

When creating a list in a sentence, make sure all elements of the list are the same, or parallel, to one another. This structure will allow you to keep a consistent flow and order of the sentence. You can connect ideas to create parallel structure using:

- coordinating conjunctions such as “and,” “but,” or “or” for a list of 2 items
- commas and coordinating conjunction for a list of 3 or more items
- a pair of correlative conjunctions such as “either...or” or “not only...but also”
- a word introducing a comparison, usually “than” or “as”

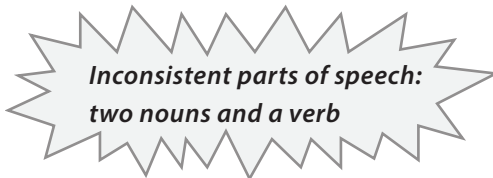
Here are some ways to make a list in a sentence parallel:

- each item starts with the same part of speech
- the verb tense is consistent (when listing verbs)
- the verb voice (passive or active) is consistent. Verbs in the passive voice signify that the subject receives the action (The pizza was eaten by me) while active verbs indicate that the subject performs the action (I ate the pizza).

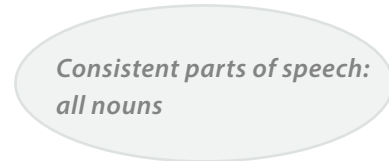
Examples



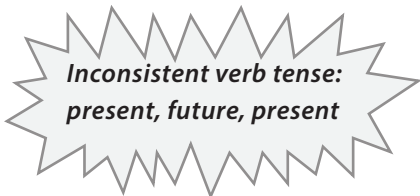
The dictionary can be used to find **definitions**, **pronunciations**, and look up synonyms.



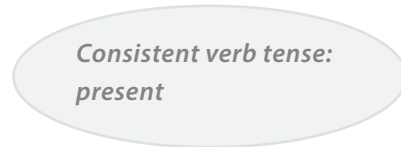
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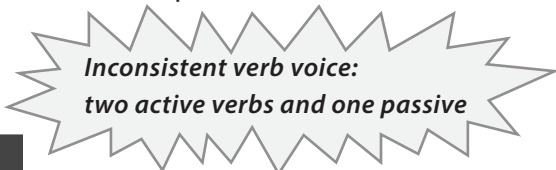
Most football players **get** a lot of sleep, will eat moderately, and **stretch** before a game.



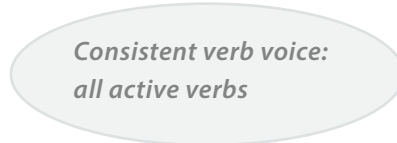
Most football players **get** a lot of sleep, **eat moderately**, and **stretch** before a game.



The salesman expected that he would **present** his product at the meeting, **show** his slide presentation, and questions would be answered.



The salesman expected that he would **present** his product at the meeting, **show** his slide presentation, and **answer** questions.



Proofreading Strategies

- Skim or read your writing out loud pausing at the conjunctions “and,” “but,” or “or.”
- Identify each list by underlining individual items before and after the conjunctions. Make sure the parts of speech, verb tense, and voice are consistent. This strategy allows you to actively search for where the list begins and ends.
- If you have several items in a list, write them in a column on another sheet of paper. This can allow you to see whether your list is parallel.

Practice

Correct the following sentences with faulty parallelism. You should first identify if the sentence has an inconsistent part of speech, voice or verb tense. The wrong parts of the sentence are in bold.

1. Activities on Wednesday afternoons include fishing trips, dance lessons, and **golf**.
2. Jan wanted to drive to the wine country or **at least** Sausalito.
3. Hannah told her rock-climbing partner that she bought a new harness and **of her desire** to climb Otter Cliffs.
4. It is more difficult to sustain an exercise program than **starting** one.
5. Arriving at Lake Powell in a thunderstorm, the campers found it safer to remain in their cars than **setting up their tents**.

Answer Key

1. miniature golf. (Each item in the list should start with an adjective).
2. at least or at lest to
3. that she desires
4. to start
5. to set up