

Grades 9–10 Playlist: Using Parallel Structure

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1.A*:

- Use parallel structure.

Welcome

Parallelism is a technique writers use to convey ideas of equal importance. It can also be helpful for creating emphasis in a text. Writers achieve parallelism by repeating the structure of a phrase or sentence. This can occur within a sentence or across two or more consecutive sentences. By learning to use parallel structure, writers will be able to craft balanced, well-structured sentences that are easily understood and pleasant to read.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- use parallel structure.

Exploring the Standard

Parallel structure is a strategy writers use to express ideas clearly and concisely. However, this does not limit writers to short, subject-verb-object sentences. In fact, parallel structure can be used in any kind of sentence or group of sentences, whether simple, compound, or complex. The purpose of parallelism is to make it easier for readers to recognize that ideas in a sentence carry equal weight or value. This is achieved by applying the same structure to sentence elements that perform the same function. In other words, all nouns, verbs, and phrases should share the same grammatical format.

Watch!

Watch this video to check your understanding of the basic rules for using parallel structure:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aoiW5LWuQGA>

A Closer Look: Creating Parallelism

Skilled writers recognize that sentences without parallelism can sound strange to readers, even if they look correct on paper. This is because a lack of parallel structure can throw off the rhythm of a sentence. By balancing the grammatical structure of related ideas, writers are able to improve the clarity and readability of their writing. Take a look at the following sample sentence:

I not only was hungry but also exhausted.

This sentence does not follow parallel structure and might sound stilted as a result. The verb *was* interrupts the phrase *not only hungry* and prevents it from matching the grammar of the phrase *but also exhausted*. One way to make the sentence parallel is to repeat the verb *was* in the second phrase:

*I not only **was** hungry but also **was** exhausted.*



A better option is to move the verb *was* closer to the subject at the beginning of the sentence. In this case, the sentence flows more smoothly because the two phrases are made parallel and the verb *was* is applied to both of them:

*I **was** not only hungry but also exhausted.*

Watch!

Watch this video to learn more about writing concise sentences with parallel structure and correct word forms:

- <https://www.opened.com/video/writing-sentences-with-parallelism-and-word-forms/62812>

Hint!

Try to find equally important words or phrases that are separated by a comma and joined by a conjunction. Then, determine whether those words or phrases are parallel to one another. For example, do the verbs in the sentence use the same tense? Do all the nouns and their modifiers follow the same structure? If not, these words or phrases may need to be adjusted to create parallelism.

Here's a list of conjunctions to watch for when assessing the parallelism of a sentence:

Coordinating Conjunctions	
and	but
or	yet
so	

Correlative Conjunctions	
either . . . or	neither . . . nor
not only . . . but also	both . . . and

Practice!

Practice identifying sentences that use parallel structure:

- <https://www.ixl.com/ela/grade-10/identify-sentences-with-parallel-structure>

Examples

Sentences that lack parallel structure often sound clunky or unclear. This is because the voice and tense of the verbs or the forms of other parts of speech are unbalanced. Here are some examples showing how to add parallelism to problem sentences:



Teaching Notes: Using Parallel Structure

The goal of L.9-10.1.A is for students to understand and use parallel structure. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Ask students to bring in an editorial, article, or other example of writing from a newspaper, magazine, or web page. Direct them to highlight examples of parallel structure in the text. Then, as part of a class discussion, ask them to explain the parallelism they found.
2. Assign students a grade-appropriate excerpt from a literary text. Then, direct their attention to several examples of parallelism in the text. Ask students to identify the grammatical elements that show the use of parallel structure. For example, a list of travel destinations uses parallelism because each location is a proper noun.

Writing Prompts

1. Review with students how commas and conjunctions can signal the use of words or phrases that feature parallelism. Then, direct them to write an example sentence using parallelism for each of the following conjunctions:
 - and
 - yet
 - either . . . or
 - not only . . . but also
2. Ask students to work with a partner. Assign each pair a list of sentences that demonstrate various instances when parallelism should have been used but was not. Then, direct the students to take turns fixing the parallelism in each sentence. Once they have finished, have students review the corrections their partners made. Ask them to identify alternative ways to correct the parallelism in each sentence.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching L.9-10.1.A:

Parallel Structure Lesson Plan: In this lesson plan, students revise sentences and paragraphs to include parallel structure. The lesson plan contains links to handouts and worksheets that can be used in classroom instruction:

- http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/real/tlr/TLR_LessonPlan.aspx?id=121

Sample Quizzes: This resource provides teachers with sample questions and exercises that could be used to test students on their use of parallel structure:

- <http://www.shmoop.com/common-core-standards/ccss-ela-literacy-l-9-10-1.html>

