

## PARALLEL STRUCTURE

To have parallel structure, connected elements in a sentence need to be written so that they are structured in the same way.

Below, we see that in the first example, the sentence makes sense but it does not harmonize stylistically because both “collective survival,” “mutual aid” are noun phrases while “being responsible” is a verb phrase. To fix these, we changed the verb phrase to a noun phrase in the second example.

**No:** The group emphasized collective survival, mutual aid, and being responsible for one another.

**Yes:** The group emphasized collective survival, mutual aid, and responsibility for one another.

### Use parallel structure with elements in a list or series

Make sure tenses, parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.), phrases, and clauses all match. In the following examples nouns, infinitives, and gerunds are used consistently, creating a parallel form.

**Series of nouns:** She wanted three things: money, power, and security.

**Series of verb infinitives:** There was no opportunity to do my taxes, to request an extension, or to explain my situation.

**Series of gerunds:** Samantha likes hiking, swimming, and bicycling.

**Series of prepositional phrases:** He found cleaning supplies in the closet and under the sink, but not in the garage.

**Series of clauses:** 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.

### When comparing elements with one another

When we compare things, we often use words such as “more than,” “less than,” “better than,” “similar to,” and “same as.” When comparing with these words, they need to be parallel to one another.

Driving to New York can actually take less time than flying there.

How much money you make is just as important as where your job is located.

### With elements joined by a linking verb or ‘being’ verb

Joining elements with linking verbs or “being” verbs suggests an equality in the elements being compared. Hence, the elements need to be parallel to each other.

What you see is what you get.

Being Mohammed’s friend means being constantly alert.

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