

## Parallel Structures & Balanced Sentences

The information in the case notes is usually written in note form, and therefore does not follow conventional grammatical rules. However, when this information is organised into complete sentences in the referral letter it is necessary to follow standard conventions of grammar and sentence structure. This worksheet explains how to group information using parallel structures to ensure that the sentences you write are grammatically balanced. This can be achieved by making sure that verbs, adjectives, nouns, prepositions, phrases and clauses are parallel. Parallel structures within a sentence are joined with coordinating conjunctions such as and/or as well as with commas. Here are some examples:

### With active verbs

- He is now worried about his condition because he is overweight, lacks exercise and smokes regularly

### With passive verbs

- During hospitalization, IV fluids were commenced and a transdermal patch was used for her pain.

### With nouns & noun phrases

- He is now worried about his condition because of his increased weight, lack of exercise and his habit of smoking.
- He will require information about how and when to take his medication, how to stop smoking and the necessity of doing regular exercise.

### With gerunds

- In order to handle the above mentioned effects be cautious when driving a car, operating machinery or performing any hazardous activities especially after taking your regular dose.

### With prepositions

- Threadworms resemble pieces of 1.5 cm cotton thread which is normally detectable at the surface of the feces or around the anus at night.

### With verbs in the conclusion

- I am worried about Miss Jones and would appreciate your urgent assessment and treatment as you think appropriate.

*The important point to remember is that the structures must be balanced.*

Common Mistakes

Incorrect	Correct
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sally initially presented alone to my clinic on 27/12/07 with a 3-month-history of constipation and associated using laxatives</li> </ul> <p>Explanation: The sentence is not balanced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sally initially presented alone to my clinic on 27/12/07 with a <u>3-month-history of constipation</u> and <u>associated use of laxatives</u></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He has a family history of stroke and diabetic</li> </ul> <p>Explanation: This sentence is not balanced as stroke is a noun and diabetic is a adjective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He has a family history of <u>stroke</u> and <u>diabetes</u></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good hygiene should be maintained by taking a morning shower, using individual towels, washing clothes daily and to vacuum regularly.</li> </ul> <p>Explanation: the final verb is out of balance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good hygiene should be maintained by <u>taking</u> a morning shower, <u>using</u> individual towels, <u>washing</u> clothes daily and <u>vacuuming</u> regularly.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am writing to refer this patient, a 26 year old computer programmer, who is displaying sign and symptoms consistent with subdural haematoma.</li> </ul> <p>Explanation: Both nouns should be in plural form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am writing to refer this patient, a 26 year old computer programmer, who is displaying <u>signs</u> and <u>symptoms</u> consistent with subdural haematoma.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>His height is 170cm and weighing 99kg.</li> </ul> <p>Explanation: unbalanced word form, height is a noun, weight is a gerund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>His <u>height</u> is 170cm and <u>weight</u> is 99kg.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On subsequent visits, impressions for full upper and lower dentures were made, bite registered and complete upper and lower dentures were delivered .</li> </ul> <p>Explanation: Passive form required for all verbs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On subsequent visits, impressions for full upper and lower dentures <u>were made</u>, bite registration <u>was taken</u> and complete upper and lower dentures <u>were delivered</u></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She diagnosed with hyperthyroidism in 1997,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism <u>in</u> 1997,</li> </ul>

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<p><b>hypertension in 2003 and Glaucoma since 2004.</b>                  Explanation: Time markers need to be balanced.</p>	<p>hypertension <u>in 2003</u> and Glaucoma <u>in 2004</u>.                  • She <u>has had</u> hyperthyroidism <u>since 1997</u>, hypertension <u>since 2003</u> and Glaucoma <u>since 2004</u>.</p>
<p>• <b>During hospitalization, IV fluids were commenced and used a transdermal patch for her pain.</b>                  Explanation: Passive form required for all verbs</p>	<p>• During hospitalization, IV fluids <u>were commenced</u> and a transdermal patch <u>was used</u> for her pain.</p>
<p>• <b>Further examination revealed dry mouth ,dentures were worn out on occlusal surfaces and a heavy calculus deposit was seen on the dentures.</b>                  Explanation: In example 1, by adding in addition, you can change the structure and keep the sentence balanced. In example 2 the sentence is balanced as the verbs have been replaced with noun phrases.</p>	<p>• Further examination revealed dry mouth. <u>In addition</u>, her dentures <u>were worn out</u> on occlusal surfaces and a heavy calculus deposit <u>was seen</u> on the dentures.                  • Further examination revealed <u>dry mouth</u>, <u>worn out dentures on occlusal surfaces</u> and <u>heavy calculus deposits on the dentures</u>.</p>
<p>• <b>She is feeling loneliness and isolated due to losing her social contacts</b>                  Explanation: Loneliness is a noun whereas isolated in an adjective so the word forms are not balanced.</p>	<p>• She is suffering from <u>loneliness</u> and <u>isolation</u> due to losing her social contacts. (nouns)                  • She is feeling <u>lonely</u> and <u>isolated</u> due to losing her social contacts. (adjectives)</p>