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★

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAULTY</th>
<th>The committee studied all aspects of the problem—HUMANE, POLITICAL, AND COST.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(The adjectives <em>humane</em> and <em>political</em> are paired with the noun <em>cost.</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| PARALLEL        | The committee studied all aspects of the problem—-*humane, political, and financial.* | humane  
|                 | political                                                                 |
|                 | financial                                                                  |

★Example B★

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

The math exam tested our knowledge of [determining] exponential functions, [using] algebraic formulas, and [solving] linear equations.
According to my teacher, my composition revealed exceptional creative ability but that I make too many spelling errors.

(The noun ability is paired with the clause that I make too many spelling errors.)

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

According to my teacher, my composition revealed exceptional creative ability but 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 water-skiing is paired with the infinitive to scuba dive.)

**Parallel**

Water-skiing no longer interests me as much as scuba diving.

To water-ski no longer interests me as much as to scuba dive.

**Example E**

**Faulty**

Critics praised her novel more for its style than for what it had to say.

(The noun style is paired with the clause what it had to say.)

**Parallel**

Critics praised her novel more for its style than for its ideas.

Critics praised her novel less for what she had to say than how she said it.

**Example F**

**Faulty**

Bob Ewell’s IQ is higher than my dog.

(The possessive noun Ewell’s is paired with the noun dog.)

**Parallel**

Bob Ewell’s IQ is higher than my dog’s.
**Correlative Constructions**
Correlative constructions are formed with the correlative conjunctions *both…and, either…or, neither…nor, not only…but (also).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>★Example G★</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAULTY</strong></td>
<td>At the gate, they tried both PERSUASION and TO FORCE their way in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(The noun <em>persuasion</em> is paired with the infinitive <em>to force.</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARALLEL</strong></td>
<td>At the gate, they tried both <em>persuasion</em> and <em>force</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARALLEL</strong></td>
<td>At the gate, they tried both <em>to persuade</em> and <em>to force</em> their way in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>★Example H★</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAULTY</strong></td>
<td>In English class, Tanya learned not only TO READ poems critically but she also APPRECIATED good prose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(The infinitive <em>to read</em> is paired with the past tense verb <em>appreciated.</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARALLEL</strong></td>
<td>In English class, Tanya learned not only <em>to read</em> poems critically but also <em>to appreciate</em> good prose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Completed Parallelism**

صبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَبَb|
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>We donated time <strong>to the</strong> SOUP KITCHEN, <strong>to the</strong> ANIMAL SHELTER and <strong>to the</strong> CLOTHING DRIVE.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(The preposition *to* and the article *the* can be repeated before each parallel term.)

![Diagram](image)

We donated time to the soup kitchen to the animal shelter to the clothing drive

2. to write it just in the first item

**Example L**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>We donated time <strong>to the</strong> SOUP KITCHEN, ANIMAL SHELTER and CLOTHING DRIVE.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(The preposition *to*, and also the article *the*, can be used before the first parallel term only.)

![Diagram](image)

We donated time to the soup kitchen animal shelter clothing drive We donated time to the soup kitchen animal shelter clothing drive

**Exceptions**

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

**Example M**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAULTY</th>
<th>Before the meeting, I spoke with the SECRETARY and TREASURER.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(The sentence may mean that I talked with one person who holds the double office of *secretary* and *treasurer*.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLEAR</th>
<th>Before the meeting, I spoke with THE SECRETARY and THE TREASURER.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(This sentence indicates I talked to two separate individuals.)
### Example N

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faulty</th>
<th>The weather was a greater handicap to the invading army than their enemy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>The weather was a greater handicap to the invading army than to their enemy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The sentence means that the invading army would rather fight their enemy than the weather.)

(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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faulty</th>
<th>There are trains leaving the station in the morning and noon.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>There are trains leaving the station in the morning and at noon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are trains leaving the station in the morning and at noon.

### Example P

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faulty</th>
<th>I was interested and excited about the foreign exchange program.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>I was interested in and excited about the foreign exchange program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The preposition used with excited is about, but the preposition used with interested is in.)

🚨 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faulty</th>
<th>We feel certain that she is capable, she will succeed, and you will be proud of her.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>We feel certain that she is capable, that she will succeed, and that you will be proud of her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Omission of the introductory phrase that from the clauses may give the impression that this is a run-on sentence with the first sentence ending with capable.)
**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: