

PARALLEL STRUCTURE

According to parallel construction, two or more elements in a sentence when used in a series or list should be parallel in form-- grammatically equivalent: noun should be balanced by noun, verb by verb, phrase by phrase, and clause by clause. The following are examples of different grammatical units used in parallel constructions

Parallel Adjectives -- The creative person is not only imaginative and flexible, but also conscientious and persevering.

Parallel Nouns and Past-tense Verbs -- Whenever she entered a room, conversation stopped, heads turned, and eyes followed her every movement.

Parallel Gerund Phrases -- Getting up late in the morning, relaxing on the beach in the afternoon, and dancing until late at night— that's my idea of a vacation.

Parallel Adjective Clauses -- This is the roommate who uses my aftershave lotion and never replaces it, who gets my clothes dirty and never cleans them, and who borrows my money and never repays it.

Faulty Parallel Construction

The Renaissance in England was marked by:

1. an extension of trade routes
2. merchant class became more powerful
3. the death of feudalism
4. upsurging of the arts
5. the sciences were encouraged
6. religious quarrels began.

Improved

The Renaissance in England was marked by:

1. the extension of trade routes
2. the increasing power of the merchant class
3. the death of feudalism
4. the upsurge of the arts
5. the encouragement of the sciences
6. the rise of religious quarrels.

Examples of parallelism used for emphasis:

Series: Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. (five verb-noun combinations) —J.F. Kennedy

Contrast: On all these shores there are echoes of past and future: of the flow of time, obliterating yet containing all that has gone before. (two participles) —R Rachel Carson

Series plus contrast: Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. (four nouns) —H Henry David Thoreau

Choice: We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly, we shall hang separately. (two clauses) --Benjamin Franklin

Statement of equivalence: An empty house is a lonely place. (two noun-adjectives)

Use of Parallel Structure & Repetition for Emphasis:

1. In many ways writing is the art of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying listen to me, see it my way, change your mind. --Joan Didion
2. I came; I saw; I conquered. --Julius Caesar
3. Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. --John.F. Kennedy
4. I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. --Winston Churchill
5. They were weak in numbers but strong in pride. --S. Johnson

Weak Use of Repetition:

One of the specific aspects of the speech was the question and answer period. I feel that the panel during the question and answer period was very biased in the questions to Gov. Barnett of Mississippi. In so much as the questions directed toward Gov. Barnett were mostly concerned with segregation.

(Possible revision to avoid necessary repetition: During the question and answer period, the panel seemed biased against Gov. Barnett of Mississippi since the questions were mostly concerned with segregation.)

Faulty and Awkward Use of Parallel Structure:

1. The captain ordered his men to dig foxholes, to post sentries, and then weapons were to be cleaned before dark.
2. During pre-registration week, we are usually concerned with choosing good courses and that we can find an inexpensive place to live.
3. The sentence is difficult to understand not because the vocabulary is technical but because of faulty syntax.
4. It not only makes a good impression on prospective students but also the professional people that visit our office to use the conference room.
5. The follow-up helps the client discuss any problems that he might be facing in the job or maybe just give him some reassurance.