

# PARALLELISM

## Balancing Parallel Ideas in a Series

*If ideas are parallel, they are best expressed in parallel grammatical form. Single words should be balanced with single words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses. This helps make sentences linear and easier to read.*

Problem: Grammar is an aspect of writing that can be boring, tedious, and *it sometimes irritates me.*

Solution: Grammar is an aspect of writing that can be boring, tedious, and *irritating to me.*

Problem: I'm never going to finish this paper if I continue *to play computer games, check e-mail, and finding other ways to procrastinate.*

Solution: I'm never going to finish this paper if I continue *to play computer games, to check e-mail, and to find other ways to procrastinate.* (Or: "...*playing computer games, checking e-mail, and finding other ways to procrastinate.*")

## When to Repeat Words

*Sometimes you should repeat words for parallel structure. For example, words such as "by," "to," "that," and "because" signal the grammatical nature of the word groups to follow.*

Problem: You can go to the neighborhood store for beer, or the big supermarket.

Solution: You can go to the neighborhood store for beer, or *to* the big supermarket.

Explanation: Adding "to" balances the sentence and clarifies the meaning.

## When Not to Repeat Words

*Sometimes parallel structure requires that you do not repeat words. When using the following phrases, for instance, make sure that the grammatical structure is consistent in both the first and second halves: either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also, both...and, whether...or.*

Problem: The task was not only difficult, but also *was* time consuming.

Solution: The task was not only difficult, but also time consuming.

Explanation: Since "was" comes before "not only," it applies to both parts of the sentence and shouldn't be repeated.