

# Parallelism

Sentences that are correctly and effectively written are sentences that are balanced. A balanced sentence is one in which related actions, ideas, and descriptions are presented in the same grammatical form.

**KEY: Parallel structure is not only grammatically correct, but it also makes our sentences POP!**

**For example:**

*If you save a penny, it is just as if you have earned it.*

**OR**

*A penny saved is a penny earned.* (Oh....so much better! This sentence is POPPING!)

**Examples of parallel structure:**

*Jim and Cory visited New York City.* (noun to noun; also subject parallel with subject)

*Roya went to Cleveland and to Chicago.* (prepositional phrase to prepositional phrase)

*Jim and Cory visited New York City, and Roy went to Cleveland and Chicago.* (independent clause equal to independent clause, or – keep it simple – sentence parallel with sentence)

**KEY: Equalizing AND**

Think of “and” as an equal sign: whatever grammatical structure is found on one side of the “and” must be found on the other. This rule also holds true for “but”, “yet”, “so”, “for”, “or”.

If a preposition is on one side of the “and”, make sure to have a preposition on the other side. If there is a gerund or infinitive (“ing” or “to” verb) on one side of the “and”, make sure to have a gerund or infinitive on the other. Same with nouns, prepositional phrases, adjectives, etc.

**For example:**

*The nanny was hired to watch the children, to clean the house and for cooking meals.*

**OR**

*The nanny was hired to watch the children, to clean the house and to cook meals.*

The second sentence is correct. Notice the parallel construction around “and”: to watch, to clean and to cook.

*She liked to watch TV, and she liked reading.*

**OR**

*She liked to watch TV, and she liked to read.*

Again, the second sentence is correct: to watch AND to read. Nice and equal. Also, in keeping things balanced and parallel, be sure to always pair active voice with active voice.

*The ball was hit by Mary, and Jim caught the ball.*

**OR**

*Mary hit the ball, and Jim caught the ball.*

The first sentence pairs a passive voice clause with an active voice clause. This is incorrect. The second sentence exhibits parallelism by balancing active voice clauses, and this is correct.

**Key: Parallelism creates a rhythm in our writing**

*Our flag is red, white, and blue.* (parallel words)

*Kadeem ran up the steps; Susan ran down the steps; Joe stood bewildered on the landing.* (parallel clauses)

*"...of the people, by the people, for the people..."* is stated in the Gettysburg Address. (parallel phrases)

**KEY: Hand Holders**

When constructing a balanced sentence, some words go HAND-IN-HAND to create parallelism. Hand holders are technically called correlative conjunctions. However, all you need to remember is that you cannot break the buddy system for the following words:

Not only...But also

Neither...Nor

Either...Or

Both...And

To...From

Whenever you see one of the above in a sentence, you best find its partner!

**For example:**

*The senator was pleased not only with voter turnout but also with voter support of her proposal.*

*Neither Frank nor Stella arrived to work on time.*

*Sara was going to order either the steak or the salmon.*