

## Stylistic Parallelism

*Certain constituencies have already declared their preference for on-line options. Traditional methods are still the first choice of others.*

*It is not effective to backtrack. Apologizing or explaining doesn't help. Just do what you have to do and ignore the reaction.*

There is nothing wrong with those examples. If, however, they were in parallel structure, the reader would be more likely to realize how closely they belong together.

### Alternatives

There are a number of alternatives for structuring the above sentences to indicate relationship.

- *Certain constituencies have already declared their preference for on-line options; others still prefer traditional methods.*

SENTENCES JOINED WITH A SEMI-COLON (not a comma!), WITH PARALLEL STRUCTURE IN EACH PART: both clauses now begin with the people/constituencies who have preferences.

- *Certain constituencies have already declared their preference for on-line options; however, others still prefer traditional methods.*

This is the SAME STRUCTURE as above, but with the adverb *however* inserted to make it obvious that there is a contrast between the two parts.

- *Certain constituencies have already declared their preference for on-line options, but others still prefer traditional methods.*

ANOTHER VERSION MAKING THE CONTRAST EXPLICIT. Notice that *but*, unlike *however*, is preceded by a comma, not a semi-colon.<sup>1</sup>

- *It is not effective to backtrack, apologize or explain. Just do what you have to do and ignore the reaction.*

- *Never retract, never apologize, never explain – get the thing done and let them howl. (Nellie McClung)*

These comma splices are considered acceptable because each sentence is short, and because the style is less formal.

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<sup>1</sup> That's because *but* is a conjunction and *however* is an adverb. You can tell the difference because you can place an adverb in different places within a clause or sentence, while a conjunction can only begin one. *Others, however, prefer traditional methods* is just as correct as *However, others prefer traditional methods*. (In fact, many stylists think the first one preferable.) You can't, however, write *Others, but, prefer traditional methods*.