

# Grammar and Style

## ADD EMPHASIS

**Parallelism** is the use of similar grammatical structures to express related ideas. In this example, notice how Johnson uses the infinitive *to be* to list his many tasks and the preposition *without* to detail the obstacles each task presented to him.

*. . . choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority.* (lines 19–23)

Such perfectly balanced syntax serves to emphasize the laborious—and lonely—effort of Johnson’s undertaking.

**Directions:** Underline the parallel elements in the following sentence. Then write a sentence of your own that contains similar parallel elements.

Having therefore no assistance but from general grammar, I applied myself to the perusal of our writers; and noting whatever might be of use to ascertain or illustrate any word or phrase, accumulated in time the materials of a dictionary, which, by degrees, I reduced to method, establishing to myself, in the progress of the work, such rules as experience and analogy suggested to me—experience, which practice and observation were continually increasing, and analogy, which, though in some words obscure, was evident in others . . . . (lines 24-30)

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