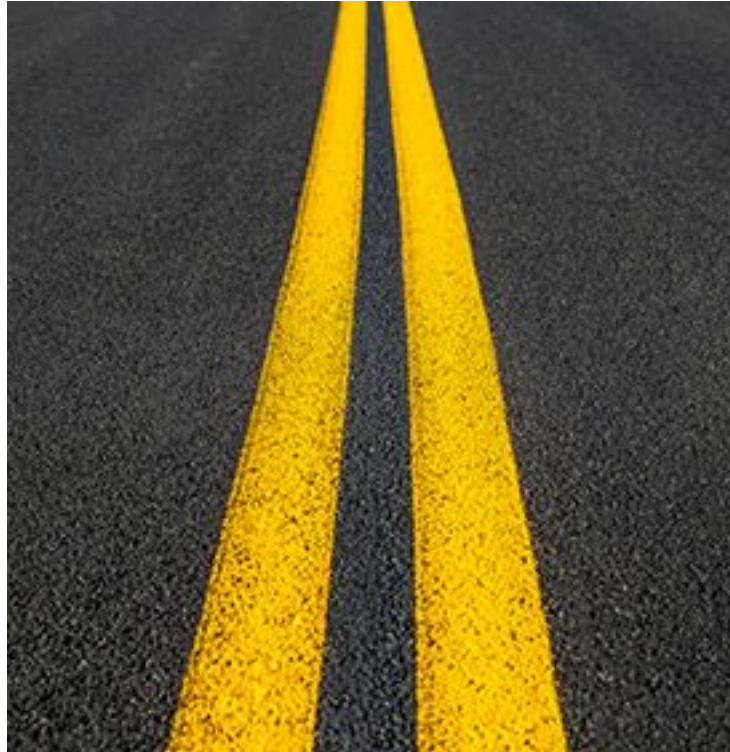


Using Parallel Structure



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When writing a sentence, make sure all elements are *parallel*, or treated in the same way. Otherwise, the sentence becomes unbalanced and may confuse your readers.

Parallel Structure with Items in a Series

Incorrect: The walls in my room are painted white, gray, and they are painted pink, too.

- *Discussion:* This sentence is unparallel because the last item in the series is treated differently than the first two items.

Correct: The walls in my room are painted white, gray, and pink.

- *Discussion:* Now all the words in the series—*white*, *gray*, and *pink*—are single-word adjectives. They are parallel.

Incorrect: Some of my favorite activities are playing board games, dancing, and to swim.

- *Discussion:* This sentence is not parallel because the first two series items start with *ing* words and the last item starts with an infinitive phrase—*to swim*.

Correct: Some of my favorite activities are playing board games, dancing, and swimming.

- *Discussion:* Now all three ideas are expressed equally.

Parallel Structure with Comparisons

Incorrect: I think multiplying numbers is easier than to divide numbers.

- *Discussion:* The two items being compared are treated differently.

Correct: I think multiplying numbers is easier than dividing numbers.

- *Discussion:* Now the two items being compared are treated equally.

Your Turn Read the following sentences out loud with a partner. Edit them to make them parallel.

(Some answers may vary.)

1. Some examples of marine mammals are polar bears, seals, and including sea otters.

Some examples of marine mammals are polar bears, seals, and sea otters.

2. Sea otters spend their days foraging for food, sunbathing on rocks, and to graze in kelp forests.

Sea otters spend their days foraging for food, sunbathing on rocks, and grazing in kelp forests.

3. Did you know otters eat, sleep, and they give birth in the water?

Did you know otters eat, sleep, and give birth in the water?

4. Sea otters are bigger than an otter in rivers.

Sea otters are bigger than river otters.

5. They can roam the shore and to swim at sea.

They can roam the shore and swim at sea.

6. Oysters, mussels, and they also eat abalone.

They eat oysters, mussels, and abalone.

7. Otters enjoy playing in the waves and to dive for food.

Otters enjoy playing in the waves and diving for food.

8. Thick fur, oily skin, and they have blubber to stay warm.

Thick fur, oily skin, and blubber help them stay warm.

9. Sea otters are social, smart, and they are funny.

Sea otters are social, smart, and funny.

10. Have you ever seen an otter at a zoo or wild?
Have you ever seen an otter at a zoo or in the wild?

- See more at <http://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/using-parallel-structure>