

Aggie Grammar Guide: Parallel Structure

Answer Key

Intermediate Practice

The following revisions show possible ways to correct parallel structure errors. The parallel structure is in bold in each sentence. Other options may exist. The part of speech or logical connection is included in parentheses after each sentence.

- 1) Some suicide rulings are based on **cops', physicians', or coroners'** methods. (all plural possessive nouns, so all items are logically and grammatically connected)
- 2) There is always a dilemma between trying **to overcome** problems, **solve** problems, and **stay** safe. (all bare infinitive phrases following "to" as the head of the list)
- 3) The author's main pieces of evidence are **her feelings, experiences from her childhood, and the effect** these experiences had on her. (all noun phrases)
- 4) Languages are related closely to **reading, writing, speaking** and **listening** in our daily life. (all gerunds)
- 5) This means that once I have been issued a French visa, I can easily go to other Schengen Agreement member countries, including **Germany, Italy, Spain**, etc. – to travel and visit. (all nouns)
- 6) Option 1: The majority of professors teaching other languages such as Spanish, French, German or Chinese **are** not native speakers themselves, **have forgotten** the language, or **have lost** their accent over the years due to the lack of practice. (all verb phrases. Even though the tenses are inconsistent ["are" is simple present and "have forgotten" and "have lost" are present perfect], the meaning is logical, and the list is grammatical because all are verb phrases.)
Option 2: The majority of professors teaching other languages such as Spanish, French, German or Chinese **are** not native speakers themselves, **they have forgotten** the language, or **they have lost** their accent over the years due to the lack of practice. (all independent clauses that contain verb phrases a present tense.)
- 7) For instance, my basketball coach in middle school studied abroad in Africa for two years and taught young ladies about health, such as **sexually transmitted diseases** and **birth control**. ("basketball" and "health" are not logically connected, so you can either change "health" to be more broadly inclusive [e.g. "issues" or "topics"] or change "basketball" to be a noun related to health.)
- 8) Finally, the author introduces how we, normal people, can save coral reefs, **including** using fewer sunscreens and **finding** substitutions which are less harmful. (all gerunds)

- 9) If the government can help them by **teaching** them some skills and **giving** some assistance in finding a job, their conditions might be better. (all gerunds)
- 10) Option 1: The author used many different examples to illustrate his points, such as **the use of** water, **the use of** the same clothing for a long period of time, **the use of** a soaked wet cloth for showers, etc. (all noun phrases; deleted repetition of “shower”)
- Option 2: The author used many different examples to illustrate his points, such as using **water**, **the same clothing for a long period of time**, **a soaked wet cloth for showers**, etc. (all nouns following the gerund “using”; deleted repetition of “shower”)

Advanced Practice

Here is the paragraph with all instances of parallel structure underlined.

In 2015, U.S. News announced that Princeton is ranked number one on the list of the best national universities. On the other hand, the Princeton Review revealed that Bryant University is the best college in the United States. The cause of this difference is that they have different processes on how to rank colleges. While **U.S. News relies on experts** and **categories**, the **Princeton Review relies on** student surveys about colleges. U.S. News has seven categories for ranking with unequal statistical weight for each of them; it then divides colleges into different categories. Colleges within a category will rank each other. The Princeton Review's ranking system is a little simpler. It surveys a large amount of students by asking them more than eighty questions about **themselves, their schools, other students, and life at their school**. The questions offer an answer choice on a five-point scale from **excellent** to **awful**. Both of them are credible sources, but the question is whether we should trust **U.S. News** or **the Princeton Review**. From my perspective, I would trust the Princeton Review's college ranking system. Letting colleges **rank each other** would lead to a biased result because colleges **do not know anything about each other** and **compete against each other**. Surveying students is more reasonable since they **are at that college** and **experience the college life there**.