

PARALLEL SENTENCE STRUCTURE

WRITING SERVICES - UNCW - DEPAOLO HALL, 1ST FLOOR - 962-7857

Parallel structure is using the same pattern of words to show that items in a sentence have the same importance. Words, phrases, and clauses can all be parallel.

1. When using the **-ing** verb form (gerund):

Parallel: Jimmy enjoys rock climbing**ing**, surfing**ing**, and running**ing**.

NOT Parallel: Jimmy enjoys rock climbing**ing**, surfing**ing**, and *to run*.

2. When using the **infinitive** verb form:

Parallel: Sally likes **to hike**, **to swim**, and **to play soccer**.

NOT Parallel: Sally likes **to hike**, **to swim**, and **playing soccer**.

3. When using adverbs ending in **-ly**:

Parallel: Sal styled his hair **efficiently**, **precisely**, and **outrageously**.

NOT Parallel: Sal styled his hair **efficiently**, **precisely**, and *in an eccentric manner*.

4. If you begin a series using clauses, you must continue to use clauses. **Do not change to another word pattern or from active to passive verb forms:**

Parallel: Ryan told his son **that he should get enough sleep**, **that he should brush his teeth**, and **that he should eat his breakfast**.

NOT Parallel: Ryan told his son **that he should get enough sleep**, **that he should brush his teeth**, and *to eat his breakfast*.

OR

Parallel: The presenter at the conference assumed **that she would read her paper**, **that there would be handouts available**, and **that several audience members would ask questions**.

NOT Parallel: The presenter at the conference assumed **that she would read her paper**, **that there would be handouts available**, and *that questions would be asked by several audience members*.

Hint: *If you have several items in a list, put them in a column to see if they are parallel.*