

Grammar Parallelism

Parallelism occurs when all items in a list are in the same grammatical form. It aids the flow and readability of your prose.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parallelism is important because it

- ◀ provides clarity
- ◀ emphasizes
- ◀ maintains balance

When a list is parallel, words are balanced with words, phrases with phrases, or clauses with clauses.

EXAMPLE: I am **tired** and **hungry**. (words)

Please write **a long essay, a short story, and an epic poem**. (phrases)

Jason went home because **he wanted to save money, he missed his family, and he was tired of his roommates**. (clauses)

FAULTY PARALLELISM

Faulty parallelism occurs when unequal structures are used to express equal ideas.

UNPARALLEL: Sarah does not like **hot milk** or **water that is cold**.

PARALLEL: Sarah does not like **hot milk** or **cold water**.

UNPARALLEL: Bryan loves **playing baseball, reading poetry, and to study history**.

PARALLEL: Bryan loves **playing baseball, reading poetry, and studying history**.

FIXING FAULTY PARALLELISM

Fixing faulty parallelism helps restore a writer's credibility. Below is an example of how to recognize and fix faulty parallelism.

1. Identify the word or group of words that the conjunction (*and, or, etc.*) joins.

EXAMPLE: There were **three red cars, two blue trucks, and four bicycles that were green**.

2. Examine each of the words, phrases, or clauses to see if they are parallel by labeling each word with *adjective, noun, verb, phrase, etc.*

three (<i>adjective</i>)	red (<i>adjective</i>)	cars (<i>noun</i>)
two (<i>adjective</i>)	blue (<i>adjective</i>)	trucks (<i>noun</i>)
four (<i>adjective</i>)	bicycles (<i>noun</i>)	that were green (<i>modifying phrase</i>)

The first two word groups are parallel; however, the last one is not because it does not have the same grammatical pattern.

3. Fix the word group that is not parallel.

BEFORE:	four (<i>adjective</i>)	bicycles (<i>noun</i>)	that were green (<i>modifying phrase</i>)
AFTER:	four (<i>adjective</i>)	green (<i>adjective</i>)	bicycles (<i>noun</i>)

4. Rewrite the sentence: There were **three red cars, two blue trucks, and four green bicycles**.