



Parallel Constructions

Parallelism in writing refers to the use of equal grammatical forms or matching sentence structures formulated to express similar ideas.

Parallelism in Lists

- Incorrect: *Susan likes **to swim** in the ocean, **biking** in town, and a **hike** in the mountains.*

The above sentence is incorrect because the three actions, equal in relationship, are each structured differently.

Correct: *Susan likes **to swim** in the ocean, **to bike** in town, and **to hike** in the mountains.*

Correct: *Susan likes **to swim** in the ocean, **bike** in town, and **hike** in the mountains.*

Correct: *Susan likes **swimming** in the ocean, **biking** in town, and **hiking** in the mountains.*

The phrases in the correct sentences above are parallel because the verb beginning each phrase is in the same form {infinitive (to + verb) and gerund (-ing or continuing action verb)}.

- Incorrect: *The professor explained **how to organize** and **about documenting**.*

The sentence above is incorrect because "to organize" is the infinitive form and about documenting is the gerund form.

Correct: *The professor explained **how to organize** a paper and **how to document** sources.*

Correct: *The professor explained **organization** and **documentation**.*

Correct: *The professor explained about **organizing** the paper and **documenting** the sources.*

The phrases in the correct sentences are parallel because they contain the same forms of the verbs.

Parallelism in Comparisons

- Incorrect: *When writing a paper, **research** is usually more time consuming than **documenting sources**.*

The sentence above is incorrect because the two items being compared are in different grammatical forms; one is a noun in the regular form, and the other is a gerund.

Correct: *When writing a paper, **research** is usually more time consuming than **documentation**.*

Correct: *When writing a paper, **researching** is usually more time consuming than **documenting sources**.*

The phrases in the first correct sentence are parallel because they are both nouns, while the phrases in the sentence that follows are both gerunds.