



## GRAMMAR PRACTICE

# Parallel Structure

To improve the *clarity* of your writing, it is important to remember the *equality* of your sentence structure. This worksheet was designed to help you better understand the importance of Parallel Structure.

Parallel Structure means using the same construction for sentence elements that are the same in function.

Below are THREE rules to consider when checking for Parallel Structure in your writing:

1. Parallel Structure should be used when elements are joined by coordinating conjunctions:

**Incorrect:** I am allergic to the dog's hair *and* how it smells.

**Correct:** I am allergic to the dog's hair *and* its smell.

2. Parallel Structure should be used when writing elements in the form of a list or a series: **Incorrect:** The class valued respect, honesty, and being on time in a teacher.

**Correct:** The class valued respect, honesty, and promptness in a teacher.

3. Parallel Structure should be used when comparing or contrasting elements (A is *better than* B – X is *less than* Y):

**Incorrect:** James enjoys reading *more than* to write.

**Correct:** James enjoys reading *more than* writing.

## PRACTICE Exercise

Complete the exercises on the backside of this worksheet for more practice on using Parallel

Structure.

**A.** In the four sentences below, circle the correct word or phrase that gives the sentence correct parallel structure.

1. Justin was excited about inviting friends over, eating a good meal, and \_\_\_\_ .
  - a. ...a game of cards.
  - b. ...to play cards.
  - c. ...playing a game of cards.
2. I have always enjoyed reading the book more than \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. ...I watched the movie version.
  - b. ...watching the movie.
  - c. ...to watch the movie.
3. When the weather outside is cold and \_\_\_\_\_, I like to be indoors.
  - a. ...starting to get windy...
  - b. ...windy...
  - c. ...getting windy...
4. Running, lifting, and \_\_\_\_\_ are three of Ashley's favorite exercises.
  - a. ...racquetball...
  - b. ...a spinning class...
  - c. ...bicycling...

**B.** In the sentences below, write a word or phrase in the blank that gives the sentence Parallel Structure.

1. The little girl liked eating cookies better than \_\_\_\_\_ at her grandmother's house.
2. Students like to sleep, relax and \_\_\_\_\_ during the summer.
3. He went to the store to pick up a carton of milk and two \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Food, shelter, and \_\_\_\_\_ are all I need to survive on a deserted island.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is much better than a visit to the dentist.

# Parallel Structure – Exercise 1

**Directions:** Determine whether the sentences below contain errors in parallel structure. *Fix any problems that you find.*

1. Monica brewed espresso, steamed milk, and told jokes as she prepared Mike's latte.
2. Natasha tried holding her breath, chewing a piece of gum, and poking her belly, but she could not quiet her empty stomach, which rumbled during the chemistry exam.
3. In the restroom, Tishena was brushing her hair, freshened hepr lip-gloss, and took deep breaths, trying to work up the courage to walk to her first speech class.
4. Celine looked behind the toilet, in the laundry basket, and checked under the bed, but she could not find Squeeze, her nine-foot albino python.
5. Not only did Dennis apply an extra layer of deodorant to his armpits, but he also polished each tooth with special care. He did not want to offend Malinda with any unpleasant odors.
6. For his first date with Malinda, Dennis bought not only a dozen roses but he also purchased a box of chocolates.
7. Not only did Malinda squeal at the sight of the beautiful bouquet, but she also was tearing open the box and eating chocolates all the way to the restaurant.
8. Dennis tried to be thoughtful and generous, yet Malinda refused to give him not only a kiss good night but also a single chocolate from the nut and caramel sampler.
9. Chelsea had to paddle past a school of jellyfish, kick a small sand shark in the nose, and untangle seaweed from her surfboard before she reached her favorite point break.
10. Spiders that bite, hissing snakes, and squealing rodents fill the aquariums in Desmond's basement.
11. Class with Dr. Rogers was a nightmare: the clock seemed stuck in place, the air conditioner blew inadequate cool, and a fluorescent bulb buzzed overhead.

12. Ernie is too noisy as a seatmate. Crunching on apple slices, slurping hot coffee, and the rings of his notebook snapped open and shut all contribute to the cacophony.
13. Neither the scowls from her neighbors nor the disapproval of her husband will deter Larissa from painting her house hot pink with orange and white trim.
14. Larissa will either add a flock of plastic pink flamingos, or she will purchase a family of ceramic gnomes for the front lawn.
15. Until the Weavers arrived home at 5 p.m., the clock ticked, the refrigerator hummed, and the dog snoring in the otherwise quiet house.
16. Jessica has found that neither background music nor potato chips make writing her research essay any easier.
17. Mark looked under the bed, in the hamper, and he even searched his brother's closet, but he could not find his favorite University of Florida T-shirt.
18. After you eat tuna salad from the campus cafeteria, not only will your stomach rumble, but you will also sneeze for hours from the generous addition of MSG.
19. Natalia blinked her eyes, she wiped her glasses, and then squinted at the screen, but she could not decipher the small text crammed onto the presentation slide.
20. Neither the unhappy man with the cold soup nor the irate woman with an empty glass of iced tea could get Gloria's attention, for this waitress was too busy flirting with Jose.

## Parallel Structure – Exercise 2

**Directions:** Determine whether the sentences below contain errors in parallel structure. *Fix any problems that you find.*

1. Pancakes dripping with syrup, coffee steaming in big mugs, and bacon frying on the stove make breakfast at Grandma's house a real treat.
2. Le'Ron scowled at Professor Nguyen, was muttering under his breath, and sighed heavily, but in truth he loved taking algebra exams.
3. Skipping the directions, hurrying to finish first, and neglecting to recheck her work have caused Claudia to fail every calculus exam this semester.
4. At the family reunion, we ate Grandma's barbecued ribs, Aunt Sally's potato salad, and heaping plates of jiggling banana Jell-O prepared by Cousin Sue.
5. Claude glanced at his watch, took a last sip of coffee, and began his trek to Dr. Grayson's three- hour snooze fest on the French Revolution.
6. Vacuuming under the furniture, dusting the ceiling fans, and scrubbing the tile grout with a toothbrush, Jerry prepared the house for his ultra-picky mother-in-law.
7. The sky grew pink, seagulls began to cry, and waves rolled onshore as Diane took her morning stroll on the beach.
8. During the exam, Mary sucked the ends of her hair, chewed the top of her pencil, and all the while she was picking at a scab on her elbow, but she could not remember the third cause of the French Revolution.
9. Solita has packed an orange soda not only for herself but also Josh.
10. Josh neglected not only to thank Solita, but he also gave a sip of orange soda to Reva, Solita's rival.
11. Reva not only drank from the bottle of orange soda but also got hot pink lipstick on the rim.

12. Josh thinks Annie is the most beautiful woman in Springfield, so he has no interest in dating either Solita or going out with Reva.
13. Frances searched the car trunk, on the pantry shelves, and the top of the refrigerator, but she could not find the box of cornflakes she remembered buying.
14. Waves that crash against the shore, chanting monks, and chirping birds are the sound files Wendell enjoys on his iPod.
15. Filled with holiday spirit, Ximena bought a Christmas present not only for her boyfriend Andre but also for his obnoxious younger brother Pierre.
16. Eli held the phone on his lap, trying to work up the courage to call the beautiful Leodine. All the while, his foot jiggled, his nostrils flared, and sweat was collecting on his upper lip.
17. On school mornings, Rachel can sleep through anything, even with the alarm clock buzzing or when Mom bangs on the bedroom door.
18. On vacation, Patrick can trust neither his roommates nor the veterinary staff with Squeeze, his 9- foot albino python, so he hides his beloved reptile in a suitcase and sneaks him into hotel rooms.
19. While Patrick is sightseeing, Squeeze will either find a patch of sunlight under a window or he will curl up under a table lamp.
20. Squeeze shocked neither the maid who cleaned the room nor the valet who brought room service.

# Parallel Structure – Exercise 3

**Directions:** Choose the option that maintains parallel structure in the sentence.

1. When Delores realized that her father had made lima beans and rice for dinner, she \_\_\_\_\_, claimed to feel nauseous, and excused herself from the table. The bag of stale popcorn in her room would tide her over until breakfast.
  - A. clutched her stomach
  - B. was clutching her stomach
  - C. did clutch her stomach
2. Not only did Hank despise the way June chewed with her mouth open, \_\_\_\_\_ finding her wet towels all over the bathroom floor.
  - A. but also disliked
  - B. but also disliking
  - C. but he also disliked
3. To protect her delicate hands, Fran will not rake the yard, do the dishes, or \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. refuses to scrub the bathtub
  - B. won't scrub the bathtub
  - C. scrub the bathtub
4. When Diane takes her beagle for a walk, Santana enjoys sniffing for edible garbage, \_\_\_\_\_, and lunging at squirrels.
  - A. howls at bicyclists
  - B. howling at bicyclists
  - C. she howls at bicyclists
5. After Amanda cashes her paycheck, the money goes to her savings account, cappuccino fund, and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. paying her credit card bill
  - B. toward her credit card balance
  - C. credit card balance
6. In preparation for her run, Alicia \_\_\_\_\_, applied sunscreen, and increased the volume on her iPod.
  - A. tightened her shoelaces
  - B. was tightening her shoelaces
  - C. did tighten her shoelaces

7. We searched the car trunk, \_\_\_\_\_, and the top of the refrigerator, but we could not find the box of cornflakes that we remember buying.
- A. looked on the pantry shelves
  - B. on the pantry shelves
  - C. the pantry shelves
8. Bonkers, our ninety pound golden retriever, chews on furniture, \_\_\_\_\_, and snots up the car windows—inconveniences we didn't anticipate when we adopted him.
- A. would drag us around the neighborhood during walks
  - B. he drags us around the neighborhood during walks
  - C. drags us around the neighborhood during walks
9. Belinda saw very little of the horror movie, for she shut her eyes \_\_\_\_\_, when she heard the monster's footsteps in the dead leaves, and when characters started screaming.
- A. when the violins began to play
  - B. while listening to the violins play
  - C. during the violin music
10. In Mrs. Curall's office, Ruben feigned the flu. He hoped to be excused from class, get an extension on his paper, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. spend the afternoon playing tennis with his friends
  - B. to spend the afternoon playing tennis with his friends
  - C. then to spend the afternoon playing tennis with his friends
11. Carlos not only missed his one-year anniversary with Adrianna \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. but he also forgot his mother's birthday
  - B. but also forgot his mother's birthday
  - C. but also forgetting his mother's birthday
12. Teresa was expecting a visit from her mother, so she spent the day cleaning the shelves of the refrigerator, scrubbing mold from the bathroom tile grout, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. she removed dog hair from the sofa cushions
  - B. removing dog hair from the sofa cushions
  - C. removed dog hair from the sofa cushions
13. When Noodle the poodle realized that the leash meant a bath, not a walk to the park, he growled, pulled, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. was leaping like a fish on a line
  - B. he was leaping like a fish on a line
  - C. leaped like a fish on a line
14. With the humans out of the house, Skeeter had to decide either to shred a roll of toilet paper or \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. chew another hole in the sofa arm
  - B. chewing another hole in the sofa arm
  - C. if he wanted to chew another hole in the sofa arm



15. Neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor the ineffective air conditioner rattling in the window will deter Tiffany from loving the freedom of her first apartment.

- A. when the inconsiderate neighbors played loud music
- B. the inconsiderate neighbors playing loud music
- C. playing loud music by the inconsiderate neighbors

16. We looked everywhere for the car keys—under the sofa cushions, \_\_\_\_\_, and on the counters and tabletops. All along, Andrew had them in the front pocket of his jeans!

- A. our search included the trash can
- B. searching for them in the trash can
- C. in the trash can

17. Laura and Diane bang on Boen's door when they need heavy furniture moved, after they have clogged the garbage disposal, and \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. having discovered a spider in the bathtub
- B. upon the discovery of a spider in the bathtub
- C. if they find a spider in the bathtub

18. Bathing Noodle, our poodle, requires four arms to hold him in the tub, towels to mop up the water, and \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. raincoats which will keep us dry
- B. raincoats to keep us dry
- C. raincoats as protection against the oncoming deluge

19. We hate having dinner at Aunt Ida's house because she is a vegan health nut. Baked tofu, \_\_\_\_\_, and decaffeinated tea do not make a satisfying meal!

- A. vegetables steamed with no oil or seasoning
- B. steamed vegetables
- C. vegetables that are flavorless

20. Tonia kicked the back of Vincent's desk, \_\_\_\_\_, and poked his arm with her sharp pencil, but he would not bend to the side so that she could get a glimpse of his quiz answers.

- A. blew on his neck
- B. she blew on his neck
- C. blowing on his neck

# Parallel Structure – Exercise 4

**Directions:** Choose the option that maintains parallel structure in the sentence.

1. Ironing a clean shirt, \_\_\_\_\_, and buying a pack of gum for fresh breath were the tasks Aaron completed before the first day of spring semester.
  - A. the printout of a course schedule
  - B. printing a course schedule
  - C. making sure that he had printed a course schedule
2. Stuart wiggled his foot, drummed a Jimi Hendrix riff with his pencil, and \_\_\_\_\_, but he could not burn off the caffeine-induced energy from an extra large cup of coffee.
  - A. chewed a mouthful of gum
  - B. was chewing a mouthful of gum
  - C. his jaw worked a mouthful of gum
3. The blonde who sucked the ends of her hair, the athlete who blinked nervously, and \_\_\_\_\_ would not share their algebra homework with Jake.
  - A. the rebel slouching in his seat
  - B. the slouching rebel
  - C. the rebel who slouched in his seat
4. \_\_\_\_\_, no recognition for her skills, and a dislike for the polyester uniform made Kelsey quit the ping-pong team.
  - A. Because she was frustrated with the coach
  - B. Frustration with the coach
  - C. Having become frustrated with the coach
5. The hike through the canyon exhausted Kim. The steep incline made her thigh muscles throb, \_\_\_\_\_, and the relentless sun burned her skin.
  - A. the heavy pack caused her shoulders to ache
  - B. aching shoulders from the heavy pack
  - C. shoulders that ached from the heavy pack
6. Instead of finishing her chemistry homework, Terry wanted to spend her birthday money at the mall, \_\_\_\_\_, and eat pizza in the food court.
  - A. see a movie at the theater
  - B. she planned to see a movie at the theater
  - C. planning to see a movie at the theater

7. Because Alex is always flirting with Becky, Bridgette will neither lend him an eraser nor \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. will she let him peek at her score sheet
  - B. let him peek at her score sheet
  - C. agreeing to let him peek at her score sheet
8. Mrs. Martin, the hiring manager, explained that she would consider an interview if Lester remembered to wear shoes, comb the crumbs out of his beard, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. replace the shark-tooth necklace with a tie
  - B. he needed a tie, not a shark-tooth necklace
  - C. she wanted to see a tie, not a shark-tooth necklace, around his throat
9. After no rabbit popped out of the hat, Lori decided she had neither the patience nor \_\_\_\_\_ to tolerate another of Darren's poorly performed magic tricks.
- A. the good humor
  - B. did she have the good humor
  - C. the ability to muster the good humor
10. Elizabeth wanted to enjoy the plate of nachos that she and Jared shared, but she worried about black beans sticking to her teeth, cheese dripping from her chin, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. the possibility that chip crumbs might catapult from her mouth
  - B. whether or not chip crumbs would catapult from her mouth
  - C. chip crumbs catapulting from her mouth
11. Neither the carrots rotting in the bottom bin nor \_\_\_\_\_ will make a suitable side for the chicken you are planning to bake for dinner.
- A. the broccoli that is crusting over with freezer burn
  - B. the broccoli which has crusted with freezer burn
  - C. the broccoli crusted with freezer burn
12. Horatio tickled the pads of Samson's feet, blew in his ears, and \_\_\_\_\_, but the ancient German shepherd refused to leave the sofa for a walk in the rain.
- A. she removed dog hair from the sofa cushions
  - B. removing dog hair from the sofa cushions
  - C. removed dog hair from the sofa cushions
13. While sitting in English class, Peterson wonders how Dr. Jones can speak so passionately about comma splices, why she would spend her free evenings voluntarily reading Shakespeare, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. when she manages to have some real fun
  - B. does she ever have some real fun
  - C. ever having any real fun

14. \_\_\_\_\_, a dirty hamster cage, and a glass of old milk all contribute to the unbearable stench emanating from Wilson's bedroom.
- A. Gym socks that are smelly from sweat
  - B. Sweaty gym socks
  - C. Sweaty gym socks that smell
15. Natalya quietly unzipped her book bag, removed a bottle of pink polish, and \_\_\_\_\_ while Dr. Adams droned on and on about the Mesopotamians.
- A. began painting her fingernails
  - B. she began painting her fingernails
  - C. with utter disrespect, she began painting her fingernails
16. In a car, Wesley wants \_\_\_\_\_, a sound system that vibrates with booming bass, and a style that attracts beautiful women.
- A. an engine that roars with power
  - B. an engine roaring with power
  - C. a powerful engine
17. In a girlfriend, Wesley wants a shapely body, a smart head, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. a wallet that is fat
  - B. a fat wallet
  - C. a fat wallet that is bursting with cash
18. In a home, Wesley wants windows showcasing the skyline of Los Angeles, steel and glass furniture sparkling in the sunlight, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. a Great Dane sleeping on the white shag carpeting
  - B. a Great Dane who sleeps on the white shag carpeting
  - C. a sleeping Great Dane on the white shag carpeting
19. In reality, Wesley has a bus pass, an Angelina Jolie poster, and \_\_\_\_\_ in the room he shares with his brother.
- A. sleeping in the bottom bunk
  - B. the bottom bunk
  - C. the bunk which is on the bottom
20. Everyone points to Jeannine as an example of an excellent student because she has an attentive attitude, detailed class notes, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. never is the one who yawns in class
  - B. a bright smile
  - C. the fact that she gets As on everything

# Parallel Structure – Exercise 5

**Directions:** Fill in the blanks with the additional information provided for each item. Be sure that you maintain parallel structure.

1. Lenora flipped through her notebook, rummaged through her book bag, and \_\_\_\_\_, but she could not find Mark's completed calculus homework which she had borrowed to copy.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Lenora also went outside to search the backseat of her car.*

2. Watching reruns of *Battlestar Galactica*, shopping for new shoes online, and \_\_\_\_\_ were the procrastination methods Kendrick used to avoid starting his research essay.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Kendrick also took the dog for a walk.*

3. A basketball, a court, and \_\_\_\_\_ are Jordan's three favorite things.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Jordan also likes an aggressive, tall, fast opponent whose skills test Jordan's own ball-handling competence.*

4. This year in karate class, Andrew hopes to master the high roundhouse kick, \_\_\_\_\_, and win all of his matches.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Breaking a 2-inch board with his bare hands is another goal Andrew has.*

5. Noodles swimming in butter, \_\_\_\_\_, and vegetables glistening with oil made Daisy's dinner a caloric nightmare.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*In addition, Daisy drenched the steak in hollandaise sauce.*

6. We love when Christina closes the coffee shop because the next morning we find shiny counters, a clean floor, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Christina always fills the napkin dispensers.*

7. Hawks, cats, and \_\_\_\_\_ make raising babies difficult for mother squirrels.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Six-foot black snakes that crawl into the trees and raid the nests are another danger for the squirrel pups.*

8. Professor Hayden requires a pen, an exam book, and \_\_\_\_\_ at his midterm and final examinations.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*In addition, having a brain stuffed with accurate dates, full names, and other historical details will help.*

9. Ecstatic that Keisha had agreed to a date, Shaun opened the car door for her, let her choose the restaurant, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*In addition, he had no reservations paying for the expensive lobster dinner.*

10. Gerald can not only charm a dragonfly to land on his finger but also \_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Moreover, Gerald is good at coaxing the neighborhood cats to twine around his ankles.*

11. After chewing the sofa arm, barking at strangers passing on the street, and \_\_\_\_\_, Rowdy curled up on Miranda's new sweater and fell asleep.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Rowdy also ate a roll of toilet paper.*

12. Gurjeet tightened the shoelaces of his inline skates, adjusted his helmet, and \_\_\_\_\_ before pushing off down the steep hill.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Saying a little prayer is another of Gurjeet's rituals.*

13. Miranda wants her dog to sit on command, stop chasing the cat, and \_\_\_\_\_, but Rowdy behaves as he pleases.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Coming when he's called is another behavior Miranda would like to see Rowdy demonstrate.*

14. Sylvia's home is spotless. Every day she wipes down all surfaces, vacuums all floors, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Dusting over one hundred ceramic squirrels is another chore Sylvia completes daily.*

15. Ragged jeans, a torn T-shirt, and \_\_\_\_\_ made Theodora reconsider her decision to go out with Tommy.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Tommy's sneakers were also dirty, which did not impress Theodora.*

16. Charday crunched ice, clicked her pen, and \_\_\_\_\_, but she could not solve the last problem of calculus homework.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Shuffling through her notes was another strategy Charday tried to find the solution for the problem.*

17. Joshua remains asleep when thunderclaps shake the house, when commuter jets rumble overhead, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Joshua can sleep even if his mother is yelling his name.*

18. At the family reunion, Natasha sampled the homemade ice cream, Jasper ate a cheeseburger hot off the grill, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*A tall glass of lemonade was nursed by Lori.*

19. Anthony smiled, \_\_\_\_\_, and touched her arm before asking to borrow a pencil for the twenty-third time.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Anthony also gave Wanda a compliment about her necklace.*

20. Either a bagel with peanut butter or

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makes a perfect breakfast for Fiona.

**Fill in the blank using the information below. Maintain parallel structure.**

*Fiona also enjoys a chocolate-broccoli muffin with cream cheese frosting warmed in a microwave and eaten off a sheet of paper towel.*