)

As...as or the same?

Why not say Sally and her mother are **the same height**?

We use *as...as* when we want to **emphasize** one thing is **not less** than another thing.

Sally is a teenager. She has recently reached the same height as her mother. So we want to emphasize that she is **no longer shorter than her mother** - she has grown.

Imagine a friend criticizes your English. She says: **Your English is terrible!** You might think that her English is no better than yours, so you could reply: **My English is as good as yours!**

(You wouldn't say: *Our English is the same* as it doesn't have the same emphasis.)

Don't avoid as...as!

Students often avoid using *as...as*. Here are some reasons why:

It's **more complicated** than other structures such as *the same, a bit bigger, a little less* etc.

It's **difficult to hear** because the word **as** is **unstressed** so it becomes weak - the **schwa sound**.

It is as good as yours sounds like this:

itsuz gooduz yours

Also, the word **as** has **many other uses** and it can be difficult to know which.

Why do you need as...as?

It adds meaning. As you can see from the examples, it often gives an emphasis that would be lost with other structures.

It's very common. Native speakers use it a lot so if you can't recognize it, you may misunderstand what people are saying.

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As...as is used in some **common idiomatic expressions**

As long as (provided /providing that)

You can borrow the car **as long as** you bring it back before five.

As far as I know / I can tell / I can remember (fairly sure)

As far as I know, it's about 100 km from here.

As...as is used in **common similes**

A **simile** is an expression where **one thing is compared to another to give emphasis**. Many of these are common fixed expressions such as **(as) brave as a lion**. **Note** the first **as** can be omitted.

He is **as brave as a lion**. - He is extremely brave.

as bald as a coot

completely bald

By the time he was thirty, he was bald as a coot.

as black as pitch / night

very dark

There were no stars and it was as black as pitch outside.

as deaf as a post

unable to hear well

You'll have to shout - he's deaf as a post.

as drunk as a lord

very drunk

He was singing at the top of his voice, clearly as drunk as a lord.

as flat as a pancake

completely flat (land)

The countryside was as flat as a pancake.

as free as a bird

free to do what you want

He walked out of court as free as a bird.

as fresh as a daisy

refreshed; full of energy

After a short nap I felt as fresh as a daisy.

as good as gold

well-behaved

The children were as good as gold all day.

as good as new

in very good condition, especially after repairs etc.

The car is as good as new now it's been repaired.

as happy as a lark

very happy

He was playing in the sand as happy as a lark.

as hard as nails

physically strong, violent, or unkind and insensitive

The leader of the gang was as hard as nails and everyone was afraid of him.

as light as a feather

light in weight

His racing bike was light as a feather.

as mad as a hatter

very silly, strange or unreasonable. (Usually humorous and not used for someone who is mentally ill.)

He's as mad as a hatter so I wouldn't take too much notice of him.

as nutty as a fruitcake

See **mad as a hatter**

as old as the hills

very old - (so old you do not know how old)

The legend is as old as the hills.

as red as a beetroot

having a red face, usually because you are embarrassed

He went as red as a beetroot when he saw her.

as white as a sheet

having a pale face because you are afraid or ill

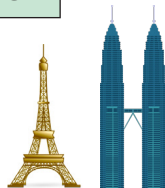
She went as white as a sheet when she heard the news.

Comparison with *not as...as*

as big as... as well as... as many as you can... just as good as... nearly as many as... as soon as possible...
as long as... not as strong as... not nearly as fast as... not quite as tall as... nowhere near as expensive as...

Not as...as shows one thing *is less than* another

The **Eiffel Tower** is **324** metres tall.
The **Petronas Towers** are **452** metres tall.



The Eiffel Tower **isn't as tall as** the Petronas Towers.

Not as...as is used with **adjectives, adverbs** and **quantity expressions**

Adjectives: Her new flat isn't **as big as** the old one.
Adverbs: It doesn't work **as well as** we'd hoped.
Quantity expressions: My ticket didn't cost **as much as** yours.

Not such...as is used with **noun phrases**

The journey doesn't take **such a long time** as it used to.
I don't have **such an interesting job** as Julia.

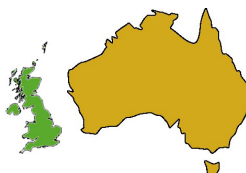
Not as...as can be followed by **nouns, pronouns** and **clauses**

London isn't as big as **Tokyo**. (noun)
Mine isn't as good as **yours**. (pronoun)
He didn't play as well as **he did last week**. (clause)

Not nearly as and **nowhere near as** show a big difference

UK: 242,595 sq km; Australia: 7,692,024 sq km

The UK **isn't nearly as big as** Australia.
The UK **is nowhere near as big as** Australia.



Bus fare = \$20; air fare = \$110

It **isn't nearly as much** by bus.
It's **nowhere near as much** by bus.
(It's **far cheaper** by bus.)

Not quite as shows a small difference

UK: 242,595 sq km; Italy: 301,230 sq km

The UK **isn't quite as big as** Italy.
(The UK **is nearly as big as** Italy.)



Visitors this year: 551; visitors last year: 597

There **weren't quite as many visitors as** last year.

Not so...as and **not as...as** have the same meaning

It's not **as good as** yours.
It's not **so good as** yours.

There's no difference in meaning.

Note: We don't use so...as when expressing equality.

He's **so tall as** his dad is wrong.

Not as (big) as or (smaller) than?

Not as...as is often preferred to an opposite adjective, although sometimes there isn't much difference in meaning:

My flat isn't as big as yours.
My flat is smaller than yours.

It isn't as expensive by bus.
It's cheaper by bus.

At other times, an opposite adjective is too negative:

His new novel is worse than his first one.

This is correct if **both novels are bad**. If one or both are good, we should say:

His new novel isn't as good as his first one.

As...as is better in these examples:

Canada is smaller than Russia.
Canada isn't as big as Russia.
(Neither Canada nor Russia is small.)

Rome is newer than Athens.
Rome isn't as old as Athens.
(Neither Rome nor Athens is new.)

Not as (expensive) as or less (expensive) than?

Either is possible but *not as...as* is more common in spoken English.

It's less expensive by bus.
It isn't as expensive by bus.

Don't avoid not as...as!

Reasons why students tend to avoid *not as...as*:

Negative structures are more **difficult to comprehend**, and the use of **nearly** and **quite** can be confusing.

The confusion can be made worse because the word **as** is **unstressed**, while the subject and the verb *to be* are usually **contracted**.

It's not nearly as big as yours can sound like this:

snot nearlyuz biguz yours (!)

Remember that this is a **commonly used structure** for comparison and it is important to be able to recognize it even if you don't use it.