

There are several situations in which you should be particularly careful of parallel structure. Parallel structures are required in the following situations: (1) with coordinate conjunctions, such as *and*, *but*, *or*; (2) with paired conjunctions, such as *both...and*, *either...or*, *neither...nor*, *not only...but also*; and (3) with comparisons.

SKILL 24: USE PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH COORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS

The job of the coordinate conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or*) is to join together equal expressions. In other words, what is on one side of these words must be parallel to what is on the other side. These conjunctions can join nouns, or verbs, or adjectives, or phrases, or subordinate clauses, or main clauses; they just must join together two of the same thing. Here are examples of two nouns joined by a coordinate conjunction:

I need to talk to the manager *or* the assistant manager.
 She is not a teacher *but* a lawyer.
 You can choose from activities such as hiking *and* kayaking.

Here are examples of two verbs joined by a coordinate conjunction:

He only eats *and* sleeps when he takes a vacation.
 She invites us to her home *but* never talks with us.
 You can stay home *or* go to the movies with us.

Here are examples of two adjectives joined by a coordinate conjunction:

My boss is sincere *and* nice.
 The exam that he gave was short *but* difficult.
 Class can be interesting *or* boring.

Here are examples of two phrases joined by a coordinate conjunction:

There are students in the classroom *and* in front of the building.
 The papers are on my desk *or* in the drawer.
 The checks will be ready not at noon *but* at 1:00.

Here are examples of two clauses joined by a coordinate conjunction:

They are not interested in what you say *or* what you do.
 I am here because I have to be *and* because I want to be.
 Mr. Brown likes to go home early, *but* his wife prefers to stay late.

The following chart outlines the use of parallel structures with coordinate conjunctions:

PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH COORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS			
(same structure)	and but or	(same structure)	
(same structure),	(same structure),	and but or	(same structure)

EXERCISE 24: Each of the following sentences contains words or groups of words that should be parallel. Circle the word that indicates that the sentence should have parallel parts. Underline the parts that should be parallel. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. She held jobs as a typist, a housekeeper, (and) in a restaurant.
- C 2. The report you are looking for could be in the file (or) on the desk.
- ___ 3. She works very hard but usually gets below-average grades.
- ___ 4. The speaker introduced himself, told several interesting anecdotes, and finishing with an emotional plea.
- ___ 5. You should know when the program starts and how many units you must complete.
- ___ 6. The term paper he wrote was rather short but very impressive.
- ___ 7. She suggested taking the plane this evening or that we go by train tomorrow.
- ___ 8. The dean or the assistant dean will inform you of when and where you should apply for your diploma.
- ___ 9. There are papers to file, reports to type, and those letters should be answered.
- ___ 10. The manager needed a quick but thorough response.

SKILL 25: USE PARALLEL STRUCTURE WITH PAIRED CONJUNCTIONS

The paired conjunctions *both...and*, *either...or*, *neither...nor*, and *not only...but also* require parallel structures.

I know *both* where you went *and* what you did.

Either Mark *or* Sue has the book.

The tickets are *neither* in my pocket *nor* in my purse.

He is *not only* an excellent student *but also* an outstanding athlete.