# Learning Objectives

#### After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define what parallel and parallelism mean.
- Identify other terms used to refer to parallelism.
- Understand the rules of parallelism.
- Recognize the relevance of paralleling elements in sentences.
- Repair sentences with faulty elements which do not make it parallel.
- Make observing the rules of parallelism.

Sentence elements that are alike in function should also be alike in construction. These elements should be in the same grammatical form so that they are **parallel**.

Using parallel structure in your writing will help with

1) economy 2) clarity 3) equality 4) delight.

Here are some examples of parallel elements:

words	infinitives	prepositional phrases	subordinate clauses
thinking	to see	at the time	because I care
running	to understand	in the house	after they met

These elements, on the other hand, are not parallel

words	infinitives	prepositional phrases	subordinate clauses
thinking	to see	at the time	because I care
to run	since I understand	being here	to meet

The balance between two or more similar words, phrases or clauses is called parallelism in grammar. Parallelism is also called parallel structure or parallel construction. Parallel construction prevents awkwardness, promotes clarity and improves writing style and readability.

- Nancy likes playing the piano, the trumpet and play the guitar.
- Nancy likes the piano, the trumpet and the guitar.
- Nancy likes *playing the piano, the trumpet* and *the guitar*.
- She played basketball, had a shower and gone to school.
- She played basketball, had a shower and went to school.
- The company is looking for a candidate who is friendly, organized, meticulous, and is going to arrive to work on time.
- The company is looking for a candidate who is *friendly*, *organized*, *meticulous*, and *punctual*.



1. With elements joined by coordinating conjunctions, especially *and*, *but*, and *or*.

Examples of parallel words:

Thinking or running is not my cup of tea.

Thinking and running often accompany one another as I exercise.

Examples of parallel phrases:

She likes to look but not to listen.

You will find the light bulbs in the closet or under the kitchen counter

Examples of parallel clauses:

Please bring the bill after we have had some coffee or when your shift is over

We wondered who he was and what he was doing.

coordinating conjunction

The examples below show how to repair "faulty" parallelism.

My uncle likes to eat in expensive restaurants and visiting museums. My uncle likes to eat in expensive restaurants and to visit museums. My uncle likes eating in expensive restaurants and visiting museums.

My friends never judged me *by my words* or *what I did*. My friends never judged me *by my words* or *my actions*. My friends never judged me *by what I said* or *(by) what I did*.







### **Lesson 7. Inversion**

Revise each sentence so that the elements joined by the coordinate conjunction are parallel to one another.

- 1. What I said or my actions upset everyone in the room.
- 2. She suggested that I write a memoir and to send it to a good publisher.
- 3. The instructor advised me to use the rearview mirror often, and I should observe the speed limit.
- 4. People are paying more now for health insurance but to get less coverage.
- 5. Doing strenuous exercise and poor nutrition habits can lead to illness.
- 6. We put the pictures and what our itinerary was into the album.
- 7. Many young people like to skateboard and watching the techniques of other skateboarders.
- 8. Joe wants to buy a vest that has buttons or closes with a zipper.
- 9. Her ideas are usually sound and of importance.
- 10. Good sense and being thoughtful are two valuable assets.

2. Use parallel structure with elements in lists or in a series.

A series is a group of **three or more** elements in a row. The last element in the series is connected to the others with one of these coordinating conjunctions: *and, or, but (not),* or *yet (not)*. Commas (,) should be placed between each element in the series and before the coordinating conjunction.

Series of Words	Series of infinitives	Series of prepositional phrases	Series of Clauses
She wanted three things: money, power and security.	There was no opportunity to do my taxes, to request an extension, or to explain my situation.	He found cleaning in the closet, under the sink, but not in the garage.	The company doesn't care about who you are, how you got here, or why you have come.

coordinating conjunction

As the examples below show, a series whose components are not in parallel format sounds awkward and may cause misunderstanding.

The tribe emphasized collective survival, mutual aid, and being responsible for one another.

The tribe emphasized collective survival, mutual aid, and responsibility for one another.

The frustrated customer wanted to exchange the articles, to obtain a refund, or she wanted to speak to the manager.

The frustrated customer wanted (to) exchange the articles, (t)o obtain a refund, or (to) speak to the manager.

Note that in the corrected versions of example #2, you may choose to repeat the "to" or to omit it.





#### **Lesson 7. Inversion**

# Revise each sentence so that the elements joined by the coordinate conjunction are parallel to one another.

- 1. The students have dissected frogs, cats, and how to dissect human torsos.
- 2. At the store my duties are to keep the shelves stocked, to work the registers, and assisting customers.
- 3. Original, imaginative, and seeming almost fantastic describe the techniques of Dali's paintings.
- 4. My brother enjoys three activities: checkers, welding, and he collects baseball cards.
- 5. Later that day, Mike took the fishing rods to the lake, caught several fish, and he fell asleep.
- 6. The nanny was supposed to feed the children, walk the dog, and some dusting in the living room.
- 7. The condominium board's goals include building up a reserve fund, keeping the community informed, and property assessment.
- 8. Our baseball coach taught us how to hit, tag out runners, and base stealing.
- 9. We want a candidate who has a sense of commitment, a good record in public office, and who has experience in foreign affairs.
- 10. Reading mystery novels, exercising in the park, and crossword puzzles occupy a good deal of my retirement time.

3. Use parallel structure with elements being compared. (**X** is *more than / better than* **Y**). When we compare things, we often use words such as *more, less, better,* and *worse,* We connect the items being compared with words like *as* and *than*.

Note the comparison methods in the examples below:

**Driving** to New York can actually take less time than flying here.

Miriam's ability to come up with projects far exceeded her resolve to work on them.

How you live your life is just as important as how much money you make.

The elements being compared are parallel to one another:

driving is parallel to flying

Miriam's ability to is parallel to her resolve to

How you live is parallel to how much money you make

Comparing items without using parallel structure may cause confusion about what is being compared to what.

Rules of Parallelism 11

Repair faulty parallelism in comparisons by making one element of the comparison parallel to the other.



I like swimming better than to dive.

I like swimming better than diving.

I like to swim better than to dive.

Note that you may choose to change either element to match the other.







Revise each sentence so that the elements joined by the coordinate conjunction are parallel to one another.

- 1. It is harder to tie a slip knot than tying a square knot.
- 2. We enjoyed water skiing much more than when we swam in the lake.
- 3. Driving will get you there more quickly than to walk.
- 4. A big car is not necessarily better than one that is small.
- 5. Hearing her sing in person was ten times better than if you heard her on the radio.
- 6. He felt that being a good listener was just as important as to talk well.
- 7. Her excuses bothered me more than she was absent.
- 8. It is better to learn the material slowly than cramming on the night before the test.
- 9. What you actually do is a better indication of your true motives than your words.
- 10. One is more likely to slip on a banana peel than when an orange peel is on the floor.

4. Use parallel structure with elements joined by a **linking verb** or a **verb of being**. Joining elements with linking verbs or verbs of being suggests a completing of the first item by the second one. Often, in fact, an equality between the two is being set up, as the examples below illustrate.



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What you is what you get.

Being Jim's friend means being constantly alert.

To know her is to love her.
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Repair faulty parallelism in comparisons by making one element of the comparison parallel to the other.



To succeed is **opening** a new activity.

To succeed is to open a new activity.

Succeeding is opening a new activity.









Identify the faulty elements and revise each sentence so that the elements joined by the coordinate conjunction are parallel to one another.

- 1. To take the fifth amendment is refusing to incriminate yourself.
- 2. What she said was her meaning.
- 3. Doing well on the GRE means to assure yourself acceptance into a good graduate school.
- 4. Many people mistakenly think that being wealthy is the same thing as to be happy.
- 5. Marrying Major Boundy meant to leave her family and to travel all over the world.

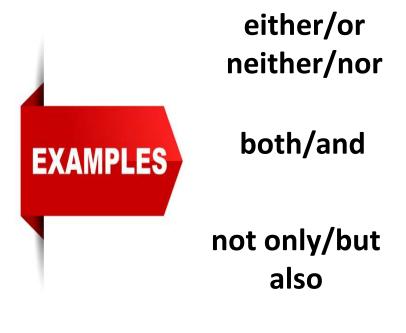
5. Use parallel structure with elements joined by a correlative conjunction.

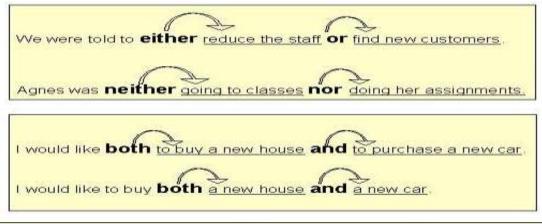
These are the major correlative conjunctions:

either / or neither / nor both / and not only / but also

Correlative conjunctions work in pairs.

Important: Whatever grammatical structure follows one must be parallel to the grammatical structure that follows the other.





As young recruits, we were told **not** only what to do but also what to think.

Sam hoped **not** only to go to France for the summer but also to live there later on.

Repair faulty parallelism with correlative conjunctions by making one structure parallel to the other as shown below.

either/or You are either for us or you are against us.

You are either for us or against us.

Either you are for us or you are against us.

neither/nor Mary is neither a Democrat nor she is a Republican.

Mary is neither a **Democrat** nor a **Republican**.

Neither is Mary a Democrat nor is she a Republican.

both/and The show is both enjoyable and it is educational.

The show is both **enjoyable** and **educational**.

not only/ The author not only wants fame but also money.

The author not only wants fame but also wants money.

The author wants not only **fame** but also **money**.





but also

# Revise each sentence so that the elements joined by the coordinate conjunction are parallel to one another.

- 1. Either ask Ben or Marianne to prepare the agenda for tonight's meeting.
- 2. The director for special projects not only visited our regional center in Baltimore but also our main office in New York.
- 3. The exercise both toned my muscles and it helped me to lose weight.
- 4. At my training session, I was not only taught how to work the register, but also how to treat customers courteously.
- 5. Either work today, or you will have to work tomorrow.
- 6. My friends are neither anxious to see the items in the museum nor are they happy about the admission price.
- 7. She is both happy about the raise and she is nervous about the extra responsibility.
- 8. They not only ate all the food in the house but they also didn't clean up their mess.
- 9. Bert will meet us either at the restaurant or he will be at the taxi stand.
- 10. The doctor promised neither to cause pain during the procedure nor leave a scar.

Answer the following questions and make sure parallelism rules are being followed. In your sentences, identify the parallel elements and share it in class.

- 1. How does your best friend look like?
- 2. What would the choices you have if you suddenly lost your job? (either/or)
- 3. Talk about the things that you learned at school. (not only, but also)
- 4. Why are a lot of people hooked to Social Media?
- 5. Compare your life from 5 years ago and now.
- 6. What does it mean to succeed?
- 7. How do you find learning English?
- 8. Talk about things you aren't or don't possess which made you not qualified to achieve something. (neither/nor)
- 9. What do you suggest people who do grievous crimes be punished with?
- 10. What are the most effective ways to improves one's English speech?

# The End