



English for Specific Purposes I

Writing skills: parallel structure

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Parallel structure or Parallelism: Definition

Parallel structure means using the **same pattern of words** to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This can happen at the word, phrase, or clause level.

It emphasizes on the **same level of importance** of multiple ideas or information given in the same sentence.

Sources:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/mechanics/parallel_structure.html

<https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/parallel-structure>



How to form parallel structure

- When there are two or more pieces of information in a sentence, **grammatical form of the first information** must be followed to the remaining.
- Multiple information can be connected by **coordinating conjunctions**.
- A parallel structure can be constructed in **word, phrase or clause level** in different sentences.

<https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/parallel-structure>



Example

- **Not Parallel:** Mary loves dancing (noun), jogging (noun), and to ride a bicycle (phrase).
- **Parallel:** Mary loves dancing (noun), jogging (noun), and riding a bicycle (noun).

OR

- Mary loves to dance, jog and ride a bicycle.



Parallelism with coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, so, nor, for, yet)

- **Not Parallel:** I will take you dancing (noun) and to a performance (phrase).
- **Parallel:** I will take you to a dance (noun) and a performance (noun).

Can you correct the following?

- You can find the keys on the table or they are in my bag.
- She likes to write but not speaking.



Parallelism with correlative conjunctions (both...and, either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also, if...then)

- **Not Parallel:** John hoped both to go to the UK for studies and work there.
- **Parallel:** John hoped both to go to the UK for studies and to work there.

Can you correct the following?

- I want not only to buy a car but also a house.



Parallelism with comparisons (than, as)

- **Not Parallel:** I would rather spend some time contemplating on the correct answer than asking for help.
- **Parallel:** I would rather spend some time contemplating on the correct answer than ask for help.

Can you correct the following?

- I like swimming better than to snorkel.



Parallelism with clauses

Not Parallel: The teacher told students that they should listen carefully and note-taking.

Parallel: The teacher told students that they should listen carefully and that they should take notes.

Can you correct the following?

- You will learn how to drive and the signs.