**PARALLELISM**

Parallelism refers to the use of **identical grammatical structures** for **related words**, **phrases**, or **clauses** in a sentence or a paragraph.

Parallelism can make your writing more forceful, interesting, and clear. It helps to **link related ideas** and to **emphasize the relationships** between them. Once a grammatical pattern has been established, the reader doesn’t have to strain to understand your meaning and ideas. **Faulty parallelism** refers to the absence of parallel structure and the subsequent loss of clarity.

**ACHIEVING PARALLEL STRUCTURE**

Parallelism ensures that similar clauses or phrases are uniform in expression and function. To achieve parallelism, you must use the same verb, noun, adverb, or adjective forms consistently throughout a sentence.

Consider the following examples:

1. *Paul likes dancing, swimming, and running.*
2. *Paul likes to dance, swimming, and run.*

In the sentence “*Paul likes dancing, swimming, and running*,” all of the activities Paul enjoys are consistently presented as **gerunds** (verbs in their –ing form that act as a noun), which retains parallelism. On the other hand, in the sentence “*Paul likes to dance, swimming, and run,*” the activities Paul enjoys are presented in inconsistent forms, resulting in a sentence that is not parallel. This results in a decreased flow, an awkward sentence, and an increased amount of work for the reader.

**SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE PARALLEL STRUCTURE**

You will encounter many instances where you will need to make sure your sentence is parallel. The most common situations are listed below:

Lists Or Series

All lists of things, qualities, or actions should take the same grammatical form.

1. **Faulty:***Cassandra loves reading the newspaper, taking long walks, and to dance the tango.*
2. **Parallel:***Cassandra loves****reading****the newspaper,****taking****long walks, and****dancing****the tango.*

**NOTE THAT THERE ARE VARIOUS WAYS TO CREATE PARALLEL STRUCTURE IN A SENTENCE:**

1. *For opera to take root in Great Britain, infrastructure was required:****the building of financial support****,****the training of singers****, and****the education of audiences****.*
2. *For opera to take root in Great Britain, three things were required:****building financial support****,****training singers****, and****educating audiences****.*
3. *For opera to take root in Great Britain, it was necessary to****build financial support****,****train singers****, and****educate audiences****.*

**Grammatical Tip:**when a list begins with a preposition, either include the preposition only at the beginning of the list or include it before every item.

1. **Incorrect:***Dictionaries are useful for learning to spell correctly and to prop open windows.*
2. **Correct:***Dictionaries are useful for learning to spell correctly and propping open windows.*

**NOUNS JOINED BY COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS**

1. **Faulty:***Among many cultures, rites of passage can involve feats of courage and sometimes even doing dangerous things.*  
     
   In the previous sentence, the addition of the verb *doing*before the second noun disrupts the balance of the sentence.
2. **Parallel:***Among many cultures, rites of passage can involve feats of courage and sometimes even dangerous things.*

**PHRASES JOINED BY CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS**

Correlative conjunctions include sentence constructions that include either/or, neither/nor, both/and, not only/but also, or whether/or. When your sentence includes these constructions, it is important to proofread carefully for parallelism.

1. **Faulty:***Idrees is not only fluent in Urdu but also in English.*
2. **Parallel:***Idrees is****fluent not only****in Urdu but also in English.*

Since both nouns are modified by a single adjective (fluent), the adjective should be placed before the first correlative conjunction (not only).

**WHERE EACH CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTION HAS ITS OWN VERB, THE CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTION COMES BEFORE THE VERB:**  
  
**Faulty:**Idrees speaks not only two languages fluently but also plays cricket very well.

**Parallel:**Idrees **not only speaks** two languages fluently **but also plays**cricket very well.

Sentences that explain chronological events

**SENTENCES MUST USE VERB TENSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT AND REFLECT THE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF EVENTS.**

1. **Faulty:***Kevin stopped asking for directions and starts using a map.*
2. **Parallel:***Kevin****stopped****asking for directions and****started****using a map.*

Because this sentence describes an event that happened in the past, both verbs need to be in the past tense.

**PARALLELISM IN PROOFREADING**

**USING PARALLELISM TO REMOVE REPETITION**

**Repetitive words**can often be removed from a sentence if their removal does not detract from your clarity.

1. **Faulty:***Alan picked up his****computer****. Alan picked up his****books****. Alan picked up his****phone****.*
2. **Parallel:***Alan picked up his****computer****,****books****, and****phone****.*
3. **Faulty:***In the morning, afternoon, and the evening...*
4. **Parallel:** *In the morning, afternoon, and evening...*

**USING PARALLELISM FOR CLARITY**

1. **Faulty:** *Sandra is interested in****Canadian art and poetry****.*  
     
   In the above sentence, we're not sure whether Sandra is interested in Canadian poetry specifically or poetry in general. To ensure your meaning is clear, repeat "Canadian" and retain parallelism.
2. **Parallel:***Sandra is interested in****Canadian art and Canadian poetry****.*