

## Parallel Manners

**Goal:** Creating awareness of how the ways we use everyday language can influence our behaviors and attitudes, which can benefit or disempower certain groups of people or individuals.

**Time:** 10-15 min for activity, 5-10 min for discussion

**Materials:** Handout

**When:** It would be best to do this activity in the middle of the semester instead of right at the start when students are only beginning to get to know one another.

**Instructions:** Examine the lists of sentences and determine how subjects are treated differently through the language used. Then rewrite the sentences to address all subjects more equally. After students have completed the activity, go over the sentences and topics as a class to examine the effects of language in reinforcing stereotypes.

### **Sentences:**

An ice skating tournament is being held downtown. The men's competition starts at 7:00, and the ladies take the ice at 9:00.

Two people built a new bench for the local park. Heather sanded the edges, and Mr. Jones used the heavy equipment.

A new church has sent out flyers for their services. The events are open to Christians and heathens alike.

Please join us for the community picnic tomorrow. Everyone is welcome, and bring the grandparents with you!

We hope that both whites and nonwhites will participate in the campus forum addressing diversity.

Welcome, sir, and welcome, little lady! We hope you enjoy your stay!

Of the attendees at the meeting last night, the only people I recognized were Mr. Robertson and Juan.

Five scientists were working in the lab yesterday. Dr. Phillips placed the sample in the Petri dish, and one of the girls put it in the incubator.

Please be prepared! Every student must have a pencil, and he should always bring it to class.

I currently need four students to man the internship table, and only one student has volunteered so far.

Thank you to the men and women who serve on the force. A policeman's work is never done.

The reservations are in the name of Mrs. John Smith.

**Follow Up Questions:**

- What did you think of this activity?
- Did you feel you needed further context to understand these sentences?
- Have you heard any statements like these or noticed similar language being used towards you or people around you?
- Did this activity help you notice language being used as a tool to create differences amongst people?
- Do you think that you will notice language being used like this in the future? Why or why not?

SOURCE: Adapted from *Writing for change: raising awareness of difference, power, and discrimination*. Retrieved from

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