

Ellen's Grammar Corner
Worksheet for **Faulty Parallelism**

Indicate whether the following sentences are **correct** or have **faulty parallelism** by placing a **C** or **//** in the blank preceding the sentence. Then, correct the faulty parallel construction.

- _____ 1. They decided that they needed a change, that they could afford a new house, and wanted to move to Arizona.
- _____ 2. I like playing baseball, reading about sports, and tacos.
- _____ 3. Let me remind you not only of your duty but of your promise.
- _____ 4. Members of the work crew spent their lunch break eating sandwiches, napping on the grass, and reading newspapers.
- _____ 5. Hawaii is famous for its beaches that are beautiful, warm climate, and exotic atmosphere.
- _____ 6. Before leaving for work, Teresa exercises, eats breakfast, and the dog is fed.

- _____ 7. The office has run out of pens, paper, ink cartridges, and we need more toner, too.
- _____ 8. Someday America would judge his children not “by the color of their skin but by the content of their character”. – *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, “I Have a Dream.”
- _____ 9. At the International Food Festival, visitors tasted tortillas, snacked on sukiyaki, and were munching on manicotti.
- _____ 10. You’ll always be happy if you have your health, a loving family, and your work is satisfying.

Notes for **Faulty Parallelism**

In a series of two or more, each element must
 appear in the same grammatical **form/structure**
 perform the same grammatical **function**

Good writers use parallel structure to
 “beat a rhythmic drum”
 establish a pattern
 repeat & stress an idea

When to use parallelism

presenting a series of items

Popular summer vacation activities include **visiting** relatives, **hiking** in state parks, and **spending** time at the beach.

offering choices

The instructor announced that each student in the class could either **write a ten-page report** or **take the final exam**.

making a point effectively

“**Ask not what** your country can do for you; **ask what** you can do for your country.” –*President John F. Kennedy*

“Don’t ask what your country can do for you. Instead, you should be asking what you can do for your country” – not quite the same tone or emphasis!

Candidates for parallel structure

entire sentence [ex: compound sentence]

John hit the ball, and **he ran** to first base.

sentence part [ex: compound subject, compound verb, or “other stuff”]

John **hit** the ball and **ran** to first base.

subordinate addition [ex: prepositional phrases]

John hit the ball **over the pitcher’s head, above the out-stretched hands of the shortstop, but into the waiting glove of the center fielder**.

subpart of subordinate addition [ex: -ing verb clauses]

After **stepping up** to the plate and **acknowledging** the cheers of the crowd, John hit the ball.

Correlative conjunctions

come in pairs

connect grammatically equal elements

both . . . and

either . . . or

neither . . . nor

not . . . but

not only . . . but (also)

whether . . . or

Example: Food Irradiation (as an idea or a topic to be developed)

Not Parallel

How is it good?

- Longer shelf life
- Using fewer pesticides
- Kills bacteria

Concerns

- Nutritional value
- Consumers are worried
- Workers' safety

Parallel

Benefits

- Extends shelf life
- Requires fewer pesticides
- Kills bacteria

Concerns

- Lowers nutritional value
- Alarms consumers
- Endangers workers

Ex: Many people favor food irradiation because it extends shelf life, requires fewer pesticides, and kills bacteria; on the other hand, opponents express concern over the fact that food irradiation lowers nutritional value, alarms consumers, and endangers workers.

Sources:

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