

# Parallelism

## AN IMPORTANT LANGUAGE DEVICE

DEFINITION: similar construction of adjacent word groups for rhetorical effect\*

EXAMPLE: *of the people, by the people, and for the people*

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Effective communication needs two elements: **REDUNDANCY** (repetition) and **NOVELTY** (something new). Redundancy creates structure while novelty creates interest. Parallelism is important because it efficiently and forcefully combines both elements. Variations exist too. For example, *Chiasmus* reverses elements, as in "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (*Macbeth* I.i.)

\* *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. Merriam-Webster, 2002. <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com> ( 5 Aug. 2010).