

# THE BEST ACT PREP COURSE EVER

## PARALLELISM

*ACT English: Problem Set*

When you see a FANBOYS (For And Nor But Or Yet So) conjunction, or comparison & relationship words (like, not only, but also, more, etc.) beware! Always check parallelism when you see these words. Most of these errors fall into two categories:

Verb Form Errors:

- Lack of unity between active, passive, tense, gerunds, or infinitive phrases

List Errors:

- Lack of unity in list of items or phrases

Correct the parallelism error(s), if they exist, in the following sentences.

1. Our duty at the time was to carefully stock more than fifty aisles throughout the night, to pick up fallen items, and we also made sure to set up displays nicely.
2. In her early life, Olympic track and field champion Wilma Rudolph dealt with polio, battled scarlet fever, and wearing a brace to correct her weakened left leg.
3. Jerry Jones supports the repeal of the Environmental Protection Act as well as that of the social security system should be removed.
4. In her role as a diner hostess, she often used old-fashioned expressions while she served dinner guests and introducing them to their tables.
5. My family and I walk out to the ocean, swim against the current, and fighting its pull away from the shore.
6. The instructions state that one can raise the temperature by turning the knob to the left, and lowering it by turning it the other way.
7. Levees can fail because of excessive floods, a break in the wall, or eroding of the wall over time or from a storm.
8. By 2004 he had launched a website of his own, and members of his college had been connected by him through one of the first forms of social media.
9. The high school's mission is to foster an atmosphere where all will be accepted and bullies were punished.
10. Over the summer, he attempted to give back to his community in different ways by helping out at the pet shelter, read to the children at the orphanage, and cooking for the Sunday soup kitchen.
11. Some of the many improvements for the school planned in the next years include renovating the science laboratories, improving safety, and the construction of a new fitness center.
12. After painting for several years, she found that she prefers using acrylics to use oil-based paints.
13. During our visit to Amsterdam, we biked along the canals, spent time at some art museums, and ate Dutch pancakes.
14. Her father is her biggest inspiration; she admires his courage, his strength, and that he is tenacious.
15. The Roman Forum was a hub of city life. It hosted public speeches, holding criminal trials, and brought people together to watch gladiator matches.
16. Sandra requested to be transferred to a different room because her roommate stole her food, played loud music in the middle of the night, and locks her out of the room.
17. New York City's The High Line park was established to revitalize an abandoned section of railroad, creating a community space and showcasing local artists.
18. If you find yourself lost in the wilderness, it is important to remember that in order to survive, you need water, food, and to build a shelter.
19. Audrey Hepburn's early career entailed appearing in the Broadway play *Gigi*, starring in the film *Roman Holiday*, and acted in a production of *Ondine*.
20. Although his coursework at school can take up most of his free time, Sam still likes to run, to play tennis, or swimming right when he gets home.

Choose the correct use of parallelism from the following options.

1. While taking what turned out to be a much harder math course than she originally thought, Ashley honed her ability to recall formulas and diligently focusing on studying the most difficult topics.  
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. focus
  - C. had focused
  - D. had been focusing
2. The cats roaming around the yard and the large dogs snarling at us from every angle gave me flashbacks to a hospital bed.  
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. snarled
  - C. snarl
  - D. were snarling
3. During a trip to Santorini, half of our group preferred sunbathing at the bed and breakfast to explore the island.  
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. to explore throughout
  - C. to explored
  - D. to exploring
4. He is deserving of the school's humanitarian award because he volunteers the most hours, participates in school advisory boards, and to be an upstanding citizen in the community.  
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. and be the
  - C. and being an
  - D. and is an
5. The scientists organized their thoughts, drew out a hypothesis, and to conduct a successful experiment which was published and forms the basis of medical procedures today.  
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. conducted
  - C. conducting
  - D. conduct

**ANSWER KEY**

Correct the parallelism error(s) in the following sentences.

1. Our duty at the time was to carefully stock more than fifty aisles throughout the night, to pick up fallen items, and to set up displays nicely.  
Remove unnecessary “we also made sure” and keep all three verbs in infinitive form.
2. In her early life, Olympic track and field champion Wilma Rudolph dealt with polio, battled scarlet fever, and wore a brace to correct her weakened left leg.  
“Wore” replaces “to wear” to keep all verbs in the past tense.
3. Jerry Jones supports the repeal of the Environmental Protection Act as well as that of the social security system.  
Change the second part of the sentence into a noun phrase to match the first part. This is a phrase used to complete comparisons. When we say “that of” it is the same as saying “a repeal of.” If this one was difficult for you, you could also work on your comparisons skills. Incomplete comparison questions are rare on the ACT, but it’s a concept that is good to know for those seeking top scores.
4. In her role as a diner hostess, she often used old-fashioned expressions while she served dinner guests and introduced them to their tables.  
“Introduced” replaces “introducing” to match “served” in past tense.
5. My family and I walk out to the ocean, swim against the current, and fight its pull away from the shore.  
“Fight” replaces “fighting” to keep all verbs in present tense.
6. The instructions state that one can raise the temperature by turning the knob to the left, and lower it by turning it the other way.  
“Lower” replaces “lowering” to match “raise” in present tense.
7. Levees can fail because of excessive floods, a break in the wall, erosion of the wall over time, or from a storm.  
Change “eroding” into a noun phrase to maintain parallel structure. Omitting the additional or and adding an appropriate comma also help the sentence retain parallel structure.
8. By 2004 he had launched a website of his own and had connected members of his college through one of the first forms of social media.  
Avoid passive voice and change the verb form so all verbs are in the active past.
9. The high school’s mission is to foster an atmosphere where all will be accepted, and bullies will be punished.  
Change second verb phrase into the future form to maintain parallelism, and add a comma before the “and” to denote there is a clause to follow.
10. Over the summer, he attempted to give back to his community in different ways by helping out at the pet shelter, reading to the children at the orphanage, and cooking for the Sunday soup kitchen.  
Replace “read” with “reading” to keep all the verbs in present progressive tense.
11. Some of the many improvements for the school planned in the next years include renovating the science laboratories, improving safety, and constructing a new fitness center.  
Replace “the construction of” with “constructing” to keep all verbs in the present progressive form.
12. After painting for several years, she found that she prefers using acrylics to using oil-based paints.  
Replace “use” with “using” to keep all verbs in present progressive tense.

13. Correct/No error.
14. Her father is her biggest inspiration; she admires his courage, his strength, and his tenacity.  
Replace “he is tenacious” with “tenacity” to keep all the items as nouns.
15. The Roman Forum was a hub for city life. It hosted public speeches, held criminal trials, and brought people together to watch gladiator matches.  
Replace “holding” with “held” to keep all the items in past tense.
16. Sandra requested to be transferred to a different room because her roommate stole her food, played loud music in the middle of the night, and locked her out of the room.  
Replace “locks” with “locked” to keep all verbs in past tense.
17. No error.  
Though this may seem unparallel, it is ok, because by revitalizing the railroad the project is at once doing the other two things listed and connected by and at the end of the sentence. They are a participial phrase that adds more information to the sentence. The two final elements are parallel parts of a phrase at the end of the sentence, while the first element is part of the main clause. It would also be correct, however, if it read “to create a community space, and to showcase...” If the latter option were available, it would be a better choice than the sentence as is, but it is not necessarily incorrect.
18. If you find yourself lost in the wilderness, it is important to remember that in order to survive, you need water, food, and shelter.  
Replace “to build a shelter” with “shelter” to keep all the items as nouns.
19. Audrey Hepburn’s early career entailed appearing in the Broadway play Gigi, starring in the film Roman Holiday, and acting in a production of Ondine.  
Replace “acted” with “acting” to keep all the verbs in present progressive tense.
20. Although his coursework at school can take up most of his free time, Sam still likes to run, to play tennis, or swimming right when he gets home.  
Replace “swimming” with “to swim” to keep all the verbs in the infinitive form.

**ANSWER KEY**

1. B    2. A    3. D    4. D    5. B

**ANSWER EXPLANATIONS**

1. **B.** The parallel structure of the sentence follows, “Ashley honed her ability to recall ... and diligently focus” not “focusing” because the verb focus must follow the infinitive form of “recall” that came before.
2. **A.** The two verbs “roaming” and “snarling” match and therefore appropriately follow the parallel structure of this sentence.
3. **D.** The phrase should read “to exploring” because the sentence states that the group “preferred sunbathing ... to exploring” so the verb must be in present progressive tense as well.
4. **D.** “Is” replaces “to be” to match the previous verbs in present tense, “volunteers” and “participates.”
5. **B.** “Conducted” replaces “to conduct” to match the previous verbs in past tense, “organized” and “drew.”