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."

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.
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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
  - checking up irregular verbs.

- The dictionary can be used to find:
  - word meanings,
  - pronunciations,
  - correct spellings, and
  - irregular verbs.

For Your Essay Outlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. Coffin’s Summer Routine</th>
<th>III. Dictionary Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Relaxing</td>
<td>A. Word Meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Surfing</td>
<td>B. Pronunciations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Painting</td>
<td>C. Correct Spellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Poking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Hobos</td>
<td>1. Important Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Guitar Players</td>
<td>2. Bad Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bunkers</td>
<td>3. Tricky Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Irregular Words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When Checking Outlines for Parallelism:

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

OR

- Using Our TV Dads
  Example: [Image of Homer Simpson]

- Using Our Superheroes
  Example: [Image of Iron Man]
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

Take Homer:
   > A. Works
   > B. Hates
   > C. Loves
   > D. Chokes
      a. Sobriety
      b. Lawfulness
      c. Honesty
      d. Loyalty

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

Take Iron Man
   > A. Made
   > B. Flew
   > C. Was
      1. Tuna
      2. Tomatoes
      3. Soup
      4. Beer
      a. Eats
      b. Has
      c. Loves
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?