

SKILL 15: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH QUESTION WORDS

There is some confusion about when to invert the subject and verb after question words such as *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. These words can have two very different functions in a sentence. First, they can introduce a question, and in this case the subject and verb that follow are inverted.

What is the homework?

When can I leave?

Where are you going?

Also, these words can join together two clauses, and in this case the subject and verb that follow are not inverted.

I do not know *what* the homework is.

When I can leave, I will take the first train.

Do you know *where* you are going?

In each of these examples there are two clauses joined by a question word. Notice that the subjects and verbs that follow the question words *what*, *when*, and *where* are not inverted in this case.

The following example shows how this sentence pattern could be tested in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



The lawyer asked the client why _____ it.

- (A) did he do
- (B) did he
- (C) he did
- (D) did

In this example the question word *why* is used to connect the two clauses, so a subject and verb are needed after this connector; this is not a question, so the subject and verb should not be inverted. The best answer is therefore answer (C).

The following chart lists the question words and their sentence patterns:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH QUESTION WORDS					
<i>who</i>	<i>what</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>where</i>	<i>why</i>	<i>how</i>
When the question word introduces a question, the subject and verb <i>are</i> inverted.					
		(question word)		V S ?	
		<i>What</i>		<i>are they?</i>	
When the question word connects two clauses, the subject and verb that follow <i>are not</i> inverted.					
S V		(question word)		S V.	
<i>I know</i>		<i>what</i>		<i>they are.</i>	

EXERCISE 15: Each of the following sentences contains a question word. Circle the question words. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. The phone company is not certain (when) will the new directories be ready.
- C 2. The professor does not understand (why) so many students did poorly on the exam.
3. How new students can get information about parking?
4. Where is it cheapest to get typeset copies printed?
5. Only the pilot can tell you how far can the plane go on one tank of fuel.

SKILL 16: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH PLACE EXPRESSIONS

After ideas expressing place, the subject and the verb sometimes invert in English. This can happen with single words expressing place, such as *here*, *there*, or *nowhere*.

Here is the book that you lent me.

There are the keys that I thought I lost.

Nowhere have I seen such beautiful weather.

In the first example the place word *here* causes the subject *book* to come after the verb *is*. In the second example the place word *there* causes the subject *keys* to come after the verb *are*. In the last example the place word *nowhere* causes the subject *I* to come after the verb *have*.

The subject and verb can also be inverted after prepositional phrases expressing place.

In the closet are the clothes that you want.

Around the corner is Sam's house.

Beyond the mountains lies the town where you will live.

In the first example the prepositional phrase of place *in the closet* causes the subject *clothes* to come after the verb *are*. In the second example the prepositional phrase of place *around the corner* causes the subject *house* to come after the verb *is*. In the last example the prepositional phrase of place *beyond the mountains* causes the subject *town* to come after the verb *lies*.

It is important (and a bit difficult) to understand that the subject and verb will invert after place expressions at the beginning of a sentence only when the place expression is *necessary* to complete the sentence. Study the following examples:

In the forest are many exotic birds.

In the forest I walked for many hours.

In the first example the subject *birds* and verb *are* are inverted because the place expression *in the forest* is needed to complete the idea *many exotic birds are...* In the second example the subject *I* and the verb *walked* are not inverted because the idea *I walked for many hours* is complete without the place expression *in the forest*; the place expression is therefore not needed to complete the sentence.

The following example shows how this sentence pattern could be tested in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests  

On the second level of the parking lot _____.

- (A) is empty
- (B) are empty
- (C) some empty stalls are
- (D) are some empty stalls

This example begins with the place expression *on the second level of the parking lot*, which consists of two prepositional phrases, *on the second level* and *of the parking lot*. This sentence needs a subject and a verb to be complete, and the two answers that contain both a subject, *stalls*, and verb, *are*, are answers (C) and (D). The subject and verb should be inverted because the place expression is necessary to complete the idea *some empty stalls are...* The best answer is therefore answer (D).

The following chart lists the sentence patterns used with place expressions:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH PLACE EXPRESSIONS		
When a place expression at the front of the sentence is <i>necessary</i> to complete the sentence, the subject and verb that follow are inverted.		
PLACE (necessary)	V	S
<i>In the classroom</i>	<i>were some old desks.</i>	
When a place expression at the front of the sentence contains <i>extra</i> information that is <i>not</i> needed to complete the sentence, the subject and verb that follow are <i>not</i> inverted.		
PLACE (extra)	S	V
<i>In the classroom,</i>	<i>I studied very hard.</i>	

EXERCISE 16: Each of the following sentences contains an expression of place at the beginning of the sentence. Circle the expressions of place. Look at the clauses that immediately follow the place expressions and underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. (In front of the house) were some giant trees.
- I 2. (There) a big house is on the corner.
- ___ 3. In the cave was a vast treasure of gems and jewels.
- ___ 4. To the north the stream is that the settlers will have to cross.
- ___ 5. Around the corner are the offices that you are trying to find.

SKILL 17: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH NEGATIVES

The subject and verb can also be inverted after certain negatives and related expressions. When negative expressions, such as *no*, *not*, or *never*, come at the beginning of a sentence, the subject and verb are inverted.

Not once did I miss a question.

Never has Mr. Jones taken a vacation.

At no time can the woman talk on the telephone.

In the first example the negative expression *not once* causes the subject *I* to come after the helping verb *did*. In the second example the negative word *never* causes the subject *Mr. Jones* to come after the helping verb *has*. In the last example the negative expression *at no time* causes the subject *woman* to come after the helping verb *can*.

Certain words in English, such as *hardly*, *barely*, *scarcely*, and *only*, act like negatives. If one of these words comes at the beginning of a sentence, the subject and verb are also inverted.

Hardly ever does he take time off.

(This means that he *almost never* takes time off.)

Only once did the manager issue overtime paychecks.

(This means that the manager *almost never* issued overtime paychecks.)

In the first example the “almost negative” expression *hardly ever* causes the subject *he* to come after the helping verb *does*. In the second example the “almost negative” expression *only once* causes the subject *manager* to come after the helping verb *did*.

When a negative expression appears in front of a subject and verb in the middle of a sentence, the subject and verb are also inverted. This happens often with the negative words *neither* and *nor*.

I do not want to go, and *neither* does Tom.

The secretary is not attending the meeting, *nor* is her boss.

In the first example the negative *neither* causes the subject *Tom* to come after the helping verb *does*. In the second example the negative *nor* causes the subject *boss* to come after the verb *is*.

The following example shows how this sentence pattern could be tested in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests  

Only in extremely dangerous situations _____ stopped.

- (A) will be the printing presses
- (B) the printing presses will be
- (C) that the printing presses will be
- (D) will the printing presses be

In this example you should notice that the sentence begins with the negative *only*, so an inverted subject and verb are needed. Answer (D) contains a correctly inverted subject and verb, with the helping verb *will*, the subject *printing presses*, and the main verb *be*, so answer (D) is the best answer.

The following chart lists the negative expressions and the sentence pattern used with them:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH NEGATIVES					
<i>no</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>neither</i>	<i>nor</i>	
<i>barely</i>	<i>hardly</i>	<i>only</i>	<i>rarely</i>	<i>scarcely</i>	<i>seldom</i>
<p>When a negative expression appears <i>in front of a subject and verb</i> (at the beginning of a sentence or in the middle of a sentence) the subject and verb <i>are inverted</i>.</p>					
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 2px 10px; display: inline-block;">negative expression</div>		V	S		
<i>Rarely</i>		<i>were they so happy.</i>			

EXERCISE 17: Each of the following sentences contains a negative or "almost negative" expression. Circle the negative expressions. Look at the clauses that follow and underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. Never the boy wrote to his sisters.
- C 2. On no occasion did they say that to me.
- ___ 3. Steve did not win the prize, nor did he expect to do so.
- ___ 4. Only once in my life gone I have to New York City.
- ___ 5. Did he go out of the house at no time.
- ___ 6. Seldom their secretary has made such mistakes.

SKILL 18: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH CONDITIONALS

In certain conditional structures, the subject and verb may also be inverted. This can occur when the helping verb in the conditional clause is *had*, *should*, or *were*, and the conditional connector *if* is omitted.

If he had taken more time, the results would have been better.

Had he taken more time, the results would have been better.

I would help you if I were in a position to help.

I would help you were I in a position to help.

If you should arrive before 6:00, just give me a call.

Should you arrive before 6:00, just give me a call.

In each of these examples you can see that when *if* is included, the subject and verb are in the regular order (*if he had taken, if I were, if you should arrive*). It is also possible to omit *if*; in this case, the subject and verb are inverted (*had he taken, were I, should you arrive*).

The following example shows how this sentence pattern could be tested in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests  

The report would have been accepted _____ in checking its accuracy.

- (A) if more care
- (B) more care had been taken
- (C) had taken more care
- (D) had more care been taken

In this example a connector *if* and a subject and verb are needed, but *if* could be omitted and the subject and verb inverted. Answer (A) is incorrect because it contains the connector *if* and the subject *care* but no verb. Answer (B) is incorrect because it contains the subject *care* and the verb *had been taken* but does not have a connector. In answers (C) and (D), *if* has been omitted. Because it is correct to invert the subject *more care* and the helping verb *had*, answer (D) is correct.

The following chart lists the conditional verbs that may invert and the sentence patterns used with them:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH CONDITIONALS			
	<i>had</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>were</i>
When the verb in the conditional clause is <i>had</i> , <i>should</i> , or <i>were</i> , it is possible to omit <i>if</i> and invert the subject and verb.			
(omitted <i>if</i>)	V S		
	Were he	here, he would help.	
It is also possible to keep <i>if</i> . Then the subject and verb are not inverted.			
	<i>if</i> S V		
	If he were	here, he would help.	

EXERCISE 18: Each of the following sentences contains a conditional with a stated or an implied *if*. Circle the conditionals, or put an asterisk (*) where *if* has been omitted. Look at the clauses that follow and underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. *Were our neighbors a bit more friendly, it would be somewhat easier to get to know them.
- I 2. There are plenty of blankets in the closet if should you get cold during the night.
3. Has he enough vacation days left this year, he will take two full weeks off in December.
4. Had we been informed of the decision, we might have had something to say about it.
5. I would like to know could you help me pack these boxes.

SKILL 19: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH COMPARISONS

An inverted subject and verb may also occur after a comparison. The inversion of a subject and verb after a comparison is optional, rather than required, and it is a rather formal structure. There have been a number of inverted comparisons on recent TOEFL tests, so you should be familiar with this structure.

My sister spends *more* hours in the office *than* John.

My sister spends *more* hours in the office *than* John does.

My sister spends *more* hours in the office *than* does John.

All three of these examples contain the comparison *more...than*, and all three are correct in English. It is possible to have the noun *John* alone, as in the first example; it is possible that the comparison is followed by the subject and verb *John does*, as in the second example; it is also possible that the comparison is followed by the inverted subject and verb *does John*, as in the third example.

The following example shows how this sentence pattern could be tested in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests  

The results of the current experiment appear to be more consistent than _____ the results of any previous tests.

- (A) them
- (B) were
- (C) they were
- (D) were they

In this example you should notice the comparison *more consistent than*, and you should also understand that *the results of the current experiment* is being compared with *the results of any previous tests*. Because *the results of any previous tests* is the subject, only a verb is needed; the best answer to this question is therefore answer (B). We know that it is possible for a subject and a verb to be inverted after a comparison, and in this case the subject *the results of any previous tests* comes after the verb *were*.

The following chart lists the sentence patterns used with comparisons:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH COMPARISONS					
The subject and verb <i>may</i> invert after a comparison. The following structures are both possible.					
S	V	comparison	S	V	
We	were	more prepared than	the other performers	were.	
S	V	comparison	V	S	
We	were	more prepared than	were	the other performers.	
NOTE: A subject-verb inversion after a comparison sounds rather formal.					

EXERCISE 19: Each of the following sentences contains a comparison. Circle the comparisons. Look at the clauses that follow and underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. This candidate has received more votes than has any other candidate in previous years.
- I 2. Obviously we were much more impressed with the performance than did the other members of the audience.
- ___ 3. The film that we saw last night at the festival was far better than any of the other films.
- ___ 4. The vegetables at the market this morning were far fresher than were those at the market yesterday.
- ___ 5. I am afraid that is the condition of these tires as bad as the condition of the others.

TOEFL EXERCISE (Skills 15–19): Choose the letter of the word or group of words that best completes the sentence.

- Rarely _____ located near city lights or at lower elevations.
(A) observatories are
(B) are
(C) in the observatories
(D) are observatories
- There are geographic, economic, and cultural reasons why _____ around the world.
(A) diets differ
(B) do diets differ
(C) are diets different
(D) to differ a diet
- Were _____ millions of dollars each year replenishing eroding beaches, the coastline would be changing even more rapidly.
(A) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers not spending
(B) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers not spend
(C) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not spend
(D) not spending the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Nowhere _____ more skewed than in the auto industry.
(A) that retail trade figures
(B) retail trade figures are
(C) are retail trade figures
(D) retail trade figures
- New York City's Central Park is nearly twice as large _____ second smallest country, Monaco.
(A) as
(B) is the
(C) as is
(D) as is the
- Potassium has a valence of positive one because it usually loses one electron when _____ with other elements.
(A) does it combine
(B) it combines
(C) in combining
(D) combination
- The economic background of labor legislation will not be mentioned in this course, _____ be treated.
(A) trade unionism will not
(B) nor trade unionism will
(C) nor will trade unionism
(D) neither trade unionism will
- _____ test positive for antibiotics when tanker trucks arrive at a milk processing plant, according to federal law, the entire truckload must be discarded.
(A) Should milk
(B) If milk
(C) If milk is
(D) Milk should
- Located behind _____ the two lacrimal glands.
(A) each eyelid
(B) is each eyelid
(C) each eyelid are
(D) each eyelid which is
- Only for a short period of time _____ run at top speed.
(A) cheetahs
(B) do cheetahs
(C) that a cheetah can
(D) can

PROBLEMS WITH SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

Subject/verb agreement is simple: if the subject of a sentence is singular, then the verb must be singular; if the subject of the sentence is plural, then the verb must be plural. An *s* on a verb usually indicates that a verb is singular, while an *s* on a noun usually indicates that the noun is plural. (Do not forget irregular plurals of nouns, such as *women*, *children*, and *people*.)

The boy walks to school.

The boys walk to school.

In the first example the singular subject *boy* requires a singular verb, *walks*. In the second example the plural subject *boys* requires a plural verb, *walk*.

Although this might seem quite simple, there are a few situations on the TOEFL test when subject/verb agreement can be a little tricky. You should be careful of subject/verb agreement in the following situations: (1) after prepositional phrases, (2) after expressions of quantity, (3) after inverted verbs, and (4) after certain words, such as *anybody*, *everything*, *no one*, *something*, *each*, and *every*.

SKILL 20: MAKE VERBS AGREE AFTER PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Sometimes prepositional phrases can come between the subject and the verb. If the object of the preposition is singular and the subject is plural, or if the object of the preposition is plural and the subject is singular, there can be confusion in making the subject and verb agree.

The key (to the doors) are* in the drawer.

SINGULAR PLURAL

The keys (to the door) is* in the drawer.

PLURAL SINGULAR

(* indicates an error)

In the first example you might think that *doors* is the subject because it comes directly in front of the verb *are*. However, *doors* is not the subject because it is the object of the preposition *to*. The subject of the sentence is *key*, so the verb should be *is*. In the second example you might think that *door* is the subject because it comes directly in front of the verb *is*. You should recognize in this example that *door* is not the subject because it is the object of the preposition *to*. Because the subject of the sentence is *keys*, the verb should be *are*.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should understand about subject/verb agreement with prepositional phrases:

SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT WITH PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES		
S	(prepositional phrase)	V
When a prepositional phrase comes between the subject and the verb, be sure that the verb agrees with the subject.		

EXERCISE 20: Each of the following sentences has one or more prepositional phrases between the subject and verb. Circle the prepositional phrases. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. The climbers (on the sheer face) (of the mountain) need to be rescued.
- I 2. The interrogation, conducted (by three police officers) have lasted for several hours.
- ___ 3. The tenants in the apartment next to mine is giving a party this evening.
- ___ 4. The president, surrounded by secret service agents, is trying to make his way to the podium.
- ___ 5. The buildings destroyed during the fire are being rebuilt at the taxpayers' expense.

SKILL 21: MAKE VERBS AGREE AFTER EXPRESSIONS OF QUANTITY

A particular agreement problem occurs when the subject is an expression of quantity, such as *all*, *most*, or *some*, followed by the preposition *of*. In this situation, the subject (*all*, *most*, or *some*) can be singular or plural, depending on what follows the preposition *of*.

All (of the *book*) was interesting.

SINGULAR

All (of the *books*) were interesting.

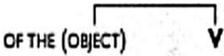
PLURAL

All (of the *information*) was interesting.

UNCOUNTABLE

In the first example the subject *all* refers to the singular noun *book*, so the correct verb is therefore the singular verb *was*. In the second example the subject *all* refers to the plural noun *books*, so the correct verb is the plural verb *were*. In the third example the subject *all* refers to the uncountable noun *information*, so the correct verb is therefore the singular verb *was*.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should understand about subject/verb agreement after expressions of quantity:

SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT AFTER EXPRESSIONS OF QUANTITY	
$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{all} \\ \text{most} \\ \text{some} \\ \text{half} \end{array} \right)$	
When an expression of quantity is the subject, the verb agrees with the object.	

EXERCISE 21: Each of the following sentences has a quantity expression as the subject. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the objects that the verbs agree with. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. The witnesses saw that most of the (fire) in the hills was extinguished.
- I 2. Some of the (animals) from the zoo was released into the animal preserve.
- ___ 3. All of the students in the class taught by Professor Roberts is required to turn in their term papers next Monday.
- ___ 4. Half of the food that we are serving to the guests are still in the refrigerator.
- ___ 5. We believe that some of the time of the employees is going to be devoted to quality control.

SKILL 22: MAKE INVERTED VERBS AGREE

We have seen that sometimes in English the subject comes after the verb. This can occur after question words (Skill 15), after place expressions (Skill 16), after negative expressions (Skill 17), after omitted conditionals (Skill 18), and after some comparisons (Skill 19). When the subject and verb are inverted, it can be difficult to locate them, and it can therefore be a problem to make them agree.

SKILL 23: MAKE VERBS AGREE AFTER CERTAIN WORDS

Certain words in English are always grammatically singular, even though they might have plural meanings.

Everybody are going* to the theater.

Even though we understand from this example that a lot of people are going to the theater, *everybody* is singular and requires a singular verb. The plural verb *are going* should be changed to the singular verb *is going*.

The following chart lists the grammatically singular words that have plural meanings:

SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT AFTER CERTAIN WORDS				
These words or expressions are grammatically singular, so they take singular verbs:				
<u>anybody</u>	<u>everybody</u>	<u>nobody</u>	<u>somebody</u>	<u>each (+ noun)</u>
<u>anyone</u>	<u>everyone</u>	<u>no one</u>	<u>someone</u>	<u>every (+ noun)</u>
<u>anything</u>	<u>everything</u>	<u>nothing</u>	<u>something</u>	

EXERCISE 23: Each of the following sentences contains one of the words that are grammatically singular but have plural meanings. Underline these words once and underline the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. It is impossible to believe that somebody actually admire that man.
- C 2. Each of the doctors in the building needs to have a separate reception area.
- ___ 3. The president felt that no one were better suited for the position of chief staff advisor.
- ___ 4. Everybody participating in the fund-raiser are to turn in the tickets by 8:00.
- ___ 5. Because of the low number of orders, nothing has to be done now.

TOEFL EXERCISE (Skills 20–23): Choose the letter of the word or group of words that best completes the sentence.

1. Among bees ___ a highly elaborate form of communication.
- (A) occur
(B) occurs
(C) it occurs
(D) they occur
2. ___ heated by solar energy have special collectors on the roofs to trap sunlight.
- (A) A home is
(B) Homes are
(C) A home
(D) Homes

Choose the letter of the underlined word or group of words that is not correct.

- ___ 3. Each number binary system are formed from only two symbols.
- A B C D
- ___ 4. Scientists at the medical center is trying to determine if there is a relationship between saccharine and cancer.
- A B C D

5. On the rim of the Kilauea volcano in the Hawaiian Islands are a hotel called the Volcano Hotel.
6. The great digital advances of the electronic age, such as integrated circuitry and a microcomputer, has been planted in tiny chips.
7. There are many frequently mentioned reasons why one out of four arrests involve a juvenile.
8. Kepler's Laws, principles outlining planetary movement, was formulated based on observations made without a telescope.
9. Only with a two-thirds vote by both houses are the U.S. Congress able to override a presidential veto.
10. Of all the evidence that has piled up since Webster's paper was published, there is no new ideas to contradict his original theory.

PROBLEMS WITH PARALLEL STRUCTURE _____

In good English an attempt should be made to make the language as even and balanced as possible. This balance is called "parallel structure." You can achieve parallel structure by making the forms of words as similar as possible. The following is an example of a sentence that is not parallel:

I like to sing and dancing.*

The problem in this sentence is not the expression *to sing*, and the problem is not the word *dancing*. The expression *to sing* is correct by itself, and the word *dancing* is correct by itself. Both of the following sentences are correct:

I like to sing.

I like dancing.

The problem in the incorrect example is that *to sing* and *dancing* are joined together in one sentence with *and*. They are different forms where it is possible to have similar forms; therefore the example is not parallel. It can be corrected in two different ways: we can make the first expression like the second, or we can make the second expression like the first.

I like to sing and to dance.

I like singing and dancing.

SKILL 24: USE PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH COORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS

The job of the coordinate conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or*) is to join together equal expressions. In other words, what is on one side of these words must be parallel to what is on the other side. These conjunctions can join nouns, or verbs, or adjectives, or phrases, or subordinate clauses, or main clauses; they just must join together two of the same thing. Here are examples of two nouns joined by a coordinate conjunction:

I need to talk to the manager *or* the assistant manager.

She is not a teacher *but* a lawyer.

You can choose from activities such as hiking *and* kayaking.

Here are examples of two verbs joined by a coordinate conjunction:

He only eats *and* sleeps when he takes a vacation.

She invites us to her home *but* never talks with us.

You can stay home *or* go to the movies with us.

Here are examples of two adjectives joined by a coordinate conjunction:

My boss is sincere *and* nice.

The exam that he gave was short *but* difficult.

Class can be interesting *or* boring.

Here are examples of two phrases joined by a coordinate conjunction:

There are students in the classroom *and* in front of the building.

The papers are on my desk *or* in the drawer.

The checks will be ready not at noon *but* at 1:00.

Here are examples of two clauses joined by a coordinate conjunction:

They are not interested in what you say *or* what you do.

I am here because I have to be *and* because I want to be.

Mr. Brown likes to go home early, *but* his wife prefers to stay late.

The following chart outlines the use of parallel structures with coordinate conjunctions:

PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH COORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS			
(same structure)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">and but or</div>	(same structure)	
(same structure),	(same structure),	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">and but or</div>	(same structure)

EXERCISE 24: Each of the following sentences contains words or groups of words that should be parallel. Circle the word that indicates that the sentence should have parallel parts. Underline the parts that should be parallel. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. She held jobs as a typist, a housekeeper, and in a restaurant.
- C 2. The report you are looking for could be in the file or on the desk.
- ___ 3. She works very hard but usually gets below-average grades.
- ___ 4. The speaker introduced himself, told several interesting anecdotes, and finishing with an emotional plea.
- ___ 5. You should know when the program starts and how many units you must complete.

SKILL 25: USE PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH PAIRED CONJUNCTIONS

The paired conjunctions *both...and*, *either...or*, *neither...nor*, and *not only...but also* require parallel structures.

I know both where you went and what you did.

Either Mark or Sue has the book.

The tickets are neither in my pocket nor in my purse.

He is not only an excellent student but also an outstanding athlete.

The following is not parallel and must be corrected:

He wants either to go by train or by plane*.

It is not correct because *to go by train* is not parallel to *by plane*. It can be corrected in several ways.

He wants either to go by train or to go by plane.

He wants to go either by train or by plane.

He wants to go by either train or plane.

When you are using these paired conjunctions, be sure that the correct parts are used together. The following are incorrect:

I want both this book or* that one.

Either Sam nor* Sue is taking the course.

These sentences are incorrect because the wrong parts of the paired conjunctions are used together. In the first example, *and* should be used with *both*. In the second example, *or* should be used with *either*.

The following chart outlines the use of parallel structure with paired conjunctions:

PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH PAIRED CONJUNCTIONS			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">both either neither not only</div>	(same structure)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">and or nor but also</div>	(same structure)

EXERCISE 25: Each of the following sentences contains words or groups of words that should be parallel. Circle the word or words that indicate that the sentence should have parallel parts. Underline the parts that should be parallel. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

I 1. According to the syllabus, you can either write a paper or you can take an exam.

C 2. It would be both noticed and appreciated if you could finish the work before you leave.

___ 3. She would like neither to see a movie or to go bowling.

___ 4. Either the manager or her assistant can help you with your refund.

___ 5. She wants not only to take a trip to Europe but she also would like to travel to Asia.

SKILL 26: USE PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH COMPARISONS

When you make a comparison, you point out the similarities or differences between two things, and those similarities or differences must be in parallel form. You can recognize a comparison showing how two things are different from the *-er...than* or the *more...than*.

My school is farther than your school.

To be rich is better than to be poor.

What is written is more easily understood than what is spoken.

A comparison showing how two things are the same might contain *as...as* or expressions such as *the same as* or *similar to*.

Their car is as big as a small house.

Renting those apartments costs about the same as leasing them.

The work that I did is similar to the work that you did.

The following chart outlines the use of parallel structures with comparisons:

PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH COMPARISONS		
(same structure)	<u>more ... than</u> <u>-er ... than</u> <u>less ... than</u> <u>as ... as</u> <u>the same ... as</u> <u>similar ... to</u>	(same structure)

EXERCISE 26: Each of the following sentences contains words or groups of words that should be parallel. Circle the word or words that indicate that the sentence should have parallel parts. Underline the parts that should be parallel. Then indicate if each sentence is correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. His research for the thesis was (more useful than) hers.
- I 2. Dining in a restaurant is (more fun than) to eat at home.
- ___ 3. I want a new secretary who is as efficient as the previous one.
- ___ 4. What you do today should be the same as did yesterday.
- ___ 5. This lesson is more difficult than we had before.

TOEFL EXERCISE (Skills 24–26): Choose the letter of the word or group of words that best completes the sentence.

- Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* is neither journalistically accurate _____.
 - a piece of fiction
 - nor a fictitious work
 - or written in a fictitious way
 - nor completely fictitious
- Vitamin C is necessary for the prevention and _____ of scurvy.
 - it cures
 - cures
 - cure
 - for curing

