

## 8.7. Double possessives in comparisons

Comparison sentences can sometimes create the erroneous *double possessive* construct that one needs to watch out for.

Let's take an example:

*Although Neptune is four times bigger than the Earth, Neptune's gravity is similar to that of the Earth's.*

Clearly, *that* (in *that of*) refers to *gravity*, while the possessive *Earth's* again refers to *Earth's gravity*. *That of* is a possessive construct, while *Earth's* is a possessive construct as well, thereby creating the following erroneous *double possessive* construct:

*Although Neptune is four times bigger than the Earth, Neptune's gravity is similar to that (gravity) of the Earth's (gravity).*

Either of the following would be correct:

*Although Neptune is four times bigger than the Earth, Neptune's gravity is similar to that of the Earth.*

Or

*Although Neptune is four times bigger than the Earth, Neptune's gravity is similar the Earth's.*

Let's look at a sentence based on official question (#107, OG Verbal Guide: *Bluegrass musician Bill Monroe...*):

*Bob Dylan inspired many lyricists, including John Lennon, whose lyrics differed significantly from those of his own.*

**Analysis:** *those* (in *those of*) refers to *lyrics*, while the possessive *own* again refers to *own lyrics*. *Those of* is a possessive construct, while *own* is a possessive construct as well, thereby creating the following erroneous *double possessive* construct. Following would be correct:

*Bob Dylan inspired many lyricists, including John Lennon, whose lyrics differed significantly from his own.*