

Quiz Answers

1. **N** The sandwich was made with cheese bread, spread with herbed mayonnaise, and filled with roasted vegetables.
2. **N** When I was a kid, I learned gymnastics, archery, and piano.
3. **P**
4. **N** Before I went back to college, I gathered my supplies, did a grammar review, and shopped for new clothes.
5. **P**
6. I made a crispy salad, a smooth soup, a tasty casserole, and a rich dessert.



If you need more help, make an appointment with us at...

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Student Academic Learning Services

Parallel Structure

What is Parallel Structure?

Parallel structure involves using a grammatical pattern to imply that two or more items in a series have the same importance.

Why use Parallel Structure?

Structure that isn't parallel sometimes isn't precisely grammatically *wrong*, but it comes across as awkward. Parallelism has long been a technique used in persuasive writing and poetry. If a number of verbs have the same subject, parallelism can prevent the need to repeat that noun.

The Word Level

PARALLEL: I like singing, acting, and dancing.

NOT: I like singing, acting, and to dance.

The Phrase Level

PARALLEL: Video games enable me to relax and to escape from reality.

NOT: Video games enable me to relax and provide an escape from reality.

The Clause Level

PARALLEL: In Canadian society, teenagers do volunteer work because it is inspired by their social conscience, it is mandatory for school, or it is appreciated on university applications.

NOT: In Canadian society, teenagers do volunteer work because of their social conscience, they are forced to by their high school, or universities like to see it on applications.

What sorts of things should be parallel?

Headings and subheadings

(in this example, gerunds are used throughout)

Example: Golfing, Swimming, Sailing

NOT: How to Golf, Swimming, Learning to Sail

Ideas being compared or contrasted

(in this example, no helping verbs are used)

Example: Fishing is more fun than cycling.

NOT: Fishing is more fun than going cycling.

Items in a list

(in this example, an adjective and noun without a definite article are used throughout)

Example: We will study Russian Cuisine, Russian Geography, and Russian Monarchy.

NOT: We will study Russian Cuisine, Geography of Russia, and the Russian Monarchy.

Instructions

(in this example, the active imperative with a simple verb is used throughout)

Example: Water the plants. Feed the dog. Sweep the floor.

NOT: Make sure the plants are watered. Feed the dog. Have the floor swept.

Compound elements of a sentence

(in this example, the active voice is maintained)

Example: I ate the cookie, and John ate the cake.

NOT: I ate the cookie, and the cake was eaten by John.

Thesis Statements

(in this example, each verb is in the present tense and applies to “public health workers”) **Example:** Learning about the social customs of other cultures can help public health workers relate better to their clients, prevent misunderstandings, and deliver the best possible service.

NOT: Learning about the social customs of other cultures can help public health workers relating to their clients, prevent misunderstandings, and enable the delivery of the best service.

Parallelism Quiz

Indicate if each of the following sentences is parallel (P) or not (N). If it is not, try and correct it. The answers are over the flap.

- ___ I ate cheese bread, spread with herbed mayonnaise, and roasted vegetables.
- ___ When I was a kid, I learned gymnastics, archery, and to play piano.
- ___ I like to surf the internet, compare prices, and then make purchases.
- ___ Before I went back to college, I had to gather my supplies, do a grammar review, and I shopped for new clothes.
- ___ Reading a good book is like making a new friend.
- ___ I made a crispy salad, a smooth soup, a tasty casserole, and dessert.