

Parallelism

Need to Know:

- Parallelism refers to using similar words, clauses, phrases, sentence structure, or other grammatical elements to communicate related ideas in a sentence.
- It makes the sentence concise, clear, and easy to read.
- It allows ideas within a sentence to naturally flow from one to the next without awkwardness.

Word Level Parallelism.

This is the use of parallelism through repeated words in the same sentence. This most often occurs when writing lists.

Non-parallel: “I like running, biking, and to swim.”

- In this version of this sentence, not all of the activities in the list are in the same word form. Instead, the phrase “to swim” differs from the rest. This causes the sentence to sound awkward and distracts readers from the overall meaning.

Parallel: “I like running, biking and swimming.”

- In this sentence, each activity in the list is in the gerund, or “ing” form.

Phrase or Clause Level Parallelism

This is a form of parallelism when there is a repeated structure within a more complex sentence.

Non-parallel: “The angry customer wanted to exchange the item, obtain a refund, and she demanded to speak with the manager.”

- In this version of the sentence, the explanation of the customer’s actions is cluttered with additional words, making the sentence confusing and awkward for readers.

Parallel: “The angry customer wanted to exchange the item, to obtain a refund, and to speak to the manager.”

- In this sentence, each of the customer’s actions is stated in the “to + verb” structure.