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SSC - 245

Parallel Structure

Overview: When a sentence has several parts that are similar, you must maintain the same grammatical pattern in each part to maintain a parallel structure. Switching tenses within a sentence or ordering items incorrectly creates an imbalance in sentence structure, which can make it difficult for your reader to understand your point.

Incorrect structure, Example 1: Carlos enjoys running, painting, and to eat.

This sentence lists three things that Carlos enjoys. Notice that “running” and “eating” are not in the same form as “to eat”. If we change the last verb to match the others, the sentence will flow more smoothly.

Correct parallel structure: Carlos enjoys running, painting, and eating.

Incorrect structure, Example 2: Monica was upset about crashing her car and she also felt embarrassed.

Monica has two similar feelings about the same event, so those feelings should be listed together. Doing this cuts down on wordiness and makes the overall point of the sentence easier to follow.

Correct parallel structure: Monica was upset and embarrassed about crashing her car.

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