

Name:
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PARALLEL STRUCTURE



There are three sentence elements that commonly require parallel treatment:

- Coordinated ideas
- Compared & contrasted ideas
- Correlative constructions



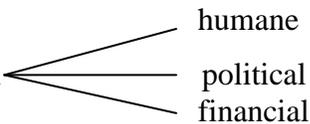
The key to understanding parallel structure is knowing that *each idea should be in the same grammatical form* (pair one noun with another noun...pair an infinitive verb with another infinitive verb...pair one clause with a clause, etc.).

Coordinate Ideas

Coordinate ideas are equal in rank. They are joined using the coordinate connectives *and, but, or, nor*.

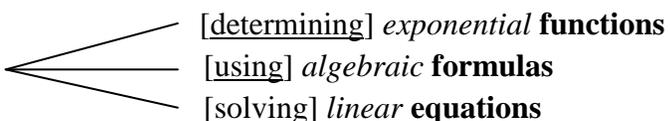
★EXAMPLE A★

FAULTY	The committee studied all aspects of the problem—HUMANE, POLITICAL, AND COST.
(The adjectives <i>humane</i> and <i>political</i> are paired with the noun <i>cost</i> .)	
PARALLEL	The committee studied all aspects of the problem— <i>humane, political, and financial.</i>

The committee studied all aspects of the problem 

★EXAMPLE B★

FAULTY	The math exam tested our knowledge of EXPONENTIAL FUNCTIONS, THE ALGEBRAIC FORMULAS, and SOLVING LINEAR EQUATIONS.
(The adjective-noun format of <i>exponential functions</i> and <i>algebraic formulas</i> , are paired with the phrase <i>solving linear equations</i> .)	
PARALLEL	The math exam tested our knowledge of <i>exponential functions, the algebraic formulas, and linear equations.</i>
PARALLEL	The math exam tested our knowledge of <u>determining</u> <i>exponential functions</i> , <u>using</u> <i>algebraic formulas</i> , and <u>solving</u> <i>linear equations</i> .

The math exam tested our knowledge of 

★EXAMPLE C★

FAULTY	According to my teacher, my composition revealed EXCEPTIONAL CREATIVE ABILITY but THAT I MAKE TOO MANY SPELLING ERRORS.
(The noun <i>ability</i> is paired with the clause <i>that I make too many spelling errors</i> .)	
PARALLEL	According to my teacher, my composition revealed <i>that I have exceptional creative ability</i> but <i>that I make too many spelling errors</i> .
PARALLEL	According to my teacher, my composition revealed <i>exceptional creative ability</i> but <i>too many spelling errors</i> .

According to my teacher, my composition revealed  that I have exceptional creative ability
that I make too many spelling errors

According to my teacher, my composition revealed  exceptional creative ability
too many spelling errors

Compared or Contrasted Ideas

When making comparisons or contrasts, the things you compare or contrast should be phrased using parallel structures whenever that is possible and appropriate.

★EXAMPLE D★

FAULTY	WATER-SKIING no longer interests me as much as TO SCUBA DIVE.
(The gerund <i>water-skiing</i> is paired with the infinitive <i>to scuba dive</i> .)	
PARALLEL	<i>Water-skiing</i> no longer interests me as much as <i>scuba diving</i> .
PARALLEL	<i>To water-ski</i> no longer interests me as much as <i>to scuba dive</i> .

★EXAMPLE E★

FAULTY	Critics praised her novel more for its STYLE than for WHAT IT HAD TO SAY.
(The noun <i>style</i> is paired with the clause <i>what it had to say</i> .)	
PARALLEL	Critics praised her novel more for its <i>style</i> than for its <i>ideas</i> .
PARALLEL	Critics praised her novel less for <i>what she had to say</i> than <i>how she said it</i> .

★EXAMPLE F★

FAULTY	BOB EWELL'S IQ is higher than my DOG.
(The possessive noun <i>Ewell's</i> is paired with the noun <i>dog</i> .)	
PARALLEL	Bob <i>Ewell's</i> IQ is higher than my <i>dog's</i> .

Correlative Constructions

Correlative constructions are formed with the correlative conjunctions *both...and*, *either...or*, *neither...nor*, *not only...but (also)*.

★EXAMPLE G★

FAULTY	At the gate, they tried both PERSUASION and TO FORCE their way in.
(The noun <i>persuasion</i> is paired with the infinitive <i>to force</i> .)	
PARALLEL	At the gate, they tried both <i>persuasion</i> and <i>force</i> .
PARALLEL	At the gate, they tried both <i>to persuade</i> and <i>to force</i> their way in.

★EXAMPLE H★

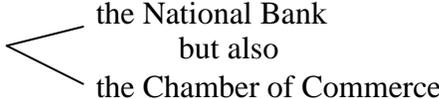
FAULTY	In English class, Tanya learned not only TO READ poems critically but she also APPRECIATED good prose.
(The infinitive <i>to read</i> is paired with the past tense verb <i>appreciated</i> .)	
PARALLEL	In English class, Tanya learned not only <i>to read poems critically</i> but also <i>to appreciate good prose</i> .

Completed Parallelism

☞ Place correlative conjunctions immediately before the parallel terms.

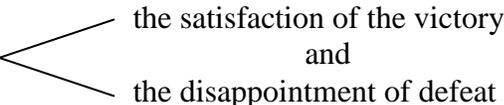
★EXAMPLE I★

FAULTY	Mrs. Sayers is not only the president OF THE NATIONAL BANK but also OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.
(The <i>not only...but</i> should come before the parallel terms <i>of the National Bank</i> and <i>of the Chamber of Commerce</i> .)	
PARALLEL	Mrs. Sayers is the president of <i>not only the National Bank but also the Chamber of Commerce</i> .

Mrs. Sayers is the president of not only  the National Bank
but also
the Chamber of Commerce

★EXAMPLE J★

FAULTY	The team both felt THE SATISFACTION OF THE VICTORY and THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF DEFEAT.
(The <i>both</i> should come directly before the parallel terms <i>the satisfaction of the victory</i> and <i>the disappointment of defeat</i> .)	
PARALLEL	The team felt <i>both the satisfaction of the victory and the disappointment of defeat</i> .

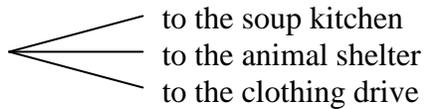
The team felt *both*  the satisfaction of the victory
and
the disappointment of defeat

☞ If the preposition (to, in, for, about, etc.), article (a, an, the), or pronoun (my, your, his, her, etc.) is the same for all items in the list, the writer can decide:

1. to include them with all of the items

★EXAMPLE K★

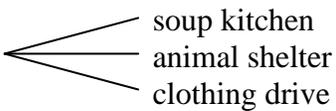
EXAMPLE	We donated time <i>to the</i> SOUP KITCHEN, <i>to the</i> ANIMAL SHELTER and <i>to the</i> CLOTHING DRIVE.
(The preposition <i>to</i> and the article <i>the</i> can be repeated before each parallel term.)	

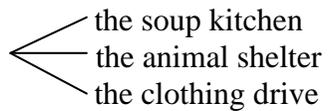
We donated time 

2. to write it just in the first item

★EXAMPLE L★

EXAMPLE	We donated time <i>to the</i> SOUP KITCHEN, ANIMAL SHELTER and CLOTHING DRIVE.
(The preposition <i>to</i> , and also the article <i>the</i> , can be used before the first parallel term only.)	

We donated time to the 

We donated time to 

EXCEPTIONS

☞ Include each preposition, article, or pronoun whenever necessary to make the meaning clear.

★EXAMPLE M★

FAULTY	Before the meeting, I spoke with the SECRETARY and TREASURER.
(The sentence may mean that I talked with one person who holds the double office of <i>secretary</i> and <i>treasurer</i> .)	
CLEAR	Before the meeting, I spoke with THE SECRETARY and THE TREASURER.
(This sentence indicates I talked to two separate individuals.)	



★EXAMPLE N★

FAULTY	The weather was a greater handicap to the INVADING ARMY than their ENEMY.
(The sentence means that the <i>invading army</i> would rather fight <i>their enemy</i> than <i>the weather</i> .)	
CLEAR	The weather was a greater handicap <i>to</i> the invading army than <i>to</i> their enemy.
(This sentence indicates the weather affected the invading army more than the weather affected their enemy.)	

🔑 Use separate prepositions or articles if each parallel item requires a different one.

★EXAMPLE O★

FAULTY	There are trains leaving the station in the MORNING and NOON.
(The preposition used with <i>morning</i> is <i>in</i> , but the preposition used with <i>noon</i> is <i>at</i> .)	
CLEAR	There are trains leaving the station <i>in</i> the morning and <i>at</i> noon.

There are trains leaving the station  in the morning
at noon

★EXAMPLE P★

FAULTY	I was INTERESTED and EXCITED about the foreign exchange program.
(The preposition used with <i>excited</i> is <i>about</i> , but the preposition used with <i>interested</i> is <i>in</i> .)	
CLEAR	I was interested <i>in</i> and excited <i>about</i> the foreign exchange program.

🔑 Repeat pronouns in a series of *that* clauses; the meaning is usually clearer if the introductory word is repeated in each clause. It also avoids a run on sentence.

★EXAMPLE Q★

FAULTY	We feel certain that SHE IS CAPABLE, SHE WILL SUCCEED, and YOU WILL BE PROUD OF HER.
(Omission of the introductory phrase <i>that</i> from the clauses may give the impression that this is a run-on sentence with the first sentence ending with <i>capable</i> .)	
CLEAR	We feel certain <i>that</i> she is capable, <i>that</i> she will succeed, and <i>that</i> you will be proud of her.



Recognizing Proper Parallel Structure

Read each pair of sentences. Write “correct” next to the one that employs correct parallel structure and write faulty” next to the one that uses faulty parallel structure.

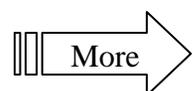
1. Raoul’s GPA is higher than Ralph.
Raoul’s GPA is higher than Ralph’s.
2. Looking is more fun than it is to go and do it.
Looking is more fun than doing.
3. Either you must stay at home or go with us.
You must either stay at home or go with us.
4. I looked in the basket, under the desk, and outside on the ledge.
I looked in the basket, desk, and ledge.
5. Professor Gowanis rewarded her students for working hard on the final project and going beyond the call of duty.
Professor Gowanis rewarded her students for their hard work on the final project and going beyond the call of duty.
6. The players were annoyed not so much by the decisions of the officials as the hostile crowd.
The players were annoyed not so much by the decisions of the officials as by the hostile crowd.
7. Children both need to nap regularly and to eat on a schedule.
Children need both regular naps and scheduled eating.
8. We were reacting and frightened by his erratic behavior.
We were reacting to and frightened by his erratic behavior.
9. People have been more interested in seeing the movie than reading the book.
People have been more interested in seeing the movie than the book.
10. The room was cozy, warm, and the cost was affordable.
The room was cozy, warm, and affordable.

Revising Sentences

Revise the following sentences by putting parallel ideas into the same grammatical form. Correct any errors in the placement of correlatives and in the omission of a necessary article, preposition, or pronoun.

1. Its large size, simple structure, and how readily available it is, make the common cockroach convenient to study.
2. Cockroaches have smooth leathery skin, long thin antennae, and they have a body that’s thick & flat.

3. They are not only found in urban areas but also in the tropics.
4. Oriental cockroaches are short-winged while American cockroaches have full wings.
5. America's cockroach species are more varied than Great Britain.
6. Seeing a cockroach is terrible, but to kill one is worse.
7. Cockroach eggs are laid in small cases, carried on the female body, and then they deposit them in hidden crevices.
8. A typical cockroach lives as a nymph for about a year, and as an adult its life lasts about half a year.
9. Most people are disgusted and fearful of cockroaches.
10. Many scientists and environmentalists believe that we can learn from the cockroach's evolution, we should admire its tenacity, and we can learn to live in harmony with them.



Writing Sentences

Write a sentence using parallel structure. Then, rewrite the sentence using faulty parallel structure.

Underline the parallel parts only.

1. correct:

faulty:

2. correct:

faulty: