

Understanding Voice and Parallel Structure in Writing

Why Does Voice Matter?

Voice in writing refers to the distinct personality, style, or point of view of a piece of writing. It reflects the author's individual way of expressing ideas and can make the writing unique and engaging. Voice is a combination of word choice, sentence structure, tone, and rhythm. Two primary types of voice are:

- **Authorial Voice:** This is the unique style of the author, which is consistent across different works. It includes the way an author uses language, the choice of words, and the overall tone.
- **Narrative Voice:** This is specific to the piece being written and can change depending on the narrator's perspective, whether it's first-person, second-person, or third-person.

A strong, consistent voice helps readers connect with the text and understand the author's message more clearly.

Strategies for Employing Voice.

Active vs. Passive Voice

Understanding the difference between active and passive voice is crucial for clear and effective writing.

- **Active Voice:** In active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action expressed by the verb. This structure is direct and vigorous.

Example: The chef cooked a delicious meal.

In this sentence, "The chef" (subject) performs the action "cooked" on "a delicious meal" (object).

- **Passive Voice:** In passive voice, the subject of the sentence receives the action. This can make sentences seem less direct and more formal.

Example: A delicious meal was cooked by the chef.

Here, "A delicious meal" (subject) receives the action "was cooked" by "the chef".

When to Use Passive Voice:

- When the doer of the action is unknown or irrelevant: *The book was left on the table.*
- To emphasize the action over the doer: *The bridge was completed ahead of schedule.*
- To create an objective or formal tone: *The results were analyzed.*

Strategies for Employing Parallel Structure.

Parallel Structure

Parallel structure, or parallelism, involves using the same pattern of words or the same grammatical forms in a series of related phrases or clauses. This technique adds balance, rhythm, and clarity to writing.

- *Example:* She likes reading, swimming, and biking.

In this sentence, the parallel structure is achieved by using three gerunds (nouns that function as verbs): reading, swimming, and biking.

Benefits of Parallel Structure:

- **Improves Readability:** Parallelism makes sentences easier to read and understand.
- **Enhances Flow and Rhythm:** Parallel structures create a pleasing rhythm and flow.
- **Provides Clarity:** Ensures ideas are presented clearly and logically.

How to Use Parallel Structure:

- **In Lists:** Use the same form for each item in a list. *Incorrect:* The coach advised to eat well, exercising regularly, and to get enough sleep. *Correct:* The coach advised eating well, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.
- **In Comparisons:** Ensure that the elements being compared are in the same grammatical form. *Incorrect:* He likes to jog and walking. *Correct:* He likes jogging and walking.
- **In Correlative Constructions:** Use parallel structure with correlative conjunctions like "either...or," "neither...nor," "not only...but also." *Incorrect:* She is not only a talented singer but also writes well. *Correct:* She is not only a talented singer but also a skilled writer.