

## Skill 4 Parallel Structures

*Parallel structures* are grammar structures that have the same pattern. For example, if you use two verbs in a sentence, they should be the same tense. Similarly, both verbs should be singular or both should be plural. The same is true for nouns.

Using parallel structures makes your writing easy to understand. It also provides variety. The readers will look for your ability to use parallel structures.

### Examples

#### subjects

*not parallel*      Working and play are both important parts of a child's development.

In this example, the subjects are not parallel. The first is a gerund, and the second is a simple noun.

*parallel*      Walking the dog and feeding the cat are examples of tasks that most children can handle.

Work and play are both important parts of a child's development.

The subjects in both of the above examples are parallel. In the first example, they are both gerunds, while in the second example they are both simple nouns.

#### verbs

*not parallel*      We walked through the park and were eating ice cream cones.  
New lockers should be bought and they should repaint the pool.

The verbs in these examples are not parallel. In the first example, the verbs are in different tenses—simple past and past continuous. In the second example, one verb is passive voice and the other is active voice.

*parallel*      We walked through the park and ate ice cream cones.  
New lockers should be bought and the pool should be repainted.

The verbs in each of these examples are parallel because they follow the same form. In the first sentence, they are both in the simple past tense. In the second example, they are both passive voice.

#### other structures

*parallel*      Students at small schools might get more individual attention and feel more secure.

It is not necessary to repeat an auxiliary verb (such as *might*, *will*, or the verb *be* in a continuous tense) to keep verbs parallel within a clause.

*not parallel*      Shopping is fun, and I enjoy it.

This example is grammatically correct, but it is not parallel. It uses an adjective, *fun*, and a verb, *enjoy*, to describe shopping.

*parallel*      Shopping is fun and enjoyable.

This example is parallel because the words it uses to describe shopping are the same kind of word. They are both adjectives.

## Practice

Change the second underlined word or phrase to make it parallel with the first.

1. When children take care of pets, they can learn to be responsible and are having fun at the same time.
2. Working all day at a dull job and then to go home tired and grumpy is not a good life.
3. A large school can make some children feel uncomfortable, and it scares them.
4. The teacher graded our papers every weekend, and they were given back to us on Monday.
5. I was working at an office during the day and studied for my college degree at night.
6. In my opinion, a shopping mall is a good place to shop because of its variety and it is convenient.
7. A dog needs to be walked every afternoon, and then someone should feed it.
8. Creativity as well as being resourceful are important qualities for a teacher to have.

## Skill 5 Coherence

Coherence shows the relationship between sentences and between ideas. You can provide coherence to your essay by repeating words and rephrasing ideas.

### Repeating

You can add rhythm to your essay by repeating some words and phrases. In the paragraph below, notice how the phrase *they provide children* is used several times and how it emphasizes the relationship among the three sentences.

### Example

Parents choose smaller schools because they meet some of the most important needs of young children. *They provide children* with a warm, loving atmosphere. *They provide children* with many opportunities for individual attention. Most important of all, perhaps, *they provide children* with a strong sense of security.

#### Tip

The current example uses repetitions intentionally, not accidentally. Be careful not to overuse a word or phrase. Look at your writing in the final stage, and see if you need to rephrase instead.

### Rephrasing

You can make your point stronger by rephrasing words and phrases. The reader then has another opportunity to understand your idea. You can rephrase a word with a synonym (see Skill 2). You can also rephrase a phrase or sentence by writing it in a different way.

The italicized words and phrases in the example paragraphs have a similar meaning.

**Examples**

People have pets because they make good *companions*. Dogs, for example, are very loyal *friends*.

Many people need a lot of *money* in order to feel secure. They want to know that they have enough *material wealth* to provide for all their needs and desires.

Some people are *addicted to shopping*. This can be a very serious problem in some cases. People who *cannot control their urge to buy things* often go into debt.

**Practice**

Choose the word, phrase, or sentence that best completes the paragraph. Use the italicized words as a guide.

1. Happiness means different things to different people. *For some people, it means having a lot of money and possessions. For others, it means developing their skills and talents as much as possible.*  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Each one of us has to seek our own kind of happiness.  
 (A) Some people are happiest when surrounded by loving friends and family.  
 (B) Having loving friends and family makes some people quite happy.  
 (C) For still others, it means being surrounded by loving friends and family.
  
2. It is very important for me to feel *satisfied* with my job. No salary, no matter how high, can make up for lack of \_\_\_\_\_, in my opinion.  
 (A) career fulfillment  
 (B) lifelong friends  
 (C) retirement benefits
  
3. A good teacher is *knowledgeable* about his subject. Things change rapidly in the modern world, and new discoveries are always being made. A good teacher makes a point of \_\_\_\_\_ about the latest developments in his field.  
 (A) teaching his students  
 (B) staying informed  
 (C) assigning interesting topics
  
4. As a rule, modern families are too busy to provide pets with the proper care and attention. *They are too busy to clean up after their pets. They are too busy to take them to the vet for regular check ups.* \_\_\_\_\_ For these reasons, I think it is not a good idea for most families to have pets.  
 (A) Also, their responsibilities are too many to give them time to spend with pets.  
 (B) Most of all, they are too busy to spend time with their pets.  
 (C) In addition, no one has room in their schedule to spend time with a pet.

