

the Writing Centers at Saint Mary's

Winona and Minneapolis

Sentence Structure: Parallel Structure

Parallelism means that all sections of a sentence are grammatically equal or balanced. Parallel sentences are easier for readers to grasp.

Unparallel

Johnston (2014) hypothesized that with this new drug protocol post-operative recovery would be fast, improved respiratory status, and with better pain control than the previous protocol.

*Each item in the list is grammatically different. We need to revise this so that each item is the same grammatically.

Parallel

Johnston (2014) hypothesized that, in comparison to the previous protocol, the new protocol would speed post-operative recovery, improve respiratory status, and provide better pain control.

*Now each item begins with a verb (in the same tense, of course), and the sentence is clearer overall.

Below are some examples of incorrect parallel structure and two options to correct it:

Not Parallel	Parallel
Climate change is a serious topic, many politicians are concerned about, and needs to be addressed in the next election.	Climate change is a serious topic, is a concern for many politicians, and needs to be addressed in the next election. OR Climate change is a serious topic, a concern for many politicians, and an issue that needs to be addressed in the next election
Teachers can act like therapists, disciplining like parents, and coaches.	Teachers can exhibit the qualities of therapists, parents, and coaches. OR Teachers can advise like therapists, discipline like parents, and cheer like coaches.
The study not only addressed home study habits in elementary school students but also following the students into high school.	The study not only addressed home study habits in elementary school students but also followed the students into high school. OR The study only addressed home study habits in elementary school students but the study also followed the students into high school.