

# PARALLEL STRUCTURE

Parallel Structure describes sentence structure where the same pattern of words is used to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. Parallel structure requires sentences that contain lists, or predicates which have multiple parts, to maintain the introduced structure of the words, phrases, and clauses, without mixing them. Oftentimes, these words, phrases, or clauses are linked with coordinating conjunctions (“and,” or “or”).

## Word Level:

### **Not Parallel:**

Mary likes hiking, swimming, and to ride a bicycle.

### **Parallel:**

Mary likes hiking, swimming, and riding a bicycle.

### **Not Parallel:**

The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and in a detailed manner.

### **Parallel:**

The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and thoroughly.

## Phrase Level:

### **Not Parallel:**

Mary wants to go swimming, go hiking, and take a jog.

### **Parallel:**

Mary likes to hike, to swim, and to ride a bicycle.

### **Not Parallel:**

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and his motivation was low.

### **Parallel:**

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and lacked motivation.

### Clause Level:

#### **Not Parallel:**

The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **to do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

#### **Parallel:**

The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **that they should do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

#### **Not Parallel:**

The salesman expected **that he would present** his product at the meeting, **that there would be** time for him to show his slide presentation, and **that questions would be asked** by prospective buyers.

#### **Parallel:**

The salesman expected **that he would present** his product at the meeting, **that there would be** time for him to show his slide presentation, and **that prospective buyers would ask** him questions.

### Lists After Colons:

#### **Not Parallel:**

The dictionary can be used to find these: **word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings,** and **looking up irregular verbs.**

#### **Parallel:**

The dictionary can be used to find these: **word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings,** and **irregular verbs.**

### HOW TO CHECK???

Skim your paper, pausing at the words "and" and "or." Check on each side of these words to see whether the items joined are parallel. If not, make them parallel.

## Parallel Structure Worksheet

Most of the following sentences are out of balance because they lack parallel structure. On the lines provided, rewrite each sentence, giving it parallel structure. If a sentence already has parallel structure, write *Correct*.

EXAMPLE 1. Being compassionate and because she knows a lot about animals, Jessica will make a good veterinarian. Because she is compassionate and knows a lot about animals, Jessica will make a good veterinarian.

1. Rafael delivered his speech with confidence and enthusiastically.

---

---

2. In 1923 Garrett Morgan patented a traffic light with red, yellow, and green lights that looked very different from today's traffic lights.

---

---

3. Mrs. Shapiro had heard about the new hockey league but not that there would be a team in Greensboro.

---

---

4. The selection at the downtown CD store is better than going to the mall.

---

---

5. I have traveled by bus, by train, and by subway, but never by boat.

---

---

6. Thelma likes playing the clarinet, to march in the band, and watching the football games.

---

---

7. The advertisement claims that this toothpaste kills more germs and prevents more cavities than any other toothpaste.

---

---

## Parallel Structure Worksheet Answer Key

1. Rafael delivered his speech with confidence and enthusiastically.

Rafael delivered his speech with confidence and enthusiasm.

OR Rafael delivered his speech confidently and enthusiastically.

2. In 1923 Garrett Morgan patented a traffic light with red, yellow, and green lights that looked very different from today's traffic lights.

In 1923 Garrett Morgan patented a traffic light with red, yellow, and green lights which looked very different from today's traffic lights.

3. Mrs. Shapiro had heard about the new hockey league but not that there would be a team in Greensboro.

Mrs. Shapiro had heard there would be a new hockey league but not that there would be a team in Greensboro.

4. The selection at the downtown CD store is better than going to the mall.

The selection at the downtown CD store is better than at the mall.

5. I have traveled by bus, by train, and by subway, but never by boat.

Correct

6. Thelma likes playing the clarinet, to march in the band, and watching the football games.

Thelma likes playing the clarinet, marching in the band, and watching the football games.

7. The advertisement claims that this toothpaste kills more germs and prevents more cavities than any other toothpaste.

Correct