



Parallelism

Parallel constructions enhance clarity by presenting equally important ideas in the same grammatical form.

At Gettysburg in 1863, Lincoln said that the Civil War was being fought to make sure that the government *of the people, by the people, and for the people* might not perish from the earth.

When you notice that items in a series or paired ideas do not have the same grammatical form, correct them by making them parallel.

NOT Parallel:

The Census Bureau classifies people as employed if they *receive* payment for any kind of labor, *are* temporarily absent from their jobs, or *working* at least fifteen hours as unpaid laborers in a family business.

PARALLEL:

The Census Bureau classifies people as employed if they *receive* payment for any kind of labor, *are* temporarily absent from their jobs, or *work* at least fifteen hours as unpaid laborers in a family business.

NOT Parallel:

My sister obviously thought that I was *too young, ignorant, and a troublemaker*.

PARALLEL:

My sister obviously thought that I was *too young, too ignorant, and too troublesome*.

NOT Parallel:

Successful teachers must *inspire students* and *challenging them is also important*.

PARALLEL:

Successful teachers must both *inspire* and *challenge* their students.

NOT Parallel:

I dreamed *not only of getting* the girl *but also of the gold medal*.

PARALLEL:

I dreamed *not only of getting* the girl *but also of winning* the gold medal.

Maimon, Elaine P. and Janice H. Peritz. *A Writer's Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003.