

# Faulty Parallelism

---

When ideas match, they should be written in parallel grammatical form. The regular pattern makes the parallelism of the ideas immediately visible.

I cleared the ground, dug the soil, planted the seeds, and awaited the results.

Parallel structure (in this case, repeated verbs) is a means of marshalling thoughts and displaying them neatly. It makes the reader's work easy.

Faulty parallelism is the failure to maintain a parallel pattern when the reader expects it. One element in the sentence seems to cut across a pattern set up by the others, and the sentence goes off the rails.

The following examples illustrate parallelism using verbs, nouns, and adverb phrases respectively.

## Verbs:

*Faulty:* The secretary *creates* files on long distance trips, *processes* appointment requests, and then the incoming mail *is sorted by* her.

*Revised:* The secretary *creates* files on long distance trips, *processes* appointment requests, and *sorts* incoming mail.

## Nouns:

*Faulty:* We pulled files on *long distance calls*, pulled files on *subscription requests*, and of course we looked at *comparative results*.

*Revised:* We pulled files on *long distance calls*, *subscription requests*, and *comparative results*.

## Adverb Phrases:

*Faulty:* I urged Katrina to finish her training *while* she was still free, *while* her interest in the work was high, and she could profit most then.

*Revised:* I urged Katrina to finish her training *while* she was still free, *while* her interest in the work was high, and *while* she could profit most.

It can be seen that sentences using parallelism are economical. Parallelism allows you to convey three or four ideas in a single sentence, and allows your reader to follow your thoughts easily.