

보다

more than — the standard of comparison

Attaches to the thing being compared against, not to the winner. English puts "than" second; Korean puts 보다 first, which reverses the word order you are used to.

How it attaches

Pattern	Form	Example
Basic comparison	A는 B보다 adj	오늘은 어제보다 더워요
With 더	emphasis, optional	어제보다 더 더워요
Less than	덜 required	어제보다 덜 더워요
With a verb	더 goes before the verb	커피보다 차를 더 좋아해요
Any noun	보다 — no change	생각보다 쉬웠어요
Superlative uses	제일 / 가장 instead	제일 커요 — not 보다 제일

Notes

The shape of a Korean comparison is A는 B보다 (더) 형용사. The 보다 sits on B, the yardstick. 오늘은 어제보다 더워요 — today is hotter than yesterday.

더 ("more") is optional, because 보다 already signals comparison. Adding it is common and adds a little emphasis. Its opposite 덜 ("less") is not optional — without it there is no way to say less: 오늘은 어제보다 덜 추워요.

Korean is flexible about where the two nouns sit, so 어제보다 오늘이 더워요 works too. What never moves is 보다 itself: it clings to the standard. If you can identify which thing is the benchmark, you know where the particle goes.

Examples

- 오늘이 어제보다 더 더워요.
Today is hotter than yesterday.
- 이것보다 저게 더 싸요.
That one is cheaper than this one.
- 생각보다 어렵지 않았어요.
It wasn't as hard as I expected.
- 말보다 행동이 중요해요.
Actions matter more than words.
- 버스보다 지하철이 빨라요.
The subway is faster than the bus.
- 작년보다 덜 바빠요.
I'm less busy than last year.

Compared with

제일 / 가장

보다 compares two things; 제일 and 가장 pick the top of a whole group. They cannot appear in the same clause.

이 책이 저 책보다 재미있어요. (of the two) / 이 책이 제일 재미있어요. (of all)

만큼

보다 says one exceeds the other; 만큼 says they match. Same slot, different verdict.

형보다 커요. (taller than my brother) / 형만큼 커요. (as tall as my brother)

처럼

처럼 says something resembles another thing; 보다 measures a difference in degree between them.

가수처럼 노래해요. (sings like a singer) / 가수보다 잘해요. (sings better than a singer)

Watch out

✗ 저는 커피보다 차가 더 좋아해요.

○ 저는 커피보다 차를 더 좋아해요.

보다 does not change what the rest of the sentence needs. 좋아하다 still takes an object with 을/를.

✗ 이 책은 저 책보다 제일 재미있어요.

○ 이 책이 제일 재미있어요.

제일 already means "the most of all," so it cannot sit alongside a two-way comparison. Pick one or the other.

✗ 오늘은 어제보다 안 더워요.

○ 오늘은 어제보다 덜 더워요.

안 negates outright — "not hot" — which breaks the comparison. For "less than," Korean needs 덜.