Parallel Structure



Parallel structure is using a consistent format for each idea, whether words, phrases, or clauses. Parallel structure is especially useful when including a list of ideas that have the same level of importance.

Words and phrases

Pay close attention to gerunds (ex. painting) and infinitives (ex.to paint) and be consistent with the format of words.

Infinitives and Gerunds:

- Non-parallel structure:
 - Josephine loves to paint, draw, and sculpting.
 - Josephine loves to paint, to draw, and sculpt.

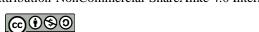
Note: These sentences are not parallel because the ideas within the sentence use different formats.

- Parallel structure:
 - Josephine loves painting, drawing, and sculpting.
 - Josephine loves to paint, to draw, and to sculpt.
 - Josephine loves to paint, draw, and sculpt.

Note: When introducing a list of infinitives, either write **to** at the beginning of the list, or include **to** before each verb.

Adjectives, Adverbs and Nouns:

- Non-parallel: The successful candidate for this job will <u>be</u> efficient, <u>take responsibility</u> <u>for his/her work</u>, and diligent.
 - **Note:** This example is considered non-parallel because it uses adjectives (efficient and diligent) and a noun (responsibility).
- Non-parallel: The successful candidate for this job will <u>work</u> efficiently, <u>be</u> responsible, and work diligently.
 - **Note:** This example uses both adverbs (efficiently and diligently) with an adjective (responsible). Again using the same format throughout will make the sentence flow better.
- Parallel: The successful candidate for this job will be <u>efficient</u>, <u>responsible</u>, and <u>diligent</u>. The successful candidate for this job will work efficiently, responsibly, and diligently.



Parallel Structure



Clauses

Be consistent when introducing each clause.

Example 1:

Non-parallel: I did not want to go to the dance because I was worried that none of my friends would be there, of the expense, and that I would miss my dog.
Note: This sentence does not use 'that' in all three parts so it is not considered parallel.

• Parallel: I did not want to go to the dance because I was worried that none of my friends would be there, that it would be too expensive, and that I would miss my dog.

Example 2:

- Non-parallel: My mother always told me <u>that I should make</u> my bed, <u>to do</u> my homework, and have fun.
- Parallel: My mother always told me that I should <u>make</u> my bed, <u>do</u> my homework, and have fun.

Correlative expressions

Use the same grammatical constriction for each part of correlative expressions (such as: both, and; not only, but also; either, or; first, second). Sometimes sentences without parallelism must be completely reworked to ensure that the sentence remains parallel.

Example 1:

- Non-parallel: It was both a long exam and very tedious.
- Parallel: The exam was both long and tedious.

Example 2:

- Non-parallel: This is a time not <u>for words</u>, but <u>action</u>.
- Parallel: This is a time not for words, but for action.

Practice: Parallel structure

Put the following sentences into parallel structure.

- 1. Without proper seatbelts, shoes, or licensing you should not drive.
- 2. The following are chores that I did today:
 - sweeping the floor,
 - washing clothes, and
 - fed my fish.
- 3. Peggy likes candles, flowers, and going to restaurants.
- 4. I commented and critiqued your screenplay.

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Parallel Structure



- 5. Ryan likes to play video games, cooking, and karate.
- 6. I hate bananas, mustard, and eating tomatoes.
- 7. Avery is skilled at painting, singing, and dance.
- 8. This weekend I plan to travel, shopping, and eat out.
- 9. Making your lunch, finish homework, and get enough sleep are good things to do on school nights.
- 10. I forgot to complete the application and bringing the homework.

Answers:

- 1. Without proper seatbelts, shoes, or <u>a license</u> you should not drive.
- 2. The following are chores that I did today:
 - swept the floor,
 - washed clothes, and
 - fed my fish.
- 3. Peggy likes candles, flowers, and going to restaurants.
- 4. I commented <u>on</u> and critiqued your screenplay.
- 5. Ryan likes to play video games, cooking, and karate.
- 6. I hate bananas, mustard, and eating tomatoes.
- 7. Avery is skilled at painting, singing, and **dancing**.
- 8. This weekend I plan to travel, **shop**, and eat out.
- 9. Making your lunch, <u>finishing</u> homework, and <u>getting</u> enough sleep are good things to do on school nights.
- 10. I forgot to complete the application and **to bring** the homework.

