



Parallel Construction- 21st Sept

Special class

Parallel Construction

What is parallel Construction?

William Strunk, in his book 'The Elements of Style', says that "expressions of similar content and function should be outwardly similar". In other words similar ideas must be logically comparable and must have the same grammatical form.

What do we mean by similar ideas? To understand this concept, we will take an example:

~~Napoleon was an ambitious, vengeful and capricious dictator- (1)~~

~~Napoleon was full of ambition, vengeful and capricious- (2)~~

Which of the above two sentences are agreeable to us? Of course, the first, because the first sentence has ideas that are in the same form- all the three words are adjectives

The similar ideas in the first sentence are highlighted; the three adjectives that describe Napoleon are similar ideas because they all have similar content, in this case they all are qualities attributed to Napoleon.

In the second example, the three words highlighted are not in the same form; the first is a noun, the other two are adjectives. The better way of framing the second example would be:

~~Napoleon was full of ambition, vengeance and caprice- (3)~~

Just as in the first sentence all the three ideas are adjectives, so in the third example all the three ideas are nouns.

What kind of ideas can be parallel?

In examples 1 and 3 discussed above, we have seen both nouns and adjectives having similar form and structure. Any grammatical unit in a sentence can be parallel; the grammatical unit could be:

~~NOUNS, ADJECTIVES, VERBS, PARTICIPLES, PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES, SUBORDINATE CLAUSES~~

We have already discussed two examples, with adjectives as the parallel elements in the first, and with nouns as the parallel elements in the second.

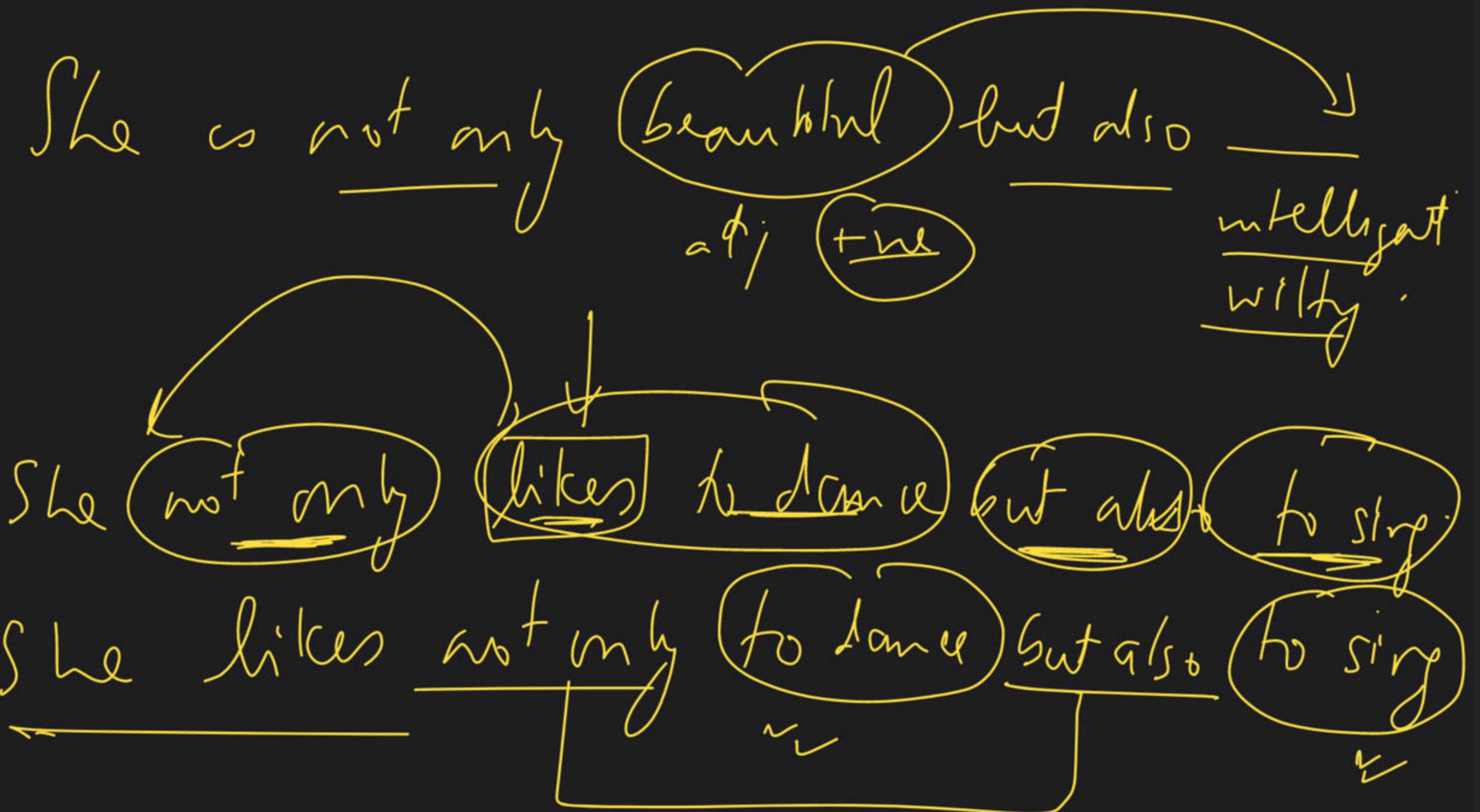
singing and dancing (rights) are my hobbies
— To sing & better than To dance do

$\checkmark \rightarrow$ I like second singing and dancing (to dance) (dancing).

$\checkmark \rightarrow$ I like to sing and to dance.
infinitive

$\checkmark \rightarrow$ I like to sing, to dance and to drink.

$\checkmark \rightarrow$ I like to sing, to drink.
and



If Subject and Verb are enough to make
is a sentence, then why do our
sentences become too
long?

→ (modifying phrases and clauses) → descriptions

How many modifying phrases and clauses can you
have in a sentence?

2
2
parallel construction

(S+V) → I C

We will take a few more examples and see how VERBS, PARTICIPLES, PHRASES and SUBORDINATE CLAUSES could be parallel

Napoleon was an **ambitious**, **vengeful** and **capricious** dictator (the adjectives are the parallel elements)

Napoleon was full of **ambition**, **vengeance** and **caprice** (the nouns are the parallel elements)

The Moghul Emperor Babur **captured** Delhi, **fixed** his headquarters near Agra, and **proceeded** to execute the traitors who had deserted him (the verbs are the three parallel elements in this sentence)

Softly, **gently** and **warmly**, he whispers "I love you" in her ears (the three adverbs are the parallel elements in this sentence)

Directed by Akira Kurosawa and **released** in 1954, 'Seven Samurai' is one of the greatest epics of all time (the two past participles are the parallel elements in the sentence; Note that both the participles are -ed participles)

Connecting the two biggest cities of the country and **managed** by the federal government, the NH6 is the lifeline of India (of the two parallel elements in the sentence, one is a present participle, and the other is a past participle)

The President walked out of the conference hall, **smiling** at the reporters and **waving** his hands at the public (the two present participles are the parallel elements in this sentence)

My opinion is not only **different from** but **contrary to** yours (the prepositions 'to' and 'from' create a parallel structure)

I am concerned not **about what happens in the country** but **about what happens in my house** (the parallel elements in this sentence are prepositional phrases)

I am happy not **because the company is doing well** but **because my promotion is almost certain** (the subordinate clauses are the parallel elements in this sentence)

Not many of us know that William Shakespeare, **the bard of Avon** and **one of the greatest dramatists of all time**, was also a very good businessman (the two appositive phrases are the parallel elements in the sentence)

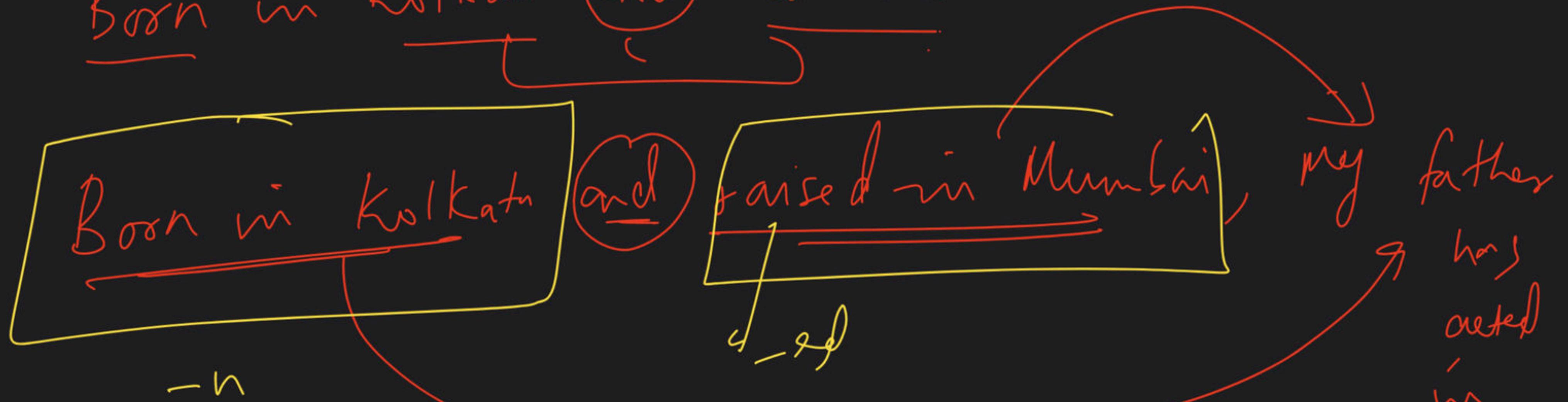
Taking a walk on an empty beach and **staring at the moon on a starry night** are the activities that I love the most (the two gerund phrases are the parallel elements in the sentence)

(**Their country ravaged by the war**) and (**their hopes shattered forever**) (the citizens of Berlin resigned to their fate (the two absolute phrases are the parallel elements in the sentence))

Macaulay's great capacity for affection found its satisfaction in the attachment and close sympathy of his sisters, **who remained in almost daily contact with him even after**

(**My arms folded**) [**I waited for my son outside**] (extra description) [the CAT exam centre]

Born in kolkata and Mumbai



Born in kolkata, raised in Mumbai, ~~and~~ educated
in Oxford, ~~and~~ married
in Tokyo, and divorced
in the

my father
has
acted
in

more
than

1000

plays,

their marriage, and whose children were to him as his own (the two relative clauses, one beginning with 'who' and the other with 'whose' are the two parallel elements in this sentence)

The British introduced western concepts to education in India supporting the replacement of Persian by English as the official language, the use of English as the medium of instruction in all schools, and the training of English-speaking Indians as teachers (the three noun phrases are the parallel elements in the sentence)

With the help of above examples, we have seen all the possible variations of parallel construction. In short, any syntactical unit in a sentence could be parallel. We only have to spot the similar ideas and ensure that they are in the same form. So our next question is:

How to spot parallel ideas?

Parallel construction comes into play only when there is more than one idea, and how do we join more than one idea? We use conjunctions. So, wherever there is a conjunction, the chances are that there we have similar ideas

The discovery of America and the fall of Constantinople are two of the greatest events in human history (the conjunction 'and' is the parallel marker; the two noun phrases are the parallel ideas)

The people here are too feeble either to protect or to oppress (the conjunction either...or is the parallel marker; the infinitive 'to protect' and 'to oppress' are the parallel ideas)

The psychotherapy has worked wonders; he is not only getting up early in the morning but also taking interest in studies (the conjunction not only... but also is the parallel marker; the two gerund phrases are the parallel ideas)

At times the doctor is available both in the morning and during the day (the conjunction both...and is the parallel marker; the prepositional phrases are the parallel ideas)

I would rather sit home and watch a movie than go out and play with my friends (the conjunction rather...than is the parallel marker; the verbs 'sit' and 'go' are the parallel elements)

I have experienced almost every adventurous activity, from climbing Mount Everest during the winters to staying alone in the Amazonian jungle without food water (the conjunction from...to is the parallel marker; the gerund phrases are the parallel ideas)

But
And
More

(and) I

from to

My neighbor, (who is beautiful) and (whose
children are like my own)

S

woks good meals

✓

for me

There are people who suffer in life **not because they are wicked but because they are unfortunate** (the conjunction not...but is the parallel marker; the two subordinate clauses beginning with 'because' are the parallel ideas)

From the examples given above, we note that conjunctions are the parallel markers. The presence of a conjunction should remind us of the presence of a similar idea, thus helping us rewrite or re-arrange the ideas in parallel form.

In the articles below, we will discuss idioms and linking verbs that have built-in parallel structure.

Apart from the conjunctions discussed above, there are certain idioms that must have parallel ideas in their structure.

An act of vengeance is an act of malice (X is Y) (the linking verb is 'is')

As you sow, so shall you reap (As X, So Y)

Compared to singing, dancing is all about physical effort (Compared to X, Y)

We must learn to distinguish generosity from selflessness (Distinguish X from Y)

→ (Loving your parents) is not the same as (loving your neighbors) (X is the same/not the same as Y)

The easier the passage, the tougher the learning

1) SVA

→ 2) To nouns

3) Modifications

4) Parallel construction

5) Adjectives \rightarrow ~~and~~ determiner v.

6) Prepositions → at, in, on

7) AS (IS | Tenses) →

8) (Act / TV) v.

9) Punctuation v. ; , !

10) Conditions (+f.,)