

Parallelism Workshop

Within sentences, one may find compound elements of speech; a sentence may have multiple subjects, verbs, or phrases, and in order for the sentence to flow smoothly, those elements need to be "alike both in use and in form," (Coats, Sandel 276) or parallel. The following examples illustrate faulty and correct parallelism:

Faulty: I enjoy hiking, biking, and to go to movies.

Correct: I enjoy hiking, biking, and going to movies.

Faulty: Voters admire politicians with integrity and who act honestly.

Correct: Voters admire politicians who have integrity and who act honestly.

Faulty: The ideal student is attentive, studious, and asks questions.

Correct: The ideal student is attentive, studious, and inquisitive.

In each of the examples of faulty parallelism, one of the elements doesn't follow the form of the other parts of speech. The parts of speech must be coordinated or "balanced noun for noun, modifier for modifier, clause for clause" (277).

Exercise:

Rewrite the following sentences to correct any faulty parallelism.

1. The shape of the rock, how big it was, and its color reminded me of a small elephant.

2. Chia, my dog, is overweight and moves clumsily.

3. Your job consists of arranging the books, cataloguing new arrivals, and the pamphlets have to be alphabetized.

4. A thin film of frost coated the trees. The hedges and shrubs had it also.

5. He is an affectionate husband, a thoughtful son, and kind to his kids.

6. He is a poet of great talent and who is insightful.

7. Every afternoon in the mountains, it either rains or there is hail.

8. His writing reveals not only intelligence but also it is humorous.

9. Marvin was happy to win the bowling tournament, and he also felt surprised.

Examples from Evergreen: A Guide to Writing by S. Fawcett and A. Sandberg

Parallel Sentences

- 1) Linda is enthusiastic, ambitious, and has seemingly unlimited energy.
- 2) Meg thought about her clothes and if her denim skirt and jacket would be suitable.
- 3) On the boat were young people dancing, older people playing shuffleboard, and other who were seated and talked.
- 4) Every child needs good food plenty of sleep and exercise, and to feel he or she is loved.
- 5) The auctioneer, a persuasive man and who knows how to arouse interest, sold many articles quickly.
- 6) All pedestrians crossing at the intersection and who don't obey the traffic lights will receive tickets.
- 7) The storm cut off the lights, stopped the pump, and the furnace stopped going.
- 8) I have brown hair, brown eyes, and wear reading glasses.
- 9) Merton Gill was an actor with a funny face but who hated comedy.
- 10) Captain Ahab described the whale as a big white hussy with a mouth as long as thirty feet and would hold twenty men in it.
- 11) Her duties were hiring personnel and sometimes to evaluate programs.
- 12) David tried playing football in the afternoon and his homework at night.
- 13) The new baby is plump, fair, and light hair.
- 14) Cottonseed oil is used in steel-making, palm oil in tin-plating, and linseed oil to make paint.
- 15) Bob has speed, height, size and a great all-round player.