

Parallel Construction: Lining Up

Parallel construction is expressing two or more related ideas in the same grammatical form. This means they have to be the same structure: the same kind of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Also use parallel structure in a series of items that are joined by the conjunctions *and* or *or*, and in lists.

1. Parallel words:

To sing and *dancing* are her strengths.
Singing and *dancing* are her strengths.

2. Parallel phrases:

Between *her work at home* and *her office work*, she is busy.
Between *her work at home* and *her work at the office*, she is busy.

3. Parallel clauses:

I will run a marathon *when I have time to train* and *having my knee better*.
I will run a marathon *when I have time to train, and when my knee is better*.

4. Parallel sentences:

My friend Mary has a red car. The blue car is my friend John's.
My friend Mary has a red car. My friend John has a blue car.

5. With conjunctions:

His hobbies are *playing the guitar*, and *acted in plays*, and *grow roses*.
His hobbies are *playing the guitar*, and *acting in plays*, and *growing roses*.

6. In lists:

Things to Do:

1. Pay the bills
2. Researching the history of Gettysburg
3. What I need for baking brownies

Things to Do:

1. Pay the bills
2. Research the history of Gettysburg
3. Gather the ingredients to make brownies

Writing with good parallel construction makes your sentences strong and easy to read. Just remember to keep the structure the same from element to element within the sentence, and you'll keep your sentences in line!