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# Parallel Structure

Do I maintain  
***parallelism***  
with a  
***participle***?



Or should I  
use an  
***infinitive***?

This presentation covers distinguishing between ***parallel*** and ***non-parallel*** elements.



**A parallelism item on an objective test might look like this ...**

# Sample Item

**Directions:** Choose the sentence that has no errors in structure.

- A. Eileen bought new shoes for the party, a gold charm for her mother, and to treat her best friend Maria to lunch.
- B. Eileen decided to buy new shoes for the party, purchasing a gold charm for her mother, and treating her best friend Maria to lunch.
- C. **Eileen purchased new shoes for the party, a gold charm for her mother, and lunch for Maria, her best friend.**

# Items in a series must have parallel structure.

**Parallelism** looks like this:

Shane  ,  , and  .

Shane  ,  , and  .

## Here is an example:

Shane **ate** the pizza, **wiped** his lips, and **burped** with contentment.

**Ate** = past tense verb;  
**wiped** = past tense  
verb; and **burped** =  
past tense verb.



**Don't create problems by mixing grammatical elements.**

**Non-parallel structure** looks like this:

Shane  ,  , and  .

Shane  ,  , and  .



# The problem looks like this:

Shane **ate** the pizza, **wiped** his lips, and **burping** with contentment.

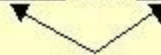
Now **look** what you've **done!** **Ate** and **wiped** = past tense verbs, but **burping** = present participle!



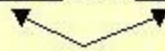
# 5 Rules to Parallelism

- 1. Use parallel structure with elements joined by coordinating conjunctions.

**Faulty:** Your company and what its potential is are of great value to me.



**Correct:** Your company and its potential are of great value to me.



- Use parallel structure with elements in lists or in a series.

**Faulty:** The tribes emphasized collective survival, mutual aid, and **being responsible** for one another.

parallel

parallel

**NOT** parallel

**Correct:** The tribes emphasized collective survival, mutual aid, and **responsibility for one another**.

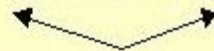
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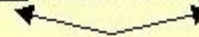
parallel

- Use parallel structure with elements being compared. (X is more than / better than Y)

**Faulty:** I like swimming *better than* to dive.



**Correct:** I like swimming *better than* diving.

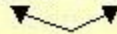


- Use parallel structure with elements joined by a linking verb or a verb of being.

**Faulty:** To succeed is opening a new opportunity.



**Correct:** To succeed is to open a new opportunity.



- Use parallel structure with elements joined by a correlative conjunction.

**Faulty:** Clara *not only* wants money *but also* fame.

**Correct:** Clara wants *not only* money *but also* fame.

**Correct:** Clara *not only* wants money *but also* wants fame.

# Quick Test, Part 1

**Directions:** In the items that follow, choose the sentence that has no errors in structure.



Let's see  
how **you**  
perform!

# Item 1

- A. Barking dogs, kittens that were meowing, and squawking parakeets greet the pet shop visitors.
- B. Barking dogs, meowing kittens, and squawking parakeets greet the pet shop visitors.**
- C. Dogs that bark, kittens that meow, and parakeets squawking greet the pet shop visitors.



## Item 2

- A. **During class, Samuel spent his time flirting with Brittney, eating candy, and doodling on the assignment sheet.**
- B. During class, Samuel spent his time flirting with Brittney, he ate candy, and doodling on the assignment sheet.
- C. During class, Samuel spent his time to flirt with Brittney, to eat candy, and doodling on the assignment sheet.

## Item 3

- A. Alex looked everywhere for his math book—under the bed, on his desk, and he searched inside the refrigerator.
- B. Alex looked everywhere for his math book—viewing under the bed, searching on his desk, and inside the refrigerator.
- C. Alex looked everywhere for his math book—under the bed, on his desk, and inside the refrigerator.**

# Item 4

- A. **The manager wanted staff who arrived on time, smiled at the customers, and didn't snack on the chicken nuggets.**
- B. The manager wanted staff who arrived on time, would be smiling at the customers, and would not be snacking on the chicken nuggets.
- C. The manager wanted staff who arrived on time, smiled at the customers, and no snacking on the chicken nuggets.

# Item 5

- A. **After giving Jeremy her phone number, Felicia had to tolerate his late night calls, stupid conversations, and requests for her math homework.**
- B. After giving Jeremy her phone number, Felicia had to tolerate his late night calls, the fact that he carried on stupid conversations, and requests for her math homework.
- C. After giving Jeremy her phone number, Felicia had to tolerate being woken up late at night, having stupid conversations, and he constantly requested her math homework.

# Quick Test, Part 2

**Directions:** In the items that follow, choose the correct word or phrase within the context suggested by the sentence.

Now try a  
***different***  
type!



## Item 6

Pasta boiling in water, \_\_\_\_\_, and garlic bread baking in the oven welcomed Francisco as he opened the door.

A. simmered tomato sauce in the pan

**B. tomato sauce simmering in the pan**

C. tomato sauce that simmered in the pan

D. saucy tomatoes that were simmering in the pan

## Item 7

During our vacation in the Bahamas, we hope \_\_\_\_\_, to enjoy beautiful sunsets, and to dance ourselves dizzy at reggae clubs.

- A.that we eat delicious seafood
- B.that eating delicious seafood occurs
- C.to eat delicious seafood**
- D.eating delicious seafood

## Item 8

Karen wished Ray chewed with his mouth closed, for otherwise he was everything she wanted in a date; he was tall, intelligent, and \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. he looked good
- B. being good looking
- C. one handsome man to look at
- D. handsome**



## Item 9

To win Laurie's love, Albert visited the florist for roses, the drugstore for a box of chocolates, and \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. bought an expensive gold necklace at the jewelry store
- B. the jeweler for an expensive gold necklace**
- C. the jeweler where he bought an expensive gold necklace
- D. to buy an expensive gold necklace

## Item 10

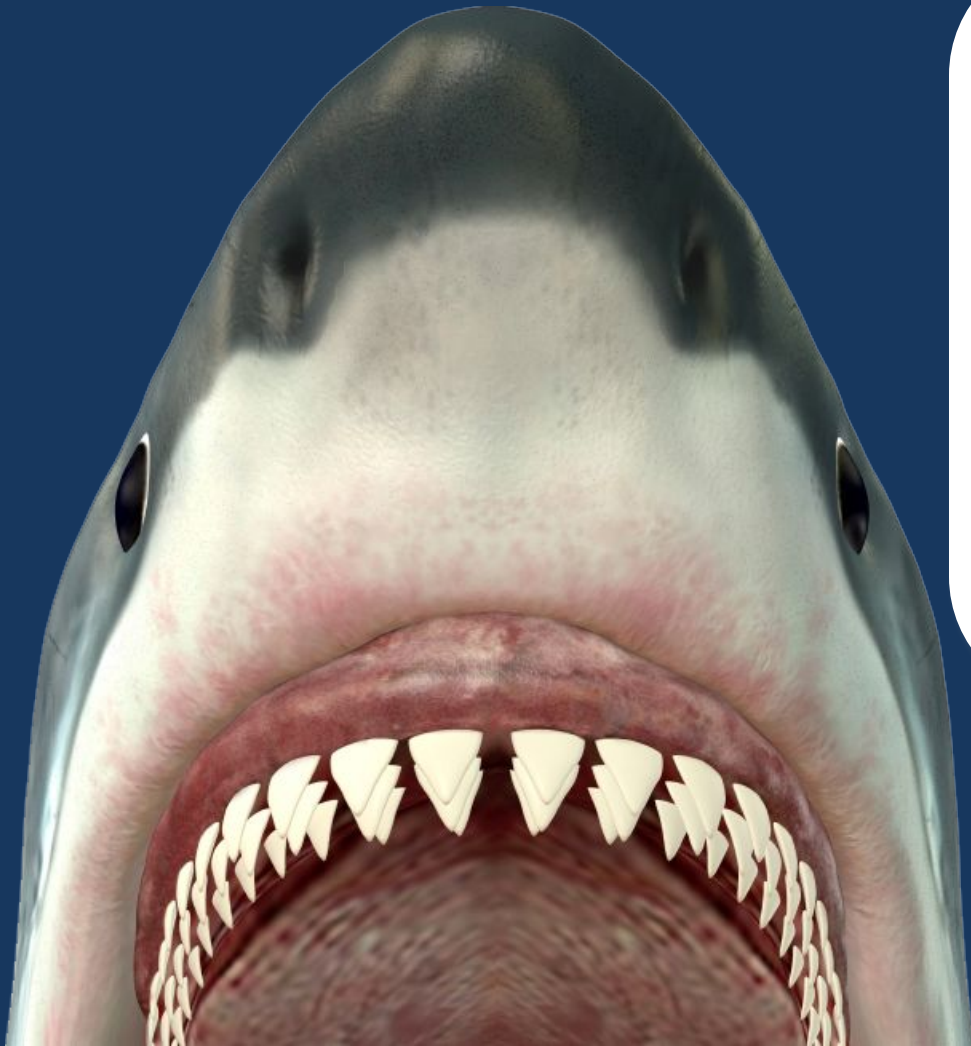
Kimberly won't date Terry because he is too short, too noisy, and \_\_\_\_\_.

A. because he picks his teeth with his fingers

**B. too impolite**

C. is the most impolite man she has ever met

D. Picking his teeth with his fingers



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**The End.**