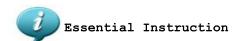Lesson Name : 18

Lesson Title : Parallel Structure

Course Name : English 2 Part 2 [Honors]

Task Id : 53907268

Course Id : 15020

 Essential Instruction

In his first inaugural speech, President Obama said "I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors," only one of many examples of parallelism in his speech.

Parallel Structure:

One hallmark of good writing is the use of **parallel structure**. Parallel structure is the repetition of patterns of words, phrases, or clauses in language. Most of the time, you probably use parallel structure automatically but it can be overlooked, especially in a longer work.

Parallel structure means consistent writing. To achieve consistency, do not mix forms. This means if one term in a set or list of two or more is written as a **gerund**, then all of the terms should be gerunds. A gerund is a verb that usually ends in *ing*:

Mickey likes hiking, skiing, and kayaking.

Similarly, if one of the terms is written as an infinitive, then all of the terms should be rewritten as infinitives:

Mickey likes to hike, to ski, and to kayak.

Note that the above examples have the same meaning, so it does not matter whether you use a gerund or an infinitive, provided you remain consistent. What is important is to avoid mixing forms:

Mickey likes to hike, to ski, and kayaking.

You also want to be sure to remain consistent in terms of voice and tense. Make sure all of your terms are in the same **tense** – present, past, or future – and **voice** – passive or active.

When revising your writing, look for the conjunctions *and* and *or*. Make sure terms on either side of these conjunctions are parallel. Look also for lists and make sure each term on the list is in the same form, tense, and voice. Finally, read your paper aloud. Often, you cannot see faulty parallel structure, particularly in your own paper. When you read your writing aloud, however, you will hesitate over terms that are not parallel.