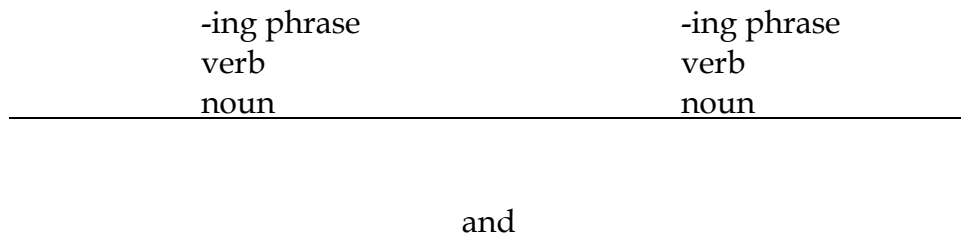


Parallelism

Parallel structure is really a matter of balance. Balancing a sentence can be compared to balancing a teeter-totter, if we pretend that certain words (and, or, but) are the balancing points.

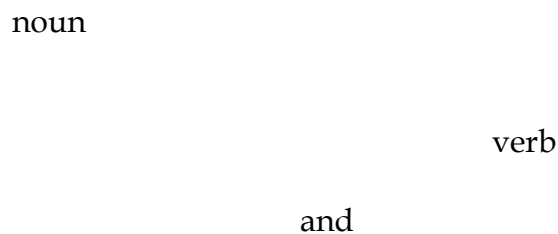
One part of speech or one part of a sentence can be balanced only by one of the same kind. Modifiers can be added without affecting the balance.

Look at this diagram:



Here a phrase balances a phrase, a verb balances a verb and a noun balances a noun.

But now look at this diagram:



The noun cannot balance a verb; they are not parallel.

Modifiers can be added without affecting the balance.
Here is an unbalanced sentence:

Boy Scouts learn **cooking, canoeing, swimming, and how to make a rope.**

The last phrase is too heavy; it cannot balance the other -ing words. If we change the phrase to **rope-making**, it is balanced.

A slightly different parallelism involves the common connectors **either-or, neither-nor, not only-but also**. Here, the kind of word or part of a sentence that follows the first connector must be the same as that following the second. For example:

I am going either **to Minneapolis or to Duluth.**

Here the two prepositional phrases are parallel; they have the same kind of structure. Now look at this example:

The hurricane not only **destroyed the fishing fleet** but also **the homes of the fishermen.**

The verb **destroyed** cannot balance the noun **homes**. The sentence should be rewritten so that the nouns follow both connectors:

The hurricane destroyed not only **the fishing fleet**, but also **the homes of the fishermen.**

