

## VERBALS

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Verbals look like verbs, but do not act like verbs because they do not show action or convey a state of being. Verbals do not have helping verbs (is, was, do, can). The lack of a helping verb is one way to recognize a verbal.

**Verb:** Serena is **walking** to school every day.

In this sentence, **is walking** is a verb that shows what Serena is doing.

**Verbal:** Serena, **walking** to school every day, recites her homework out loud.

In this sentence, the word **walking** no longer has a helping verb and thus is a verbal. In this case it is acting like an adjective by describing what Serena is doing.

Verbals can appear as single words or with a group of words. A group of words that are related to a verbal is called a verbal phrase.

**Verbal Phrases:** A **verbal phrase** is a group of words that consist of a verbal and any other related words. The verbal phrase functions as a single part of speech and contains no subject or verb. In the following examples the verbal phrase is in **bold** type and the verbal is underlined.

Feeling sad and despondent, Jarrod plodded home.

The boys, seeing the fish jump, raced to the pond to claim the best fishing spot.

To run for political office is the goal of many political science majors.

### Types of

**Verbals:** A **verbal** may be an **infinitive**, a **participle**, or a **gerund**. Verbals function in a sentence as nouns (subjects, objects), adjectives (modifying nouns or pronouns) or adverbs (modifying verbs, adjectives or adverbs).

### INFINITIVES

The **infinitive** is formed by placing the word **to** before the base form of the verb.

Examples:	to be	to achieve	to see
	to win	to do	to acknowledge

**To be** a fighter pilot is Tyrone's goal.

Rob hopes **to go** to South Campus next semester.

The Florida Gators hope **to win** their next game.

**Infinitive Phrases:** An **infinitive phrase** consists of the infinitive plus any related nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs or phrases. In the following examples the infinitive phrase is in **bold** type and the infinitive is underlined.

The instructor was pleased **to receive the award**.

The scientists needed **to calculate the odds of a successful launch**.

**EXERCISE 1:** Underline the infinitive phrase once and the infinitive twice in the following sentences.

1. You need extensive training if you want to paint well.
2. Adobe soil is a difficult medium in which to raise vegetables.
3. The students would like Dr. Smith to delay the final exam.
4. Suzanne wanted to take the puppy home.
5. To win the race requires extensive dedication and stamina.

**Special points to remember about infinitives:**

1. Do not confuse an infinitive phrase with a prepositional phrase. An infinitive is the word **to** followed by a **verb**. A prepositional phrase also may begin with the word **to**, but it is followed by a noun.

Sally wanted **to walk home**.

Infinitive: to + verb

Sally walked **to her home**.

Prepositional phrase: preposition + noun

2. Do not split an infinitive. A split infinitive occurs when another word, usually an adverb, is inserted between **to** and the **verb**. Move the adverb to precede or follow the infinitive.

Jennifer tried **to quietly open** the door.

Split infinitive

Jennifer quietly tried **to open** the door.

Correct infinitive

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**EXERCISE 2:** Underline the infinitive once and circle prepositional phrases. Correct any split infinitives.

1. Chad told us to slowly chew our food.
2. To be happy is Krystal's goal.
3. Colin gave to Sally an assignment to take home.
4. Cassandra wants to go to New York to be an actress.
5. The boys were told to quickly learn their parts.

## **PARTICIPLES**

**Participles** are verbals that function like adjectives. They can indicate either past or present time. Participles are formed by using the participial form of the verb.

The **present participle** is formed by adding "ing" to the verb.

play ---> playing                      starve ---> starving

The **past participle** can be formed by adding "ed" to the verb.

stop ---> stopped                      amuse ---> amused

Many **past participles** are irregular.

eat ---> eaten                      steal ---> stolen

### **Special points to remember about participles:**

A **participle** can function as part of a verb, or it can function as an adjective. The presence or absence of a helping verb makes the difference.

#### **Participles as**

**Verbs:** Henry **is playing** basketball.

The horse **had stopped** to drink.

We **had eaten** lunch.

**present participle with helping verb**

**past participle with helping verb**

**irregular past participle with helping verb**

#### **Participles as**

**Adjectives:** The **starving** chicks begged their mother for food.

The present participle functions as an adjective modifying "chicks."

The **amused** children giggled with delight.

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The past participle functions as an adjective modifying “children.”

**Participial Phrases:** A **participial phrase** is a phrase that functions as an adjective and contains a participle. Although participles serve only as modifiers, they often take objects, complements, and other modifiers to form verbal phrases. To identify a participial phrase, first find the participle, then identify all the words that logically relate to it.

Throwing the ball into the air, Damon hit it to the outfielders.

In this sentence, **throwing** is the participle, but **the ball into the air** are the words that logically relate to **throwing**. Technically, **ball** is the object of **throwing** and **into the air** is a prepositional phrase. Thus **throwing the ball into the air** is the participial phrase.

**EXERCISE 3:** Underline the participial phrase once and the participle twice in the following sentences.

1. Hurriedly taking his seat, Chris nervously waited for the examination.
2. Having considered the request, the coach gave her permission for a late curfew.
3. The word “vandalism” comes from the Germanic tribe of Vandals who swept across Europe, pillaging the towns in their path.
4. His failing eyesight led to disaster.
5. The violin, tuned to perfection, responded to the musician’s bow with sweet song.

## GERUNDS

A **gerund** is the present participle form of the verb, the “ing” form, when it is used as a noun. A **gerund phrase** consists of the gerund and all the words that are logically related to it. Because gerund phrases are nouns, they function as subjects, subject complements, direct and indirect objects, and objects of a preposition.

Examples:     **Playing** tennis is fun.             **Playing** is a gerund; it is the subject.  
                  **Sleeping** in a tent is fun.         **Sleeping** is a gerund; it is the subject.  
                  Did you go **shopping**?                 **Shopping** is a gerund; it is the direct object.

## Special points to remember about gerunds:

1. Gerunds, like participles, can end in “ing,” but participles function as adjectives, whereas gerunds function as nouns. Thus gerunds or gerund phrases will act as subjects or objects in a sentence.
2. The possessive case is used before a gerund. Remember that the gerund functions as a noun. The possessive case is used to show who or what “owns” the noun that follows it. Thus you would say **Jim’s book**, not **Jim book**. Therefore, the possessive case is used before a gerund.

**John’s** winning smile made the customer feel at ease.

**Henry’s** selling his stock will mean that we can take a vacation.

**EXERCISE 4:** In the following sentences, underline the gerund twice and the gerund phrase once. If you want some extra practice, identify the function of the gerund, i.e. the part of speech.

1. Tailgating is a dangerous form of driving.
2. The teacher stopped his presentation when the students’ talking became disruptive.
3. His medals in swimming will assure his college scholarship.
4. My mother believes that cooking is a form of relaxation.
5. Listening is one of the most valuable skills in business.

**EXERCISE 5:** The following sentences allow you to practice using the possessive case with a gerund. Underline the gerund once and insert the appropriate possessive form where it is needed. Remember to maintain the singular or plural form of the possessive.

1. The baby waking was caused by loud music.
2. Fred laughing during the speech was inappropriate.
3. I was annoyed by Louis whispering during the performance.
4. The boys cheating got them expelled from their college.
5. My favorite part of the football game was the quarterback throwing a touchdown after he was tackled.

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**EXERCISE 6:** Write an *I* if the underlined phrase is an **infinitive phrase**, a *P* if it is a **participial phrase**, or a *G* if it is a **gerund phrase**.

1. It is often difficult to understand grammar.
2. Josh would like to go to the Jaguars' game.
3. Amy did fifty push-ups while watching the football game.
4. Playing hockey is his favorite sport.
5. The depressed woman sought assistance from the counseling center.
6. We would like the most verbose person to be promoted to vice-president.
7. Rob fixed baked potatoes for dinner.
8. Winning the spelling award was very important to Cassandra.
9. The committee focused on winning the award for landscape beautification.
10. Shedeh wants to own Tyrone's car.
11. Falling off cliffs is dangerous.
12. Noel found a lost puppy while walking to the store.
13. He wanted to bring it home, but his mother would not let him.
14. Jeremy wants to play ping-pong, but he is busy tutoring math students.
15. Feeling pressured by his girlfriend, Nicholas asked her to marry him.



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### **EXERCISE 5:**

1. The baby's waking was caused by loud music. (Baby is singular possessive.)
2. Fred's laughing during the speech was inappropriate. (Fred is singular possessive.)
3. I was annoyed by Louis' whispering during the performance. (Louis is singular possessive. Since Louis ends in s, it requires the addition of only the apostrophe.)
4. The boys' cheating got them expelled from their college. (Boys is plural possessive; the apostrophe is added after the s.)
5. My favorite part of the football game was the quarterback's throwing a touchdown after he was tackled. (Quarterback is singular possessive.)

### **EXERCISE 6:**

1. I
2. I
3. P
4. G
5. P
6. I
7. P
8. G
9. G
10. I
11. G
12. P
13. I
14. I
15. P I