

Plural Comparison

Plural comparison can also be formed with nouns or apostrophes, or with the phrase *those of*.

- Correct: While birds are not known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that the **skills of parrots** are often similar to **the skills of** human toddlers.
- Correct: While birds are not known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that the **skills** of parrots are similar to **human toddlers' (skills)**.
- Correct: While birds are not known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **those of human toddlers**.

Again, one side of the comparison may use *nouns of nouns* or an apostrophe, while the other side will more probably include *those of*. To reiterate, it is incorrect to use both a pronoun and an apostrophe, as in the second example below.

- Incorrect: While birds are not known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that **parrots' skills** are similar to **human toddlers**.
- Incorrect: While birds are not known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that **parrots' skills** are similar to **those of human toddlers'**.
- Correct: While birds are not known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that **parrots' skills** are similar to **those of human toddlers**.

Alternately, *that of* may be incorrectly used to refer to a plural noun.

- Incorrect: Recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **that of human toddlers**.
- Correct: Recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **those of human toddlers**.

Those of may also be incorrectly used to refer to a singular noun.

- Incorrect: Recent findings have established that parrots often possess **a level of intelligence** similar to **those of human toddlers**.
- Correct: Recent findings have established that parrots often possess **a level of intelligence** similar to **that of human toddlers**.

Furthermore, when two things are compared, they must be the same type of thing.

- Incorrect: Unlike **a train, the length** of a tram is usually limited to one or two cars, which may run either on train tracks or directly on the street.
- Correct: Unlike **the length of** a train, **the length** of a tram is usually limited to one or two cars, which may run either on train tracks or directly on the street.
- Correct: Unlike **that of** a train, **a tram's length** is usually limited to one or two cars, which may run either on train tracks or directly on the street.