Grammar Explanation

Using parallel structures in sentences

- Use parallel structures (the same type of words) whenever you write a list or comparison.

  o Incorrect (and confusing): The proposal will provide several benefits, including creating jobs, crimes will be prevented, and reducing taxes.

  o Corrected (all the items in the list start with nouns ending in -ing): The proposal will provide several benefits, including creating jobs, preventing crime, and reducing taxes.

- To create parallel structures, use the same grammatical forms (e.g., adjectives, nouns with -ing endings, prepositional phrases, clauses) in a list or comparison.

  o Example (four adjectives):
  The proposed law is not only unfair and unpopular, but also unnecessary and dangerous.

  o Example (three phrases with a noun with an -ing ending):
  Eating fruits and vegetables, exercising daily and getting enough sleep are some of the things each of us can do to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

  o Example (two prepositional phrases that are followed by a clause):
  For students, flexible working hours are helpful; however, for parents, a steady job is more important.

Excerpted from: Sentence Structure: Exercise 3