Logical & complete comparisons

A comparison must compare LIKE things and be COMPLETE



Lesson `rw.conventions.W8`

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The idea

A comparison must compare LIKE things and be COMPLETE. Comparing mismatched items is illogical: 'The population of Tokyo is larger than New York' wrongly compares a population to a city; fix it with 'that of New York' (or 'New York's').

Are the two things being compared actually the same kind of thing? Are two items compared, or three or more?

Match the compared nouns with 'that of'/'those of' or a possessive. Two -> comparative; three or more -> superlative; never double up.

Watch every step

Of all the trails in the park, this one is ___.

Which choice conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- **A.** the steepest
- **B.** the steeper ✗ *comparative vs superlative misuse*
- **C.** the most steepest ✗ *double comparison*
- **D.** more steep ✗ *comparative vs superlative misuse*

Why **A** — "the steepest." Write the logical, complete, correctly-formed comparison.

Now a harder one

The song of the humpback whale is more elaborate than ___ nearly any other species.

Which choice conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- **A.** that of ✓
- **B.** than ✗ *illogical/incomplete comparison*
- **C.** those of ✗ *that / those number mismatch*
- **D.** them ✗ *illogical/incomplete comparison*

Why A — "that of." Write the logical, complete, correctly-formed comparison.

The method, in one line

Logical & complete comparisons

Match the compared nouns with 'that of'/'those of' or a possessive.
Two -> comparative; three or more -> superlative; never double up.

Am I comparing like to like? Comparative for two, superlative for 3+, and no doubled form?

Watch out: two traps to dodge

⚠ illogical/incomplete comparison

Compares mismatched things or omits 'that of/those of,' comparing a quality to the wrong noun.

⚠ that / those number mismatch

Uses 'that' for a plural noun or 'those' for a singular noun in the comparison.

Name the trap before you pick — most wrong answers are one of these two.

Try it, then watch the walk-through

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