

## WRITING WITH PARALLEL STRUCTURE

### Main Idea

Teaching ESL students how to write English sentences with parallel structure can improve sentence clarity, style and impact not to mention good grammar. As the level of writing progresses, ESL students may find that sentences with parallel structure can serve many purposes, such as a thesis sentence in an essay or the concluding sentence of a paragraph.

### What is Parallel Structure?

It is a writing style that repeats the same grammatical form in a sentence, usually two or three times.

Here is an example of a sentence that does not have parallel structure.

- Mary likes cooking, skating and **to ride** a motorcycle.

This sentence lists three things that Mary likes to do. The list has two gerunds and one infinitive. That is not parallel and in English, that doesn't read well or easily. Here are two better options:

- Mary likes **cooking, skating** and **riding** a motorcycle. (all gerunds)
- Mary likes to **cook, skate** and **ride** a motorcycle. (all infinitives)

Here is a sentence with good parallel structure.

- I asked middle school students about their hobbies. Most girls said they enjoy **eating** ice cream, **shopping** for new pencils and **chatting** on the internet.