

## JESI, 2009: Parallelism

Writers use parallel structures to communicate ideas having the same importance using the same grammatical structure. At the sentence level, parallelism is most common using gerund phrases (verb + ing) or infinitives (to + verb).

A sentence flaw occurs when writers do not use a parallel structure to communicate a series of ideas. For example,

Non-parallel: Without good pitching, the Marlins can be expected to lose more than eighty games, to draft early in next year's draft, and attendance will suffer greatly.

What are the ideas that seem to carry the same importance?

1. The Marlins will lose more than eighty games
2. The Marlins will draft early in next year's draft.
3. The Marlins' attendance will suffer greatly.

Note that we have two infinitive phrases and one independent clause. A possible revision using parallel structure can be worded as follows:

Parallel: Without good pitching, the Marlins can be expected to lose more than eighty games, to draft early in next year's draft, and to suffer greatly in attendance.

Take a look at The Owl's advice on parallelism:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/623/01/>

## Correlative Conjunctions and Comparisons

The term parallelism is also applied to the proper use of correlative conjunctions and comparisons

**Correlative Conjunctions:** both, and; not, but; not only, but also; either, or

Ginger not only provided a strong comic element, but she was also a foil to Mary Ann.

**Comparison** (faulty parallelism): Sharon's grade point average is much higher than her brother.

Revision 1: Sharon's grade point average is much higher than her brother's (grade point average).

Revision 2: Sharon has a higher grade point average than her brother (does).

Take a look at the following link, from Capital Community College:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/parallelism.htm>