

#9: Parallel Structure (Parallelism)

Parallel structure is the matching of sentence parts for logical balance. It helps to strengthen rhythm and to avoid confusion.

Examples:

- NOT PARALLEL: She likes to **run**, **swim**, and **going dancing**.
- PARALLEL:
 - She likes to **run**, **swim**, and **dance**.
 - She likes **to run**, **to swim**, and **to dance**.
 - She likes **running**, **swimming**, and **dancing**.
- NOT PARALLEL: It is important for all first-year college students **to study for tests**, **don't miss class**, and **paying attention to lectures**.
- PARALLEL:
 - It is important for all first-year college students **to study for tests**, **to attend all classes**, and **to pay attention to lectures**.
 - It is important for all first-year college students to **study for tests**, **attend all classes**, and **pay attention to lectures**.
- NOT PARALLEL: The judge is **unbiased**, **sympathetic** and **an honest man**.
- PARALLEL: The judge is **unbiased**, **sympathetic**, and **honest**.

*When writing a list (as I have in the above examples), make sure all the items in the list are of the same part of speech. Describe the judge with three adjectives (unbiased, sympathetic, honest) not two adjectives and a modified noun (honest man).

More challenging examples:

- NOT PARALLEL: The **shape of the rock**, **how big it was**, and **its color** reminded me of a small turtle.
- PARALLEL: The rock's **shape**, **size**, and **color** reminded me of a small turtle.¹
- NOT PARALLEL: The coach told the players **that they should get a lot of sleep**, **that they should not eat too much**, and **to do some warm-up exercises before the game**.²
- PARALLEL:
 - The coach told the players **that they should get a lot of sleep**, **that they should not eat too much**, and **that they should do some warm-up exercises before the game**.
 - The coach told the players that they should **get a lot of sleep**, **not eat too much**, and **do some warm-up exercises before the game**.
- NOT PARALLEL: **Cooking**, **going jogging**, and **to watch movies** are my favorite hobbies.
- PARALLEL: **Cooking**, **jogging** and **watching movies** are my favorite hobbies.

¹ From *Evergreen*.

² From the Purdue OWL.