ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Parallel structure

Difficulty level: Advanced

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you write lists and comparisons that sound balanced, like a resume where every bullet starts the same way. A hiring manager reads a resume in seconds, and bullets that all start with an action word are far easier to scan than a mix of styles. The same balance makes a speech sound polished and a set of instructions sound clear. When the parts of a sentence match each other, the writing feels steady and the reader trusts it more.



Rule

In a list, every item must be in the same grammatical form.

If the first items are ing words, the rest must be ing words too. If the first items are nouns, the rest must be nouns too.

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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Fix: She likes running, swimming, and to ride a bike.

SOLUTION

List the items: running, swimming, to ride a bike.

The first two are ing forms, so the third must match: riding a bike.

Fixed: She likes running, swimming, and riding a bike.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Fix: The job needs skill, patience, and to be careful.

SOLUTION

List the items: skill, patience, to be careful.

The first two are nouns, so the third one has to match them: care.

Fixed: The job needs skill, patience, and care.

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Practice questions

1 Fix: He is smart, kind, and works hard. (make the list adjectives)

- **A** He is smart, kind, and hard-working.
- **B** He is smart, kind, and works very hard.
- **C** He is smart, kind, and working hard.
- **D** He is smart, kind, and work hard.

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2 Fix: She enjoys reading, writing, and to paint.

A She enjoys reading, writing, and to draw.

B She enjoys reading, writing, and painting.

C She enjoys reading, writing, and painted.

D She enjoys reading, writing, and to painting.

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3 Fix: The team was fast, strong, and played well. (make the list adjectives)

- **A** The team was fast, strong, and playing well.
- **B** The team was fast, strong, and played very well.
- **C** The team was fast, strong, and skilful.
- **D** The team was fast, strong, and play well.

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4 Fix: I like to swim, to run, and biking.

- **A** I like to swim, to run, and cycling.
- **B** I like to swim, to run, and to biking.
- **C** I like swimming, to run, and biking.
- **D** I like to swim, to run, and to bike.

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5 Fix: The book is long, boring, and costs a lot. (make the list adjectives)

A. The book is long, boring, and expensive.

B. The book is long, boring, and costs too much.

C. The book is long, boring, and costing a lot.

D. The book is long, boring, and cost a lot.

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6

Fix: She decided to study, to practise, and sleeping early. (keep the 'to' forms, fix the last item)

A She decided to study, to practise, and sleeping late.

B She decided to study, to practise, and to sleep early.

C She decided to study, to practise, and slept early.

D She decided to study, to practise, and to sleeping early.

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7

Fix: He came, saw, and was conquering. (make the verbs the same form)

A He came, saw, and conquering.

B He came, saw, and was winning.

C He came, saw, and conquered.

D He came, saw, and had conquered.

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8

Fix: The cake was sweet, soft, and baked well. (make the list adjectives)

A The cake was sweet, soft, and baking well.

B The cake was sweet, soft, and baked nicely.

C The cake was sweet, soft, and bakes well.

D The cake was sweet, soft, and moist.

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9

Fix: We need pens, paper, and to buy folders. (make the list nouns)

A We need pens, paper, and folders.

B We need pens, paper, and to get folders.

C We need pens, paper, and buying folders.

D We need pens, paper, and to buy a folder.

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10

Fix: She is good at math, science, and to draw. (make the list nouns)

A She is good at math, science, and to paint.

B She is good at math, science, and drawing.

C She is good at math, science, and drew.

D She is good at math, science, and to drawing.

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ANSWER KEY

1. He is smart, kind, and hard-working.
2. She enjoys reading, writing, and painting.
3. The team was fast, strong, and skilful.
4. I like to swim, to run, and to bike.
5. The book is long, boring, and expensive.
6. She decided to study, to practise, and to sleep early.
7. He came, saw, and conquered.
8. The cake was sweet, soft, and moist.
9. We need pens, paper, and folders.
10. She is good at math, science, and drawing.

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