The Proper Use of Then/Than

Then  (Draw your mouth back a little and “smile” as you say it.)
Rhymes with when and been and fin.

1. At that time:
   • The olden days were much better because people knew how to act then.  
     (at that time)
   • First we ate dinner, and then we went for a walk.
     (at that time)

2. Sometimes used after an IF clause to mean “as a result.”
   • If it rains, then we can’t go out.

Than  (Drop your chin down about an inch as you say it.)
Rhymes with man and fan and can.

1. Used to compare two things or people to each other.
   • Chicago is larger than Carbondale.
   • Joe is taller than Bill.

2. Often used right after or near the word rather.
   • I’d rather eat a full meal than snack on chips.
   • Rather than just snack on chips, I’d prefer eating a full meal.

Fill in the blank with then or than:

1. Why don’t we share this pie? ______ we can each have some.

2. So you saw the robber running from the store. What did you do ______?

3. There is more crime now ______ there used to be.

4. Are the Rockefellers richer ______ the Kennedys?

5. If you study hard and do your homework, ______ you should pass.

6. When I see the leaves change colors and when I feel the slight nip in the air, ______ I know that fall has arrived.
7. If you read the daily newspaper, ________ you will realize that truth really is stranger ________ fiction.

8. Rather ________ fight each other, nations should talk out their problems.

9. Alaska is larger ________ any other state.

10. Superman is faster ________ a speeding bullet.