

Parallel Construction

Parallel construction makes your writing clearer and easier to read.

Parallel constructions are words or phrases expressed in the same grammatical form.

Examples:

Adjectives:	Her talk was <u>interesting</u> , <u>entertaining</u> , and <u>challenging</u> .
Verbs:	She <u>examined</u> evidence, <u>weighed</u> facts, and <u>recommended</u> action.
Nouns:	<u>Good service</u> , <u>good products</u> , and <u>good location</u> add up to success in business.
Phrases:	Stops were scheduled <u>in the camps</u> , <u>in the hotels</u> , and <u>in the resorts</u> .
Subordinate clauses:	We need to know <u>who will be interested</u> , <u>who will be there</u> , and <u>who will be willing to work hard</u> .
Main clauses:	<u>Our students are the very best</u> , and <u>our teachers are tops in their fields</u> .

Words such as "and" and "but" often signal parallel constructions.

Exercise: Underline the parallel constructions in these sentences:

1. The players are excited, eager, and enthusiastic.
2. Men, women, and children enjoy the show.
3. The author wrote skillfully and quickly.
4. His address and his gender did not matter.
5. The turquoise necklace was attractive but heavy.
6. She fell in love and out of love in a few minutes.
7. The basketball player's reputation was based on his ability in passing, shooting, and rebounding.

Some words that signal parallelism come in pairs:

1. We will **either** win this game **or** go down fighting.

2. I ordered **both** tacos **and** a hot dog.
3. I found **neither** bread **nor** peanut butter in the cabinet.
4. I will **neither** wash the dishes **nor** take out the trash.
5. Robin Hood **not only** took from the rich **but also** gave to the poor.

Correct these sentences to give them parallel structure.

1. Rosa wants to get a dog that is friendly, big, and will cuddle.
2. I dreamed of fishing on a huge lake, catching a gigantic trout, and then how I would let it go.
3. Anna was happy to have a job, to be out of debt, and about having a nice place to live.
4. Tony is creative, has talent, and intelligent.
5. I will either finish this project tonight or maybe I'll finish it tomorrow.
6. The news program examined the usefulness of herbal medicine, how acupuncture can benefit people, and the role of attitudes in recovery from illness.
7. The teacher explained how to write a summary better than making an outline.
8. I like sleeping late, to have a big breakfast, and taking my time getting started in the morning.
9. In the movie *The Color Purple* a long-suffering black woman experiences not only heartaches but also joyfully as she rises from tragedy to personal triumph.
10. You may submit your application by telephone, by mail, or you can come in person.