

## Parallel Sentence Structure

Definition: The repetition of grammatical structures in a sentence to create emphasis, balance of ideas, and rhythm in your writing. A very sophisticated style strategy.

- Parallel sentences are powerful and can be used for thesis and topic sentences that control the essay.
- Parallel sentences can draw the readers' attention to key ideas
- Parallel sentences because they are equal in strength give the ideas within them equal emphasis.
- Parallel sentences emphasize the natural rhythm of the English language.
- You can repeat any grammatical structure...
  - a series of nouns, or verbs, or adjectives, etc.
  - a series of phrases — prepositional, participial, gerund, infinitive
  - a series of dependent clauses

## Three Types of Parallels

1. **Coordinate:** The most common and the most simple.

**Conjunctions used:** **and, but, or, nor**

Example: I went to the store and bought milk, eggs, and bread. [series of nouns]

Example: In the summer I love to camp in the mountains and to work in my garden.  
[series of infinitive phrases. Repeating the word to is optional.]

❖ Fix this faulty parallel:

The salad dressing splattered on the table, on the rug, and got spots on Mr. Grimly's suit.

2. **Compared/Contrasted:** Also very common

**Conjunctions used:** **Compared = as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_**

**Contrasted = \_\_\_\_\_ than**

Example of compared:

Moisturizing your skin daily is as important as protecting it from the sun's rays.  
[Gerund phrases]

❖ Fix this faulty parallel:

Calculating accurately is as critical as to think logically.

Example of contrasted:

Selecting a Halloween costume is more stressful than studying for a test.

❖ Fix this faulty parallel:

What I plan to do in the future is more important than studying for my classes now.

3. **Correlative:** More rare, usually creates more emphasis, often misused

**Conjunctions used:** [Note these come in pairs, and like Siamese twins, can not be separated.]

either...or...	Either you come with me, or I'll leave you here.
neither...nor...	Neither Tom nor Jane had any idea about the surprise party.
whether...or...	I don't know whether to go to college or to work for a year.
not (only)...but (also)...	I not only detest cucumbers but pickles as well.
both...and...	I am determined both to succeed in life and earn a lot of money.
from...to...	From skiing the slopes to lounging in the lodge, Copper Mountain offers a remarkable snow experience.

❖ Fix this faulty parallel:

The problem is that a man won't even come close to a woman who does not have make-up on or looks good....The author doesn't put only women in a bad light but also men.