

Parallel Writing

Parallel writing is used to balance words in pairs or in a series, making the sentence clearer and easier to read. When listing words in a series, use consistent parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, adverbs. The same is true of phrases and clauses.

Examples: I am tired, hungry, and frustrated. (adjectives)

I ran up the hill, down the road, and around the corner. (phrases)

He set down his easel, he placed his paints on a rock, and he fell to the ground. (clauses)

The elements in the sentence should be of the same part of speech or grammatical unit.

Examples:

I like to hunt, to fish, and hiking. (not parallel)

I like to hunt, to fish, and to hike. (parallel)

OR

I like hunting, fishing, and hiking. (parallel)

Modifiers in a series

Use only those words together which describe the same word or groups of words and fit together logically.

Example:

The house next door is large, brick, dilapidated, and built last year. (not parallel)

The house next door, which was built last year, is large, brick, and dilapidated.
(parallel)

Paired elements

The use of parallelism is important in paired items, such as both...and, either...or, neither... nor, not only... but also. Parallel writing is also used in comparisons.

Example:

Chloe is both attractive and intelligent.

Not only is Chloe attractive, but she is also intelligent.

Jim's truck is bigger, but Emily's car is quieter.

Exercise: Make the following sentences parallel.

1. Neil is a sound engineer who plays the trombone.
2. The couch was soft comfortable, and delivered three days late.
3. The students were young, enthusiastic, vivacious, and many of them lived in Florida.
4. That book, poorly written, boring, long, and required by my instructor, is not my favorite.
5. He bought a lawn mower that was automatic, efficient, and was a bright color.
6. In England, one frequently encounters rain, fog, and sometimes it mists, too.
7. He did the laundry, cleaned the carpet, and was washing the floors.
8. I finished studying, I made some dinner, and ate it.
9. She fed, watered, pruned, and was always watering the plants.
10. The apartment contained many antiques: a marble tile from Italy, a ceramic pot from Greece, and it also had a big Scottish carpet.

Online Resources

[Purdue OWL: Parallel Structure](#)

[Parallel Form](#)

[Writer's Web: Focusing Sentences Through Parallelism](#)

[Grammarly Handbook | Parallelism In Writing Grammar Rules](#)