

PARALLEL STRUCTURE EXERCISES

Revise the following sentences to make coordinated, compared, or listed elements parallel in structure:

1. Everyone was surprised at the election results: overwhelming approval of the bond issue, the redistricting plan was defeated, and the city council will have all new faces.
2. Her generosity, sympathetic nature, and the fact that she is able to motivate employees make her an excellent supervisor.
3. The shock of having one's apartment burglarized comes less from the missing possessions than to think that a stranger has invaded one's privacy.
4. In the movies, all college men are portrayed as single and having other attributes such as money, good looks, and a great personality.
5. James, a young teenager from the ghetto, experienced an exhilarating, soul-searching encounter with God, which he thought was something to cling to, protecting him from the immoral clutches of the Avenue and that would relieve his feelings of despair. It didn't.
6. The Chicano motorist claimed that the officer was discriminating against him in terms of racial prejudice and not only because a law had been broken.
7. The captain ordered his men to dig foxholes, to post sentries, and their weapons were to be cleaned before dark.
8. Smoking cigarettes can be as dangerous as to play Russian roulette.

Combine the following sentences in each of the following sets by means of coordination and parallel structure. Change the wording where necessary:

1. Professor Harvey made two main points.
He said that modern painting is essentially personal.
He saw impersonality as the essence of modern architecture.
2. Not only may the study of literature help you to understand other people.
You may also be helped to understand yourself.
3. Most writers hate neglect.
They love to be acclaimed.

Exercises in using parallel structure for emphasis:

Identify the parallel elements in the following sentences. How does parallelism contribute to the effectiveness of each sentence?

1. Tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast is winding down through the Cajon and San Gorgonio Passes, blowing up sandstorms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to the flash point. --Joan Didion
2. (The afternoon) was gray, deadened, and wintry, with a slow moist, heavy coldness sinking in and deadening all the faculties. --D.H. Lawrence
3. The mornings are the pleasantest times in the apartment, exhaustion having set in, the sated mosquitoes at rest on ceiling and walls, sleeping it off, the room a swirl of tortured bed clothes and abandoned garments, the vines in their full leafiness filtering the hard light of day, the air conditioner silent at last like the mosquitoes. --E.H. White
4. Aging paints every action gray, lies heavy on every movement, imprisons every thought. --Sharon Curtin

The following sentences or clauses would be more effective were they structured using parallel form. Revise them to make them more effective. Change the wording where necessary.

1. I'd rather you do what I tell you to do than have you imitate me.
2. When you have a cold, you should eat more than you usually do but with a fever you're better off not eating at all.
3. He left town a villain, but when he returned he was considered to be heroic.
4. That family survived poverty; they also had to overcome prejudice; and personal tragedy was another obstacle they met successfully.