1. **Items in a series should be in parallel form to make a sentence easy to follow.** Parallelism is achieved by joining words with similar words: nouns with nouns, adjectives with adjectives, adverbs with adverbs, prepositions (or prepositional phrases) with prepositions, and so forth.

   The defense argued that the evidence was *inconclusive, prejudicial, and irrelevant.*

   (adjectives)

   The defendant claims that on the day of the murder he was at home alone *washing* his car, *mowing* his lawn, and *bathing* his dog.  (gerund phrases)

   The witness told the police officer that the car rolled *down the hill, over the lawn, and into the swimming pool.*  (prepositional phrases)

2. **Use Parallel Structure With Coordinating Conjunctions.** In general, use the same grammatical structure on both sides of any of the coordinating conjunctions—*and, but, or, nor, so, yet.*

   **Nonparallel**  Louise spent three years in Houston *going to law school and clerked for a tax firm.*

   **Parallel**  Louise spent three years in Houston *going to law school and clerking for a tax firm.*

3. **Use Parallel Structure With Correlative Conjunctions.** Use the same structure after both parts of a correlative conjunction—*either . . . or, both . . . and, neither . . . nor, not . . . but, not only . . . but also, just as . . . so, whether . . . or.*

   **Nonparallel**  I told my father that my intentions were *either to study law or learning tenor saxophone.*

   **Parallel**  I told my father that my intentions were *either to study law or to learn to play tenor saxophone.*

   **Nonparallel**  The purpose of the rule is to ensure that actual notice is provided *either by personal or constructive service.*

   **Parallel**  The purpose of the rule is to ensure that actual notice is provided *either by personal or by constructive service.*

   **Parallel**  The purpose of the rule is to ensure that actual notice is *provided by either personal or constructive service.*

Adapted from: *St. Martin's Handbook*-- Lunsford and Connors  
*The Legal Writing Handbook*-- Oates, Enquist, and Kunsch  
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