

PARALLEL STRUCTURE

Essay Writing

What is Parallel Structure?

- ▶ In academic writing, parallel structure is a must.
- ▶ Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance.
- ▶ We use parallel structure when naming items in a LIST and for ESSAY OUTLINES.
- ▶ The usual way to join parallel structures is with the use of coordinating conjunctions such as "and" or "or."

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/623/0/>

Example of Parallel Structure

- ▶ In the summer, Coffin likes relaxing, surfing, painting, and poking street performers.
- ▶ **Relaxing**
- ▶ **Surfing**
- ▶ **Painting**
- ▶ **Poking**

Do Not Mix Forms:

- ▶ **NOT PARALLEL:**
Mary likes hiking, swimming, and to ride a bicycle.
- ▶ Parallel:
Mary likes hiking, swimming, and riding a bicycle.
- ▶ **NOT PARALLEL:**
The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and in a detailed manner.
- ▶ Parallel:
The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and thoroughly.

More Mixed Forms:

▶ **NOT PARALLEL**

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and his motivation was low.

▶ **PARALLEL**

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and lacked motivation.

Outline Lists

Keep all items in a list (like your essay outline) parallel:

▶ The dictionary can be used to find:

- word meanings,
- pronunciations,
- correct spellings, and
- **looking up** irregular verbs.

▶ The dictionary can be used to find:

- word meanings,
- pronunciations,
- correct spellings, and
- irregular verbs.

For Your Essay Outlines:

II. Coffin's Summer Routine

- A. **Relaxing**
- B. **Surfing**
- C. **Painting**
- D. **Poking**
 1. Hobos
 2. Guitar Players
 3. Buskers

III. Dictionary Usage

- A. Word Meanings
- B. Pronunciations
- C. Correct Spellings
 1. **Important** Words
 2. **Bad** Words
 3. **Tricky** Words
- D. Irregular Words

Verbs

Adjectives

Most Boring Essay Ever!

When Checking Outlines for Parallelism:

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

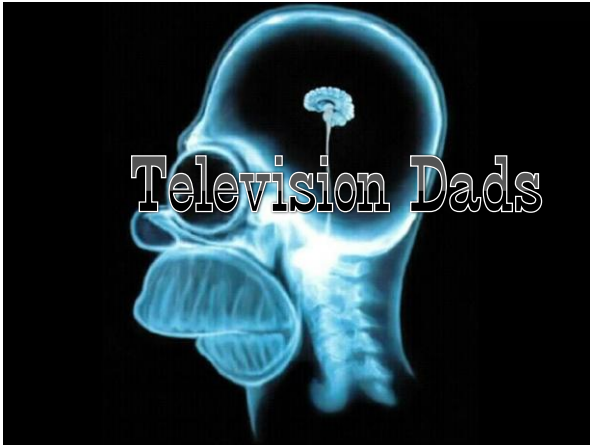
▶ Using Our TV Dads
Example:



OR

▶ Using Our Superheroes
Example:





Take Homer:

- ii. Homer Simpson
- A. Works at the nuclear power plant
 - B. Hates his neighbor Flanders
 1. Flanders represents all the qualities Homer doesn't possess.
 - a. Sobriety
 - b. Lawfulness
 - c. Honesty
 - d. Loyalty
 - C. Loves his wife Marge dearly
 - D. Chokes his son Bart often

▶ A. Works

▶ B. Hates

▶ C. Loves

▶ D. Chokes

Verbs

a. Sobriety

b. Lawfulness

c. Honesty

d. loyalty

Nouns



Take Iron Man

- ii. Iron Man
- A. Made his awesome suit out of empty tin cans
 1. Tuna
 2. Tomatoes
 - a. Eats a lot of tomatoes
 - b. Has a tomato addiction
 - c. Loves his ketchup
 3. Soup
 4. Beer
 - B. Flew from New York City to Los Angeles in four minutes
 - C. Was the one responsible for the apprehension of the Kingpin

A. Made

B. Flew

C. Was

Verbs

1. Tuna

2. Tomatoes

3. Soup

4. Beer

Nouns

a. Eats

b. Has

c. Loves

Verbs

From Homer



How is education supposed to make me feel smarter? Every time I learn something new, it pushes some old stuff out of my brain. Remember when I took that home winemaking course, and I forgot how to drive?