

Parallelism

Parallelism - a similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses.

Also called parallel structure or parallel construction.

Four areas of Parallelism:

- A. Series or lists
- B. Verb tenses
- C. Paired Words
- D. Equivalent Clauses

A. Series and Lists

By convention, items in a series appear in parallel form: a noun is listed with other nouns, an -ing form with other *-ing* forms, and so on.

Failure to express such items in similar grammatical form is considered faulty parallelism.

Example

A. She likes cooking, jogging, and walking.

Or

B. She cooked, jogged, and walked.

All verbs end in [ing] or [ed]

B. Verb Tense

- If you start a sentence or paragraph using one verb tense, stick with that same verb tense for the rest of the sentence/paragraph.

Example:

I will stop working on my speech and went to the movies.

This sentence isn't parallel because the verb tenses don't make chronological sense.

Some potential fixes:

- *I stopped working on my speech and went to the movies.*
- *I will stop working on my speech and go to the movies.*

C. Paired Words

What is wrong with the following sentence?

- *Debra needs to work on both grammar and she needs to learn to spell.*

Here, “she needs to learn to spell” is paired with the single word “grammar.” But “grammar” is a single word (a noun). As such, we need to reduce “she needs to learn to spell” to a single noun as well.

- *Debra needs to work on both grammar and spelling.*

Example Sentences:

A - Public transit such as buses or a train can help reduce air pollution.

- Incorrect ("a train" is not parallel with "buses")

B - Public transit such as buses and trains can help reduce air pollution. **Correct**

A -The chef swiftly and with efficiency rolled out the pizza dough and covered it with toppings.

- Incorrect ("with efficiency" is not parallel with "swiftly")

B -The chef swiftly and efficiently rolled out the pizza dough and covered it with toppings. **Correct**

D. Equivalent clauses

Clauses that are equivalent in meaning should be grammatically similar in form.

Example:

Faulty Parallelism - Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method, while now the laboratory method is employed.

Correct Version - Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method; now it is taught by the laboratory method.