

PARALLELISM

Ideas in parallel grammatical form express ideas parallel in meaning. Parallelism contributes to ease in reading by making ideas that are parallel in meaning parallel in structure. It also provides clarity and rhythm. Parallel elements regularly appear in lists or series, in compound structures, in comparisons, in comparisons using *than* or *as*, and contrasting elements.

I like to swim, to dance, and to have fun.

OR

I like swimming, dancing, and having fun.

Many parallel elements are linked by coordinating conjunctions (such as *and*, *or*, *but*) or by correlatives (such as *neither.....nor*, *whether.....or*). Others are not. In the following examples, verbals used subjects and complements are parallel in form.

To define Flora is to define climate. National Geographic
Seeing is believing.

Parallel structures are also used in outlines to indicate elements of equal importance.

We are not so much what we eat as what we think.

OR

We are not so much the food we eat as the thoughts we think.

If elements are not parallel in thought rather than trying to make them parallel in grammatical structure, rethink the sentence.

We can choose to eat ham or tuna salad or we can watch television.

You must balance nouns with nouns, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, and clauses with clauses.