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parallel



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parallel ^{1 of 4} adjective

par-ə-ˈlel ^{ˈper-ə-, -ləl}

Synonyms of *parallel* >

- 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 ^{2 of 4} noun

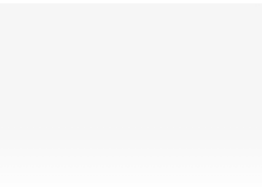
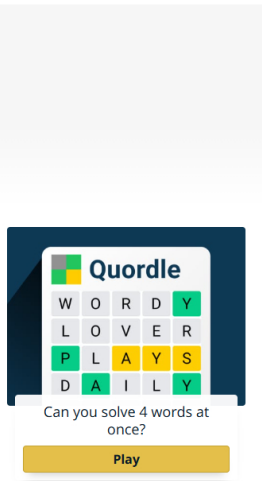
- a** : a parallel line, curve, or surface
- b** : one of the imaginary circles on the surface of the earth [paralleling](#) the equator and marking the latitude
also : the corresponding line on a globe or map
→ see [latitude](#) illustration
- c** : a character || used in printing especially as a reference 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 ^{3 of 4} 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



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.

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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*

in parallel	massively parallel	no parallel
parallel bars	parallel evolution	parallel park
parallel-veined	sub-parallel	uneven parallel bars
without parallel		

Dictionary Entries Near *parallel*

[parallax](#)

parallel

[parallel axiom](#)

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Cite this Entry

Style [MLA](#) [v](#)

"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 ^{1 of 4} adjective

par-ə-ˈlel ⓘ

- 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 ^{2 of 4} 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 ^{3 of 4} 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 ^{4 of 4} adverb

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

More from Merriam-Webster on *parallel*

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

Last Updated: 10 Feb 2025 - Updated example sentences

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Democracy or Republic:
What's the difference?



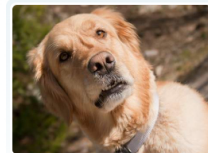
Why is 'ed' sometimes
pronounced at the end of a
word?



What's the difference
between 'fascism' and
'socialism'?



More Commonly Misspelled
Words



Words You Always Have to
Look Up

Popular in Wordplay

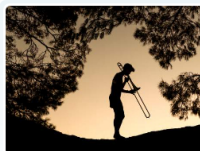
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Terroir, Oenophile, &



8 Words for Lesser-Known




9 Superb Owl Words



15 Words That Used to Mean

Games & Quizzes

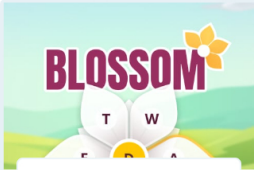
[See All](#) >



Quordle

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Blossom Word Game

Pick the best words!


[Play](#)



Missing Letter

A daily crossword with a twist

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Quiz: Spot More Misspelled Words

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