

Parallel Structure

What is Parallel Structure?

- Using the same pattern of words to show that two or more words or ideas are of equal importance.

Examples of Sentences That Follow Parallel Structure:

- **Correct:** Students *capped* their pens, *closed* their notebooks, and *zipped* their book bags as they tried to alert Professor Jones that the end of class had arrived.
- Notice how parallel structure is achieved through past tense verbs.

- Students gathered their *pens, notebooks,* and *book bags* as they tried to alert Professor Jones, rambling at the lectern, that the end of class had arrived.
- **Notice how parallel structure is achieved through present tense.**

Examples of Sentences That Do Not Follow Parallel Structure:

- Students *capped* their pens, *were closing* their notebooks, and *zipped* their book bags as they tried to alert Professor Jones that the end of class had arrived.
- Notice how the pattern is not parallel.

- We spent the hour in the waiting room *reading* old magazines, *eating* stale cookies from the vending machine, and *we wiggled* on the hard plastic chairs.
- Notice how the pattern is *not* parallel.

You Try!

- On a piece of scratch paper write one sentence that is parallel and one that is not.
- Turn to your partner and share your sentences. Make sure your partner has one parallel sentence and one that is not.