

*Instructor:* Zeghdoud. M

### *Parallelism and Faulty Parallelism*

- **Definition**

When writing about items in a series, be sure that you present each item in the same grammatical form. When all items in a series are in the same grammatical form, the sentence or passage is said to have **parallel structure**. Therefore, and in order to make sentences easy to understand, pairs and lists of words have to be parallel i.e. they are expressed with the same grammatical form or function. In other words, they have to be all nouns, all adjectives, all adverbs, or all verbs and so on (a noun must be matched with a noun, a phrase must be matched with a phrase, an infinitive must be matched with an infinitive and so on).

- Parallelism improves the writing style and adds *clarity*, *elegance*, and *symmetry* to what you write.
- Parallel structure is a writing technique worth acquiring because it makes sentences smoother and shows the connection between ideas.
- It helps to “bind up” a sentence, making its parts and meaning much easier to grasp.

### *Parallelism cases/situations*

#### 1. *Listing/ or parallelism in series*

Words and phrases that appear in lists should be parallel; they should be verbs, nouns, adverbs, adjectives, phrases ...etc

#### **Examples:**

1. We need **bread, milk, cheese, and mustard.** ► Parallel (all nouns)
2. She prefers **singing, dancing, and painting.** ► Parallel (all gerunds)
3. The office was **small, dark, dusty, and hot.** ► Parallel (all adjectives)
4. She applied the paint **slowly, carefully, and perfectly.** ► Parallel (all adverbs)

#### *Cases of faulty parallelism*

- **Faulty:** He spoke **softly, precisely, and with authority.** ► (Adv /adv/ prepositional phrase)

**Parallel:** He spoke **softly, precisely, and authoritatively.** ► (Adv/adv /adv)

- **Faulty:** Mr. David is **a lawyer, a politician, and he teaches .** ► (noun/noun/clause)

**Parallel:** Mr. David is **a lawyer, a politician, and a teacher.** ► (noun/noun/noun)

- “A, by, to...” should usually be repeated when they are used in parallel construction or structure.

**Example 1:** He saw a lady, girl, and a group of women ► faulty.

He saw **a** lady, **a** girl, and **a** group of women ► parallel.

**Example2:**

- **By not** restricting tourism and encouraging foreign investments, Algeria hopes to make economic progress. ► Faulty.

**By not** restricting tourism and **by** encouraging foreign investments, Algeria hopes to make economic progress. ► Parallel.

2. **Elements which are related by conjunctions:** For coordinated elements by coordination conjunctions “FANBOYS” (A and A)/or correlative conjunctions (either A or A)

**A and A**



Noun **and** noun

Verb **or** verb

Phrase **but** phrase

Clause **for** clause

**either A or A**



**either** noun **or** noun

**neither** verb **nor** verb

**Both** phrase **and** phrase

**Not only** clause **but also** clause.

**Examples:**

1. My watch is **classy** and **it is shining** ► faulty (adj/ clause)
  - ✓ My watch is **classy** and **shiny** ► parallel (adj /adj)
2. My friend is **adorable** and **she spreads joy** ► faulty (adj/clause)
  - ✓ My friend is **adorable** and **joyful** ► parallel (adj/adj)
3. My professor is skillful **at explaining the lecture** and **to simplify it** ► faulty (prepositional phrase/ infinitive phrase)
  - ✓ My professor is skillful **at explaining the lecture** and **at simplifying it.** ► parallel (prepositional phrase/prepositional phrase)
4. Her baby has already started **walking** and **to talk.** ► faulty (gerund /infinitive)
  - ✓ Her baby has already started **walking** and **talking.** ► parallel (gerund/gerund)

5. Either **they respect the rules** or **quitting the game** ► Faulty (clause/ gerund phrase).

✓ Either **they respect the rules** or **they quit the game** ► Parallel (clause/ clause).

6. The show is both **enjoyable** and **it is educational**. ► (adj/clause)

The show is both **enjoyable** and **educational**. ► (adj/adj)

Hint

When using correlative conjunctions, be sure to place them as closely as possible to the words they join.

**Examples:**

-They neither wanted our advice nor our help.

✓ They wanted neither our advice nor our help.

-She will be flying both to Minneapolis and Chicago.

✓ She will be flying to both Minneapolis and Chicago.

**N.B:** the use of “either as” must be as the following:

-They are regarded as either ordinary criminals or as war criminals.

✓ They are regarded either as ordinary criminals or as war criminals. (correct)

3. **Parallelism in comparison and contrast:** indicated in the following form:

-Noun **better than** noun

-Phrase **bigger than** phrase

-Clause **warmer than** clause

**Example:**

➤ **Swimming in the ocean** is much tougher than **to swim in a pool**. ► Faulty (gerund phrase/ infinitive phrase)

✓ **Swimming in the ocean** is much tougher than **swimming in a pool** ► parallel (gerund phrase/gerund phrase)

4. **Parallelism in antithetical expressions:** by this expression, two opposite ideas are put together in a sentence to achieve a contrasting effect with such expressions: **but not/rather than**.

**Example:**

➤ They decided **to postpone the trip** but not **cancelling it** ► faulty (infinitive phrase/ gerund phrase)

They decided **to postpone the trip** but not **to cancel it** ► parallel (infinitive phrase/ infinitive phrase).

5. **Parallelism with verbs:** “passive and active voice”

-Active and active

-Passive and passive

**Example:**

► They **wrote** the article and it **was published** in the journal ► faulty (active/ passive)

They **wrote** the article and **they published it** in the journal ► parallel (active/ active)

**Practice**

**Activity one: underline the parallel forms in the following paragraph.**

When deciding what kind of pet to get, most people consider only dogs, cats, and fish. Cats are soft, cute, and playful. Dogs are fun but can be destructive. They like to dig holes in the garden and to chew holes in furniture. Fish are excellent pets because they don't make much noise, they don't eat a lot, and they won't ruin your carpets.

**Activity two:**

**Read the following sentences. If the sentence is correct do not change anything. If it is incorrect, find the parallel structure problem and correct it.**

1. The factory workers were ready, able, and they were quite determined to do a great job.  
➤ .....
2. The computer network is safer, stronger, and more secure.  
➤ .....
3. We cannot be worried about or terrified of the difficulties in life.  
➤ .....
4. The actor taught his students how to read, how to cry, and to talk with funs.  
➤ .....
5. Either you can join the army or the navy.  
➤ .....
6. The reorganization of the company is neither simple nor will it be cheap.  
➤ .....
7. Fred supports the idea because, first, its simplicity; and second, it is unique.  
➤ .....
8. I like volleyball, soccer, and to play basketball.  
.....
9. I am allergic to the dog's hair and how it smells.  
➤ .....
10. They are either friends or they are not.  
➤ .....
11. He doesn't have enough time to play sports, doing social work, and socializing with friends.  
➤ .....
12. She is smart, beautiful, and she cares.  
➤ .....
13. He made decisions slowly and with caution.  
➤ .....
14. Mary likes hiking, swimming, and to ride a bicycle.  
➤ .....
15. He intended to read the book, do homework, and research.  
➤ .....
16. He looked for the keys in the car, under the bed, and his bag.  
➤ .....
17. Paula went to work, restaurant, and to the cinema  
.....
18. Do dogs chase cats because they are natural enemies or because it is fun?  
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