

Interchange of degrees of comparison - part II

Study the given sentence:

Iron is more useful than any metal.

The sentence given above doesn't make sense because it means that iron is more useful than iron itself. (When you say any metal it includes iron.). It should, therefore, be rewritten as '*Iron is more useful than any other metal.*'

More examples are given below:

John is taller than any other boy in the class. (NOT John is taller than any boy in the class.)

Shakespeare is greater than any other English poet. (NOT Shakespeare is greater than any English poet.)

The superlative is used to compare somebody or something with the whole group to which he/she/it belongs.

Compare:

John is taller than any other boy in the class. (John is excluded from the group.)

John is the tallest boy in the class. (John is a part of the group.)

He is the best player in the team. (He is part of the team.)

He is better than any other player in the team. (He is excluded from the group.)

After superlatives, we do not usually use of with singular nouns.

I am the happiest man in the world. (NOT I am the happiest man of the world.)

However, of can be used before plural nouns or pronouns.

She is the tallest of them all.