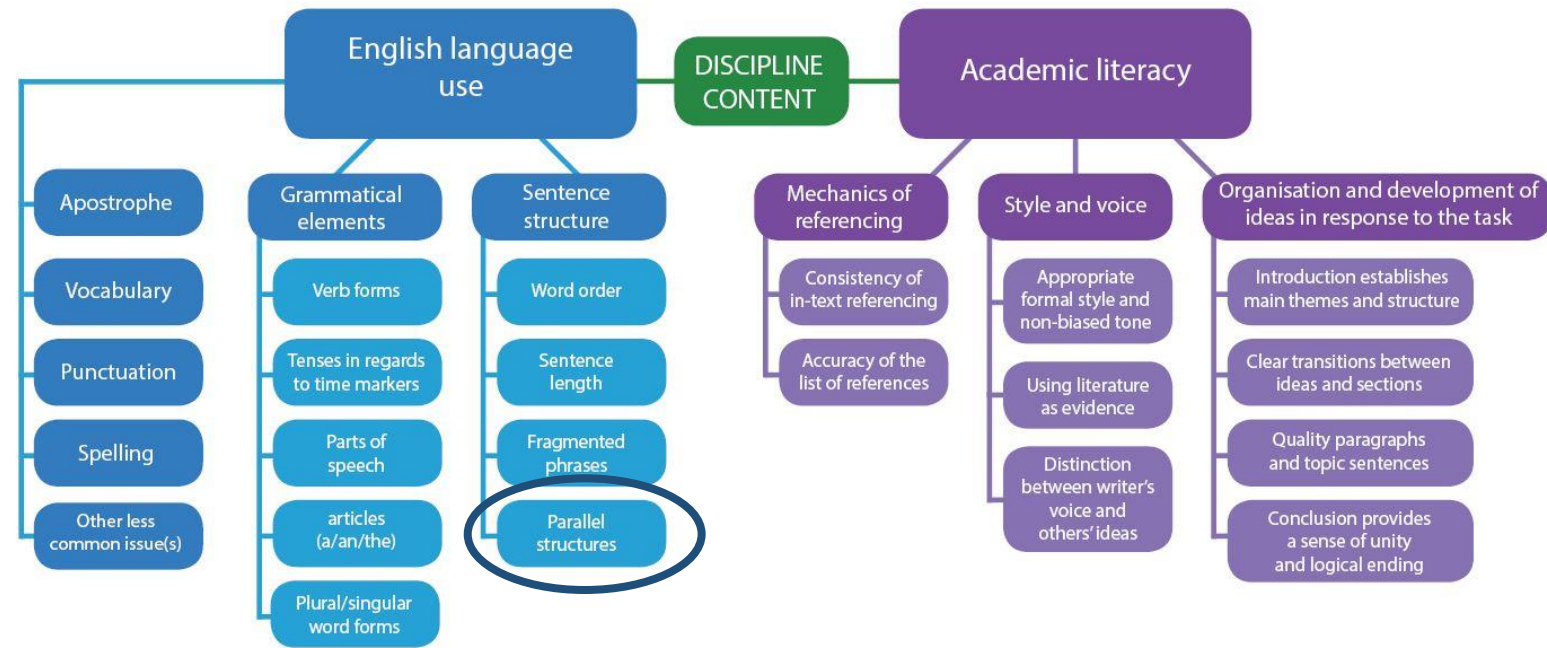


Parallel structure

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ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FEEDBACK GUIDE



Re-visit

Parallel structure

In writing, parallel structure (or parallelism) means using the same pattern of words or phrases to express two or more similar ideas in a sentence.

The PhD student is **collecting**, **categorising** and **analysing** data.

Similar verb
forms

The language students love **conversation practice** and **pronunciation exercises**.

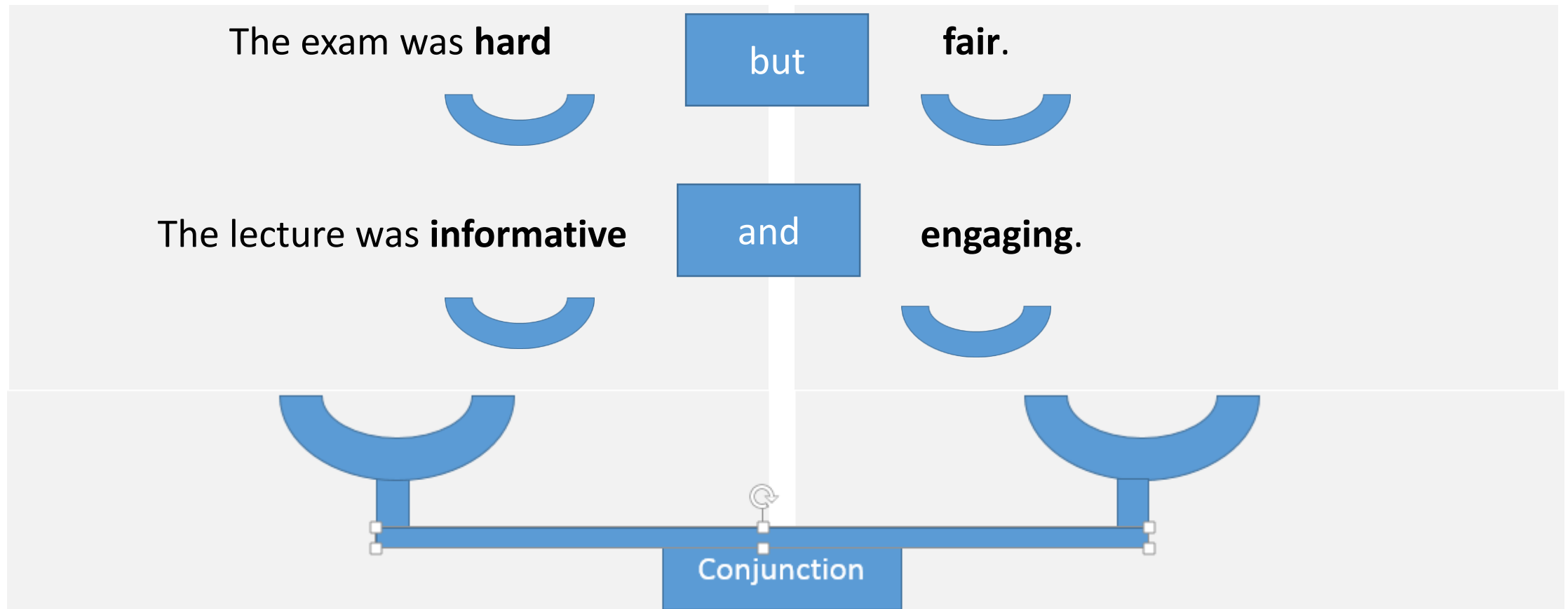
Similar nouns

The students were **intelligent**, **conscientious** and **self-directed**.

Similar
adjectives

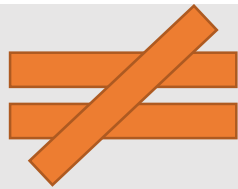
Parallel structures are balanced

In parallel structures, what is on one side of the conjunction connecting items must be equal to what is on the other side of the conjunction.



Parallel structure and coordinating conjunctions

Parallel structures are commonly used with coordinating conjunctions, for example, the conjunctions, *and* or *or*. The box on the left contains **non-parallel** structures and the box on the right contains **parallel** structures.



*Students in the class would **waive** their hands or **clicking** their fingers for attention.*

*Angela likes physics, art and **doing mathematics**.*

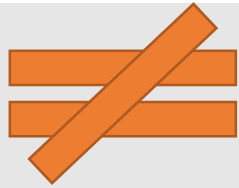


*Students in the class would **waive** their hands or **click** their fingers for attention. (Both verbs are now in the same form.)*

*Angela likes physics, art and **mathematics**. (This is now a list of nouns.)*

Parallel structures use the same grammatical structures

The sentence below (left) outlines the benefits of a new course. Parallel structure (right) has been achieved by either using matching verbs in the sentence, or breaking the sentence into two sentences.



The new e-learning course would save money on classrooms, can increase student engagement and its value was proven by winning two global teaching innovation awards.



*The new e-learning course **would save** money on classrooms, **increase** student engagement and **attract** global recognition through its teaching awards. (All verbs are in the same tense.)*

or

*The new e-learning course can **save** money on classrooms and **increase** student engagement. The course had proven its value by winning two teaching innovation awards. (Two sentences)*

Quick tips

Quick tips

To improve common mistakes with parallel structures, learn more about coordinating conjunctions and their role in parallel structure.

If your sentence is grammatically correct, check whether it could be further improved by using parallel structures.

To proofread for faulty parallel structures, check whether all elements in the list of items in the sentence are of equal status, of equal importance, and use the same grammatical form.

Learn more section

Useful links on parallel structure

[Monash University – Language and Learning on-line](#)

[University of New England](#)

[Purdue On-line Writing Lab](#)

[Self-teaching unit on parallel structure, M . Benner](#)

Face-to-face support

Who can help with English at Monash?

[English Connect](#) –
conversational circles,
peer feedback on your
writing and grammar
workshops



Resources – grammar books



- Azar, B. S. & Hagen, S.A. (2009). *Understanding and using English grammar (4th ed.)*. USA: Pearson Longman.
- Borjars, K. & Burridge, K. *Introducing English grammar (2nd ed.)*. London: Hodder Education.
- Foley, M. & Hall, D. (2012). *MyGrammarLab (Advanced)*. England: Pearson.
- Hewings, M. (2012). *Advanced grammar in use: a reference and practice book for advanced students of English (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, R. (2011). *English Grammar in Use (Intermediate) (3 ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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