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parallel



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## Dictionary

### Definition

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# parallel <sup>1 of 4</sup> adjective

par-ə-ˈlel <sup>(per-ə-ˈlel)</sup> ˈpa-rə-, -ləl

[Synonyms of parallel >](#)

- 1 a** : extending in the same direction, everywhere equidistant (see [EQUIDISTANT](#) sense 1), and not meeting  
| *parallel* rows of trees
- b** : everywhere equally distant  
| concentric spheres are *parallel*
- 2 a** : having parallel sides  
| a *parallel* reamer
- b** : being or relating to an electrical circuit having a number of conductors (see [CONDUCTOR](#) sense d(1)) in parallel (see [PARALLEL](#) entry 2 sense 4b)
- c** : arranged in parallel  
| a computer with four *parallel* processors
- d** : relating to or being a connection in a computer system in which the **bits** of a **byte** are transmitted over separate channels at the same time  
| a *parallel* port  
→ compare [SERIAL](#)
- 3 a** : similar, [analogous](#), or interdependent in tendency or development : exhibiting [parallelism](#) in form, function, or development  
| ... the standing committee systems in the two Houses are reasonably *parallel* ...  
— Harold Zink  
| ... *parallel* strikes on the railroads, in the gas and electricity services and in the metal and mining industries.  
— Percy Winner  
→ see also [PARALLEL EVOLUTION](#)
- b** : readily compared : [COMPANION](#)  
| the marriage rate turned upward ... the birth rate entered upon a *parallel* climb  
— Oscar Handlin
- c** : having identical [syntactical](#) elements in corresponding positions  
*also* : being such an element
- d** (1) : having the same [tonic](#) → used of major and minor keys and scales  
(2) : keeping the same distance apart in musical pitch (see [PITCH](#) entry 4 sense 4b(1))
- 4** : performed while keeping one's skis parallel  
| *parallel* turns

# parallel <sup>2 of 4</sup> noun

- 1 a** : a parallel line, curve, or surface
- b** : one of the imaginary circles on the surface of the earth [paralleling](#) the equator and marking the latitude  
*also* : the corresponding line on a globe or map  
→ see [latitude](#) illustration
- c** : a character || used in printing especially as a reference mark
- 2 a** : something equal or similar in all essential particulars : [COUNTERPART](#)
- b** : [SIMILARITY](#), [ANALOGUE](#)
- 3** : a comparison to show resemblance
- 4 a** : the state of being physically parallel
- b** : an arrangement of electrical devices in a circuit in which the same potential difference is applied to two or more resistances with each resistance being on a different branch of the circuit  
→ compare [SERIES](#)
- c** : an arrangement or state that permits several operations or tasks to be performed simultaneously rather than consecutively

# parallel <sup>3 of 4</sup> verb

paralleled; paralleling; parallels

*transitive verb*

- 1** : to indicate analogy of : [COMPARE](#)
- 2 a** : to show something equal to : [MATCH](#)
- b** : to correspond to
- 3** : to place so as to be parallel in direction with something
- 4** : to extend, run, or move in a direction parallel to

**Quordle**

W	O	R	D	Y
L	O	V	E	R
P	L	A	Y	S
D	A	I	L	Y

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**WORD OF THE DAY**

**jabberwocky**

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# parallel 4 of 4 adverb

: in a parallel manner

## Phrases

### in parallel

: in a parallel arrangement

## Synonyms

### Adjective

akin	alike	analogous
cognate	comparable	connate
correspondent	corresponding	ditto
like	matching	resemblant
resembling	similar	such
suchlike		

### Noun

common denominator	commonality	congruity
correspondence	resemblance	similarity
similitude		

### Verb

correspond (to)	equal	match
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[See all Synonyms & Antonyms in Thesaurus >](#)

## Choose the Right Synonym for *parallel*

**SIMILAR, ANALOGOUS, PARALLEL** mean closely resembling each other.

**SIMILAR** implies the possibility of being mistaken for each other.

| all the houses in the development are *similar*

**ANALOGOUS** applies to things belonging in essentially different categories but nevertheless having many similarities.

| *analogous* political systems

**PARALLEL** suggests a marked likeness in the development of two things.

| the *parallel* careers of two movie stars

## Examples of *parallel* in a Sentence

### Adjective

the *parallel* careers of the two movie stars

These two sentences are *parallel* in structure.

Notice the *parallel* development of the two technologies.

[See More](#) ▾

## Recent Examples on the Web

Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. Opinions expressed in the examples do not represent those of Merriam-Webster or its editors. [Send us feedback](#).

### Adjective

Residents also use the avenue to skip traffic on the *parallel* Marginal Tietê during the morning rush hour, when the crash likely occurred. Footage from the aftermath on Friday showed black clouds of smoke and bright orange flames unfurling over the highway.

— Ana Melgar, *CNN*, 7 Feb. 2025

Walter Salles reflects our *parallel* contradictions.

— Armond White, *National Review*, 7 Feb. 2025

### Noun

But conversely, up north across the 49th *parallel*, Trump's actions have created some solidarity at a time when Trudeau's Liberal Party has been on the rocks, and it's felt like only a matter of time before the Conservative Party, led by a quasi-Trumpian Pierre Polievre, would mount a victory.

— Talib Visram, *TIME*, 7 Feb. 2025

However, a deeper look reveals many *parallels* between the sport of football and the game of life.

### Verb

In general, that **parallels** the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center's outlook for spring, with much of the U.S. expected to get average or above average temperatures and about half to get average precipitation from March to May.

— Mike Snider, *USA TODAY*, 31 Jan. 2025

Trump's actions on his first day in office show **parallels** with elements of the initiative.

— Hannah Parry, *Newsweek*, 22 Jan. 2025

### Adverb

Pull up **parallel** to the lead vehicle until your rear bumpers align.

— Robert Klose, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 11 July 2022

And while his career wouldn't quite live up to its early promise, if Saka's goes on to run **parallel** then few at the Emirates will be complaining.

— *Sl.com*, 23 Sep. 2019

[See all Example Sentences for parallel >](#)

## Word History

### Etymology

#### Adjective, Noun, Verb, and Adverb

Latin *parallelus*, from Greek *parallēlos*, from *para* beside + *allēlōn* of one another, from *allos* ... *allos* one ... another, from *allos* other — more at [ELSE](#)

### First Known Use

#### Adjective

circa 1550, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a](#)

#### Noun

1551, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a](#)

#### Verb

circa 1594, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

#### Adverb

1646, in the meaning defined above

### Time Traveler

The first known use of **parallel** was circa 1550

[See more words from the same year](#)

## Phrases Containing *parallel*

<a href="#">in parallel</a>	<a href="#">massively parallel</a>	<a href="#">no parallel</a>
<a href="#">parallel bars</a>	<a href="#">parallel evolution</a>	<a href="#">parallel park</a>
<a href="#">parallel-veined</a>	<a href="#">sub-parallel</a>	<a href="#">uneven parallel bars</a>
<a href="#">without parallel</a>		

## Dictionary Entries Near *parallel*

[parallax](#)

**parallel**

[parallel axiom](#)

[See More Nearby Entries >](#)

## Cite this Entry

Style

"Parallel." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parallel>. Accessed 21 Feb. 2025.

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Kids Definition

# parallel <sup>1 of 4</sup> adjective

par-ə-ˈleɪ

- 1 : lying or moving in the same direction but always the same distance apart  
*parallel* lines  
the train tracks are *parallel*
- 2 **a** : being or relating to an electrical circuit having a number of conductors in parallel  
**b** : being or relating to a connection in a computer system in which the bits of a byte are transmitted over separate wires at the same time
- 3 : **LIKE entry 3, SIMILAR**  
*parallel* situations

# parallel <sup>2 of 4</sup> noun

- 1 : a parallel line, curve, or surface
- 2 **a** : one of the imaginary circles on the surface of the earth parallel to the equator that mark latitude  
**b** : a corresponding line on a globe or map
- 3 **a** : **COUNTERPART sense 1, EQUAL**  
a victory without *parallel*  
**b** : **SIMILARITY sense 1, LIKENESS**  
**c** : a tracing of similarity  
draw a *parallel* between two periods of history
- 4 : an arrangement of electrical devices in a circuit in which the same potential difference is applied to two or more resistances with each resistance on a parallel branch

# parallel <sup>3 of 4</sup> verb

- 1 : to be like or equal to
- 2 : to lie, run, or move in a direction parallel to  
the highway *parallels* the river

# parallel <sup>4 of 4</sup> adverb

: in a parallel manner → often used with *with* or *to*

More from Merriam-Webster on *parallel*

English: [Translation of parallel for Spanish Speakers](#)

Last Updated: 10 Feb 2025 - Updated example sentences

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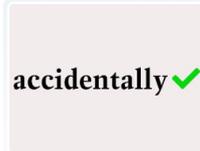
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9 Superb Owl Words



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