

VERBALS AND VERBAL PHRASES

A *verbal* is a word that is formed from a verb but is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. In this section you will learn to identify and use two kinds of verbals, *participles* and *infinitives*.

The Participle

14e. A *participle* is a verb form that can be used as an adjective.

There are two kinds of participles. One kind is the *present participle*, which ends in *-ing*. The other kind is the *past participle*, which usually ends in *-ed*, *-d*, or *-t*.

EXAMPLES The astronaut, **floating** in space, repaired the satellite. [*Floating* is the present participle form of the verb *float*. It acts as an adjective to modify the noun *astronaut*.]

Repaired by the astronaut, the satellite again sent data back to Earth. [*Repaired* is the past participle form of the verb *repair*. It acts as an adjective to modify the noun *satellite*.]

Be careful not to confuse participles used as adjectives with participles used in verb phrases.

PARTICIPLE The **singing** birds perched in the trees.
VERB PHRASE The bird **was singing** in the trees.

PARTICIPLE **Bent** out of shape, the wheel was useless.
VERB PHRASE The wheel **had been bent** out of shape and was useless.

Remember that the participle in a verb phrase is part of the verb. It is not used as an adjective.

EXERCISE 10. Identifying Participles and the Nouns or Pronouns They Modify. Number your paper 1–10. After each number, write the participle in the sentence. Then write the noun or pronoun that the participle modifies.

EXAMPLE 1. I heard the chorus practicing for the program.
1. *practicing—chorus*

1. Chased indoors by the pesky mosquitoes, I watched TV.
2. Then, wondering why mosquitoes bite, I looked up the entry for mosquitoes in the encyclopedia.
3. Some biting insects carry diseases.
4. Carried by only one kind of mosquito, yellow fever is rare in the United States.
5. Biting, mosquitoes put liquid poison into the skin.
6. The skin, swollen from the bite, itches.
7. Sucking blood for food, female mosquitoes cause more serious bites than male mosquitoes do.
8. Sometimes you can hear the mosquitoes humming.
9. Mosquitoes' wings, vibrating together, make the sound.
10. Mosquitoes, living only a few weeks, may go through as many as twelve generations in a year.

The Participial Phrase

A participle may introduce a group of related words. Together, the participle and its related words form a *participial phrase*.

14f. A *participial phrase* is a group of related words that contains a participle and that acts as an adjective.

A participle may be modified by an adverb or by a prepositional phrase. It may also have a complement. Together with the participle, these related words make up the participial phrase.

EXAMPLE **Stretching slowly**, the cat jumped down from the windowsill.

In the example above, the adverb *slowly* modifies the participle *stretching*. Together, the participle and the adverb make up a participial phrase that modifies the noun *cat*.

EXAMPLE The tornado **predicted by the weather forecaster** did not hit our area.

In the preceding example, the prepositional phrase *by the weather forecaster* modifies the participle *predicted*. Together, the participle and the prepositional phrase make up a participial phrase that modifies the noun *tornado*.

EXAMPLE Reading the assignment, she took notes carefully.

Here the complement *assignment* is the direct object of the participle *reading*. Together, the participle and the complement make up a participial phrase that modifies the pronoun *she*.

EXERCISE 11. Identifying Participial Phrases and the Nouns or Pronouns They Modify. Number your paper 1–10. After each number, write the participial phrase in the sentence. Then write the noun or pronoun that the phrase modifies.

EXAMPLE 1. Stacking her flute case on top of her books, Tanza hurried to band practice.

1. *Stacking her flute case on top of her books—Tanza*

1. Living over four hundred years ago, Leonardo da Vinci kept journals of his ideas and inventions.
2. The journals, written in a secret code, are more than five thousand pages long.
3. Leonardo drew many pictures of birds flying.
4. Based on his sketches of birds, his design for a helicopter was the first one in history.
5. Studying the eye, Leonardo understood the sense of sight.
6. He worked hard, filling his journals with ideas and sketches.
7. The solutions reached in his journals served as the bases for paintings.
8. The hands sketched in the journals helped him paint the hands of the *Mona Lisa*.
9. Painting on a large wall, Leonardo created *The Last Supper*.
10. Leonardo, experimenting continually, had little time to paint in his later years.

EXERCISE 12. Writing Sentences with Participial Phrases. Use the following participial phrases in sentences of your own,

