

## 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 be efficient, take responsibility for his/her work, 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 work efficiently, be 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 efficient, responsible, and diligent.  
The successful candidate for this job will work efficiently, responsibly, and diligently.

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### 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 that I should make my bed, to do my homework, and have fun.
- Parallel: My mother always told me that I should make my bed, do 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 for words, but action.
- 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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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 **a license** 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 **on** 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, **finishing** homework, and **getting** enough sleep are good things to do on school nights.
10. I forgot to complete the application and **to bring** the homework.