



Grammar

Parallelism

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Parallelism

One of the most common grammar mistakes I see in my high school students' writing involves parallelism. Students must learn to write using parallelism when listing or contrasting components of their content.

This two-page worksheet effectively works on that skill by providing an explanation and examples of parallelism for both lists and contrasts, followed by tasks for both that require students to modify grammatical structures within sentences in order to achieve parallelism. Sentences paraphrased from actual SAT practice sentences are used in order to prepare students for higher-level grammar expectations.

Name _____

Date _____

Parallelism

Parallelism refers to keeping grammatical structures consistent. One situation where you need to keep your grammatical structures consistent is listing components.

Examples:

At the grocery store I bought apples, oranges, and bananas.

(noun, noun, noun)

On the weekends I like to go swimming, biking, and hiking.

(-ing verb, -ing verb, -ing verb)

Last summer I swam at my community pool, biked to my friend's house, and hiked up our town's highest mountain.

(past tense verb + location, past tense verb + location, past tense verb + location)

You will see that when you don't keep listed grammatical structures consistent your sentence can sound awkward:

On the weekends I like to go swimming, biking, and I hike.

Another situation where you need to keep grammatical structures consistent is contrasting ideas/statements. Contrasts are set up by words or phrases such as "either/or", "neither/nor", "this/that", "for/against", "not only/but also".

Examples:

The track meet was not only an exciting challenge but also a fun experience.

(article + adjective + noun, article + adjective + noun)

Neither running the track nor swimming laps appealed to Mary.

(-ing verb + noun, -ing verb + noun)

Directions: Make the listed components (parts) of the following sentences have parallelism.

- 1) Failing to find work on Broadway, the young choreographer supported himself by choreographing music videos, cabaret shows, and he also did some opera dance sequences.
- 2) Brushing your teeth regularly is one way to avoid cavities. If you don't eat sweets is another way.
- 3) Every time you set out on a hike, you should check that you have packed enough food, brought ample first-aid equipment, and to make sure you have a map of the area in which you'll be hiking.
- 4) Two things contribute to the excellent flavor of Sheila's pasta: the fresh ingredients and the way she pays special attention to the timing.
- 5) Advised by the best physical therapists in the city, the clinic director learned to admit, treat, and to release patients in a timely and comprehensive manner.

Directions: Make the contrasted components of the following sentences have parallelism.

- 1) Natural scientists have demonstrated that light can appear not only in waveform but also as particle form, depending upon the conditions under which it is observed.
- 2) Educators worry that more young people vote for the winner of the TV show American Idol than in the presidential election.
- 3) Many American knitters find it easier to hold a ball of yarn in their right hand and not by holding it in their left hand in the manner of continental knitters.

Parallelism—Answer Key

Parallelism refers to keeping grammatical structures consistent. One situation where you need to keep your grammatical structures consistent is making lists.

Examples:

At the grocery store I bought apples, oranges, and bananas.

(noun, noun, noun)

On the weekends I like to go swimming, biking, and hiking.

(-ing verb, -ing verb, -ing verb)

Last summer I swam at my community pool, biked to my friend's house, and hiked up our town's highest mountain.

(past tense verb + location, past tense verb + location, past tense verb + location)

You will see that when you don't keep listed grammatical structures consistent your sentence can sound awkward:

On the weekends I like to go swimming, biking, and I hike.

Note: At this point, teachers can ask students to come up with more examples of sentences that contain lists.

Another situation where you need to keep grammatical structures consistent is contrasting ideas/statements. Contrasts are set up by words or phrases such as “either/or”, “neither/nor”, “this/that”, “for/against”, “not only/but also”.

Examples:

The track meet was not only an exciting challenge but also a fun experience.

(article + adjective + noun, article + adjective + noun)

Neither running the track nor swimming laps appealed to Mary.

(-ing verb + noun, -ing verb + noun)

Note: At this point, teachers can ask students to come up with more examples of sentences that contain contrasts.



Directions: Make the listed components (parts) of the following sentences have parallelism.

Note: Students can attain parallelism in a variety of ways: by rewriting the sentences, by crossing out and writing the correct forms above, or orally.

Shown below are corrected and rewritten sentences. For some sentences parallelism can be attained correctly in more than one way.

- 1) Failing to find work on Broadway, the young choreographer supported himself by choreographing music videos, cabaret shows, and opera dance sequences.
- 2) Brushing your teeth regularly is one way to avoid cavities. Resisting sweets is another way.
- 3) Every time you set out on a hike, you should check that you have packed enough food, brought ample first-aid equipment, and made sure you have a map of the area in which you'll be hiking.
- 4) Two things contribute to the excellent flavor of Sheila's pasta: the fresh ingredients and her special attention to timing.
- 5) Advised by the best physical therapists in the city, the clinic director learned to admit, treat, and release patients in a timely and comprehensive manner.

Directions: Make the contrasted components of the following sentences have parallelism.

- 1) Natural scientists have demonstrated that light can appear not only in waveform but also in particle form, depending upon the conditions under which it is observed.
- 2) Educators worry that more young people vote for the winner of the TV show American Idol than for the winner of the presidential election.
- 3) Many American knitters find it easier to hold a ball of yarn in their right hand than in their left hand in the manner of continental knitters.