

Parallel Structure in Sentences

Creating parallel structure in a sentence is achieved when the writer balances similar grammatical elements such as words, phrases, and clauses to demonstrate they are of equal importance.

Parallel words and phrases:

1. In the first example, a series of nouns are presented in parallel structure:

The Africans carried with them a pattern of kinship that emphasized collective survival,
mutual aid,
cooperation,
mutual solidarity,
interdependence,
and responsibility for others

Here is an example of how this sentence would NOT present parallel structure:

The Africans carried with them a pattern of kinship that emphasized collective survival (noun)
mutual aid (noun)
cooperating with each other (verb)
mutual solidarity (noun)
interdependence (noun)
and being responsible for others (verb)

2. In this sentence, a series of verbs are presented in parallel structure:

Parallel: Her children like to swim, hike and ride dirt bikes.

NOT parallel: Her children like to swim, hike, and riding dirt bikes.

3. In this sentence, a series of adverbs are presented in parallel structure:

Parallel: The manager wrote his report quickly, accurately, and thoroughly.

NOT parallel: The manager wrote his report quickly, accurately, and in detail.

4. Here are some examples of parallel phrases

a) Parallel: She had no time to be human to be happy

NOT parallel: She had no time to be human or for being happy.

b) Parallel: The reward rests not in the task but in the play.

NOT parallel: The reward rests ot in the task but in how you do it.

c) Parallel: Whether at home or at work, he was always busy.

NOT parallel: Whether at home or while he was working, he was always busy.

Parallel clauses:

1. I remember Carla's sister Morgan who had so many dreams and who saw the best in everyone.

Here is how the same sentence would NOT be parallel:

I remember Carla's sister Morgan who had so many dreams and was always trying to see the good in everyone.

2. I was happy in the thought that our influence was helpful, that I was doing the work I loved, and that I could make a living out of it.

Here is how the same sentence would NOT be parallel:

I was happy in the thought that our influence was helpful, I was doing the work I loved, and making a living out of it was possible.

Working on parallel construction:

1. I like to swim, to dance, and having fun.
2. Disney is a place where the family can get away from their normal life, and give them a chance to do a lot of stuff that normally would never be done.
3. Behaviors that are found in other places, such as spontaneous play, are missing from the park because they would interfere with the families' programmed agenda, taking away from their precious time, and proving to be a waste of their money.
4. Main Street represents each of the themes contained throughout the park, as well as opening visitors' eyes to all the other attractions.
5. In section one of Willis's essay, she argues that all spontaneous play is eliminated from Disney World and is now dominated by programmed amusement.