**FAULTY PARALLELISM**

Parallel is a word from mathematics. Teachers of writing have adopted the word *parallelism* to mean “close resemblance or similarity;” that is, when two or more ideas in a sentence are related and serve a similar purpose, they are phrased in the same parts, similarly put together. Parallelism aids the flow of a sentence and emphasizes the relationship of the ideas in the parallel elements. Parallel sentence elements regularly appear in lists or series, in compound structures, in comparisons using *than* or *as*, and in contrasted elements.

**Faulty:**  
The weather is wet, cold, and it is raining.
**Parallel:**  
The weather is wet, cold, and rainy.

**Faulty Parallelism** is an error in which two or more parts of a sentence are parallel in meaning but not parallel in form.

**Faulty:**  
I want to learn how to write with simplicity, clarity, and accurately.
**Parallel:**  
I want to learn how to write with simplicity, clarity, and accuracy.

Whenever you list a series of things, actions, or ideas, they should be similarly expressed to avoid faulty parallelism.

**Faulty:**  
We called the meeting to elect new members, for raising money, and that we could plan for the dance.
**Parallel:**  
We called the meeting to elect new members, to raise money, and to plan for the dance.

Be careful to avoid faulty coordination because when words, phrases, or clauses are linked by *and* are not similar, they sound confusing and illogical.

*He plays football and skillfully.*
*He does his homework and without mistakes.*

**NOTE:** When two words or groups are linked by *and*, they must have the same grammatical function. Notice the similarity of words, phrases, and clauses linked by *and* in the following sentences.

*He enjoys reading plays and poetry.* (two nouns)
*He blocks and tackles skillfully.* (two verbs)
*He looked in the drawers and under the beds.* (two prepositional phrases)
*He is a man who has worked hard and whom we all respect.* (two dependent clauses)
*I shall return to Purdue, and she will return to Smith.* (two independent clauses)

The most common kind of faulty coordination is the *and who* or *and which* sentence. This type of sentence makes an illogical link between a dependent and an independent clause.

**Faulty:**  
My father is a lawyer and who has been a judge.
**Parallel:**  
My father is a lawyer who has been a judge. OR  
My father, who is a lawyer and who has been a judge, is retired.

One other kind of faulty coordination is the misuse of correlative conjunctions. These are conjunctions used in pairs (Examples: not only … but also; both … and; neither … nor; either … or). The construction that follows the first half of the pair should be exactly balanced by the construction that follows the second half of the pair.
Faulty:  *Not only practicing at 6am during the week, but the team also scrimmages on Sunday afternoons.*

Parallel:  *Not only does the team practice at 6am during the week, but it also scrimmages on Sunday afternoons.*

Faulty:  *He is either a madman or he is a fool.*

Parallel:  *He is either a madman or a fool.*  OR  *Either he is a madman, or he is a fool.*

When making a comparison using the word than or as, be certain that the things you compare are similar logically as well as grammatically.

Faulty:  *The girls in Texas are more beautiful than California.* (This sentence compares the girls to states.)

Parallel:  *The girls in Texas are more beautiful than the girls in California.*

The following sentence is written in both a parallel and a non-parallel. Notice the differences:

Faulty:  *The boy, in great fear and shaken by the ordeal, collapsed after the rescue.*

Parallel:  *The boy, frightened beyond measure and shaken by the ordeal, collapsed after the rescue.*

**Practice Exercise 1**
In each list, circle the element that does not belong in the series.

1. in the country    fishing    at the river
2. going to work    coming home    to eat dinner
3. ate lunch    hungry    ate dinner    ate breakfast

**Practice Exercise 2**
1. Schultz used to like girls, football, and to play chess.

2. In the woods, under a tree, a stream alongside, I left the insect repellant.

3. He chose neither to referee nor playing.