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Parallelism I - Lists

You probably know from math that parallel lines are two lines that go in the same direction. The concept is similar in English in the way we structure certain things together.

I like flying planes, riding trains, and driving automobiles.

Notice the same format for each of the things in the list: gerund (word ending in *ing*)-noun, gerund-noun, gerund-noun. It sounds nice and fluid when the sentence is put together that way. It would be awkward and incorrect to say:

I like flying planes, riding trains, and to drive automobiles.

Here's another correct version:

I like to fly planes, to ride trains, and to drive automobiles. (infinitive-noun pattern)

It's also correct to leave out the *to*'s because they're implied to carry over to all three items in the list:

I like to fly planes, ride trains, and drive automobiles.

But again, you must be consistent—it would be incorrect to write:

I like to fly planes, ride trains, and to drive automobiles.

The *to* is used again after being left out in the second item. Let's walk through some examples so you see what sentences need to be parallel on the SAT:

Example 1

Wrong:	In chess, remember these three goals: get your pieces to the center, capture the opposing pieces, and attacking the opposing king.
Correct:	In chess, remember these three goals: get your pieces to the center, capture the opposing pieces, and attack the opposing king.

Example 2

Wrong: Fans of Teresa admire her ability to sing, her passion for performance, and she has good looks.

Correct: Fans of Teresa admire her ability to sing, her passion for performance, and **her good looks**.

Example 3

Wrong: The baby crawled quickly, sleeps softly, and cried loudly.

Correct: The baby crawled quickly, **slept** softly, and cried loudly.

Parallelism requires the verb tenses to be the same.

Example 4

Wrong: The fashion designer was praised for her creative, comfortable, and her having innovative clothing.

Correct: The fashion designer was praised for her creative, comfortable, and ~~her having~~ innovative clothing.

Parallelism most often shows up in a series or a list of things as in the examples above, but it can also come up when pairing two phrases together, especially with *and* or *or*:

Example 5

Wrong: I respect his eloquence and that he is brave.

Correct: I respect his eloquence and **his bravery**.

Example 6

Wrong: Hunting under the moonlight and to howl on top of the mountains were instinctual when the full moon appeared above the werewolves.

Correct: Hunting under the moonlight and **howling** on top of the mountains were instinctual when the full moon appeared above the werewolves.

Example 7

Wrong: I like singing more than dance.

Correct: I like singing more than **dancing**.

Example 8

Wrong: To learn what it means to love someone is accepting the flaws of others.

Correct: To learn what it means to love someone is **to accept** the flaws of others.

Example 9

Wrong:	The school was designed to be a place where creativity would be celebrated and hard work was rewarded there.
Correct:	The school was designed to be a place where creativity would be celebrated and hard work (would be) rewarded .

Note that *would be* can be left out because it's implied to carry over.

Example 10

Wrong:	The principal planned to improve teacher training and clearer rules for student conduct should be established.
Correct:	The principal planned to improve teacher training and (to) establish clearer rules for student conduct .

Example 11

Wrong:	The people who ride the bus or have taken the train can't afford to drive to work.
Correct:	The people who ride the bus or take the train can't afford to drive to work.

Example 12

Wrong:	Traveling the world has given me the pleasure of meeting new people, to explore different ways of life.
Correct:	Traveling the world has given me the pleasure of meeting new people, of exploring different ways of life.

Exercise 1: Make the following sentences parallel. Answers for this chapter start on page 224.

1. That she looks beautiful and her charm help her get out of speeding tickets.
2. Visitors to my hometown in the middle of nowhere can experience rides on the bus, drinks at the tavern, and eating at the McDonald's.
3. Because of their amazing sense of smell, quick agility, and they have fierceness when protecting themselves, lions are the kings of the savannah.
4. My tasks today are to file for divorce, burn my house down, and to start all over.
5. By investing in nuclear energy, we can save the environment, jobs, and it costs us less.
6. In his free time, Wild Bill likes smoking Cuban cigars and to drink the finest red wine Martha's Vineyard has to offer.
7. Quickly and being silent, Jesse and Walt snuck by the sleeping police officers and made off with a barrel of methylamine.
8. Inspired by the hard work of his immigrant father, Jeremy wanted to pay for college, find a job, and a new house.
9. According to Apple, Samsung's directors need to admit they violated Apple's patent, pay the fines, and also needed is to recall all their products.
10. Samsung's executives responded by completely rejecting Apple's ultimatum in court and they countersued Apple back for patent infringement.
11. The 300 men trained diligently, screamed fiercely into battle, and valiantly fights.
12. At the yard sale, Jimmy found dusty writings of Einstein, containers of fossils, and Chinese opium boxes.
13. American immigrants took huge risks to leave their homelands and searching for a better life elsewhere.
14. Come to the next party prepared to eat a lot, to dance a lot, and with a thirst for drinks.
15. As soon as he graduated from high school, he packed all his belongings, rushed to the college campus, and leaves his parents behind.



Exercise 2: Answers for this chapter start on page 224.

Trip to Paris

The last year of high school was filled with optimism and **1** emotions that were nostalgic. It was like standing on a bridge that must be crossed, leaving behind the carefree days of youth and **2** stepped into a life of responsibilities, business meetings, and **3** paying bills. My friends and I decided to have one last trip together before heading off in our own directions.

My friends had decided to go to college on the other side of the country, **4** join an environmental group to save the rainforest, or work for their parents in the family business, which was what I was doing in the same town I'd lived in all my life. Out of the three of us, I needed this vacation the most. I had never left the state, let alone **5** departing from the country. So when Tom suggested we spend the summer in Europe, I was thrilled. After all, travel is a great way to bond with others and **6** to learn about the world.

1

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) nostalgia.
- C) nostalgic emotions.
- D) emotions of nostalgia.

2

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) to step
- C) stepping
- D) we stepped

3

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) bills that have to be paid.
- C) having to pay bills.
- D) bills.

4

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) to join
- C) joining
- D) they will join

5

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) the country.
- C) from the country.
- D) depart from the country.

6

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) the world can be learned about.
- C) for learning about the world.
- D) we can learn about the world.

We landed at Heathrow Airport at about 4pm, **7** would sleep in the terminal for a few hours, and took a connecting flight to Paris. We almost missed our flight because of the loud, pushy, and **8** large size of the crowd. On the flight, we **9** were reading books, watched movies, and listened to music. When we arrived, it finally dawned on us that we were all alone in a foreign country. As students and **10** we were clueless tourists, we walked aimlessly through the streets with giant backpacks.

7

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) we slept
- C) slept
- D) sleeping

8

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) large crowd.
- C) crowd that was large.
- D) having a large crowd.

9

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) read books,
- C) decided to read books,
- D) had books to read,

10

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) as well
- C) being
- D) as

We found a car rental place and chose a Volkswagen Beetle that was inexpensive to rent and **11** easily driven. It was perfect for taking us through the streets of Paris and **12** to show us the popular tourist sites. The history of Paris dates back to the third century. Today, the city is known for its coffee culture and **13** for its fashion boutiques. It didn't take long for us to realize there was no way we could see everything in just a few hours, so we just toured the usual tourist attractions like the Louvre, the Eiffel tower, and **14** we went to the Arc de Triomphe. By having a budget and **15** we stuck to it, we had enough money to try a three star Michelin restaurant afterwards!

11

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) easy to drive.
- C) driven easily.
- D) was easily driven.

12

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) showed us
- C) showing us
- D) the showing of

13

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) having fashion boutiques.
- C) with its fashion boutiques.
- D) it has fashion boutiques.

14

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) the landmark called the Arc de Triomphe.
- C) such as the Arc de Triomphe.
- D) the Arc de Triomphe.

15

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) stuck to it,
- C) having it stick,
- D) sticking to it,