

4 SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS

In this section you will learn the writing and grammar skills that will help make your writing more sophisticated and accurate.

A Writing Skill 1: Parallel Structure

Writers use parallel structure when a sentence has a list of words or phrases that are all the same form and part of speech. This pattern can involve single words, phrases, or clauses and can be used with different grammatical patterns, which are in bold below. If the part of speech and form don't match, this is not considered good writing. Here are some examples of different kinds of parallel structure.

Adjective phrases:

Immigration can be not only very exciting but also quite stressful.

Verb phrases:

My father knew he had to either find work or return home.

He had never spoken English, been to a supermarket, or eaten fast food before he came here.

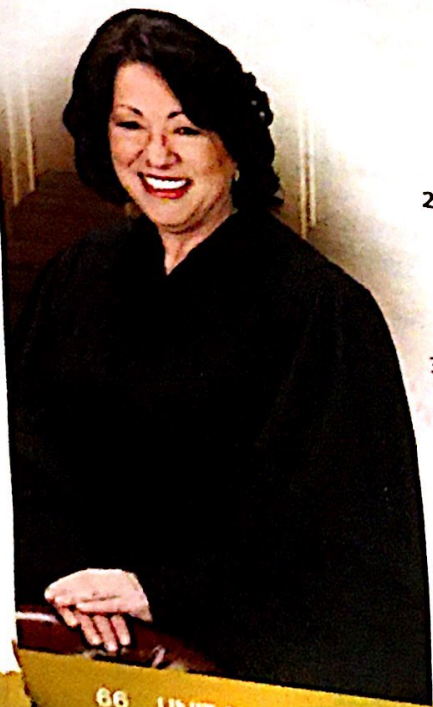
Clauses:

Albert Einstein emigrated from Germany because he wanted to work in America, he was worried about the war, and his future there was uncertain.

ACTIVITY 4.1 Using Parallel Structure

Read the information. Complete the sentences using parallel structure. You may have to add some words of your own.

- 1 Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor's parents were born in Puerto Rico. They came to the United States during World War II. During the war, they got married.
Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor's parents came to the United States during World War II and
- 2 Sonia Sotomayor is the first Supreme Court Justice of Hispanic heritage. She is also one of the youngest Supreme Court justices.
Sonia Sotomayor is not only the first Supreme Court Justice of Hispanic heritage, but she is also
- 3 Sotomayor graduated from Princeton University. She also received a degree from Yale Law School. She served as editor of the *Yale Law Journal*.
Sotomayor graduated from Princeton University, received a degree from Yale Law School, and



- 4 When Sotomayor first started college, she thought that she did not have the skills to be a good student. She also felt that she did not have enough knowledge to succeed. In addition, she suffered from a lack of confidence.

When Sotomayor first started college, she thought that she did not have enough _____, _____, or _____ to succeed academically.

- 5 Sotomayor's biography, *My Beloved World*, does not discuss her political views. It also does not include her judicial philosophy.

Sotomayor's biography does not discuss her _____ or _____.

- 6 Sotomayor visits Puerto Rico frequently because she has family there. She also has many fans there. In addition, she also visits Puerto Rico because she is often invited to speak.

Sotomayor visits Puerto Rico frequently because she has family there, she _____, and she _____.

B Writing Skill 2: Sentence Variety

Writing is better and more sophisticated if the sentences are different from each other. Short sentences in a narrative give a straight-to-the-point feeling. Longer, more complex sentences provide richer feelings and a different kind of flow. By combining these different kinds of sentences, your narrative will sound more natural and be more interesting to read. Here are some techniques for adding variety to the sentences that you write. Notice how they are used in the first paragraph of the Student Model.

When I was 13 years old, my family – my grandparents, my little sister, and I – moved to the United States from Mexico. I still remember worrying about leaving my lifelong friends behind and having to make new ones in a completely foreign land. My grandparents had made this decision to move, and there was no changing their minds. "Ale, we are moving to make a better life for you and your sister, and you will thank us one day," they explained. I did not believe them. All I could think was that my grandparents, whom I loved and trusted, were doing something that would be the end of happiness as I knew it. I was sure that I would never forgive them. In my teen years, I lacked perspective, above all, the perspective that comes from looking beyond yourself.

1 Start with a subordinate clause.

2 Make compound sentences with *and*, *or*, *but*, *so*, *yet*, and other conjunctions.

3 Vary sentence length.

4 Use relative clauses to combine information.

5 Start with a prepositional phrase.

ACTIVITY 4.2 Providing Sentence Variety

Rewrite the sentences from the paragraph below as directed. Remember to use correct punctuation.

(1) Chinese workers began immigrating to the United States in large numbers after the "Gold Rush" of 1849. (2) Most of them came because they heard that they could work as "prospectors" and mine gold in California. (3) Uncle Lee, my father's great-great-granduncle, was one of tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants who landed in San Francisco in the early 1850s. (4) He settled just north of the city. (5) Gold was not as easy to find as he had expected. (6) Some prospectors did find it. (7) According to my father, life was hard for Uncle Lee and other Chinese immigrants because they were discriminated against and sometimes even attacked by American prospectors. (8) However, thanks to Uncle Lee and others like him, there is a Chinese cultural influence in California, which remains today. (9) For example, in the town of Weaverville, north of San Francisco, Chinese settlers established a Taoist temple. (10) It is still there today.

1 Change sentence 1 so that it begins with a prepositional phrase.

2 Connect sentence 4 to sentence 3 by adding a conjunction to make one sentence.

3 Make sentence 6 a subordinate clause by adding "although" at the beginning. Then rewrite sentence 5 to begin with this clause.

4 Rewrite sentence 7 to make it two separate sentences by removing the word "because."

5 Change sentence 10 into a relative clause that describes the word "temple" in the previous sentence.