Participles and Participial Phrases

A **verbal** is a form of verb used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. The three kinds of verbals are the **participle**, the **gerund**, and the **infinitive**. A **verbal phrase** consists of a verbal and its modifiers and complements.

A **participle** is a verb form that is used as an adjective. (A adjective modifies a noun or pronoun.) There are two kinds of participles – the **present participle** and the **past participle**. The perfect tense of a participle is formed with the past participle and the helping verb having.

**PRESENT:** Smiling, the two sisters waved to the class. [Smiling, a form of the verb to smile, modifies the noun sisters.]
Paco heard something rustling outside the tent. [Rustling, a form of the verb to rustle, modifies the pronoun something.]

**PAST:** The grilled catfish with lemon tasted delicious.

**PERFECT:** Thrilled and excited, they scrambled into the roller-coaster car.

**PRESENT:** Having studied all day, Jessica was ready for her test.
Having been soaked by the rain, the cat looked unhappy.

A **participial phrase** consists of a participle and all the words related to the participle.

**EXAMPLES:** Running along the waterfront, a group of joggers stopped to watch the sunrise. [The participial phrase modifies the noun group. The adverb phrase along the waterfront modifies running. Together they are the participial phrase.]
Francis, delighted immensely by the book, let it to her best friend. [The participial phrase modifies the noun Francis.]

**Directions:** Underline with one line the participles and participial phrases. Place a box around the noun or pronoun it is modifying.

**EXAMPLE:** Having cleaned her room, Jolene went outside for a walk.

1. Allison, racing down the stairs, dropped her books.
2. Michael’s father served baked chicken with wild rice and mushrooms.
3. Waiting for her ride to school, Marie saw a deer leap into the woods.
4. Having written a short story, Andrew asked Carmen to read it.
5. Tuned to perfection, the engine purred.
6. Finding herself alone in the house, Amanda turned up the stereo.
7. The wooden floors, having been rubbed with oil, gleamed.
8. My brother and sister start their cooking lessons next week.
9. We could see shooting stars in the sky.
10. The group of friends, having dined together, sat and talked for hours.
11. Known as the “Iron Horse,” Lou Gehrig was one of baseball’s greatest hitters.

12. Basking in the audience’s applause, Mavis took a deep bow.

13. Named after a Bantu work for okra, gumbo is a spicy Creole stew.

14. Speaking eloquently, the First Lady captivated the senators.

15. The reward, announced in the newspaper, was a large sum of money.

16. The retriever, known for his gentle nature, played catch with the children.

17. Waving from the car, the O’Shea family left on vacation.

18. In your own words, explain each concept presented in the first chapter.


20. Having measured and marked the wood, the carpenter began to saw.

Directions: Using these participles and participial phrases, write your own sentence. Put a box around the noun or pronoun the participle modifies.

21. tapping at the window  **EXAMPLE:** Tapping at the window, Alex, frightened her friend who was sleeping.

22. ringing loudly

23. crowded with tourists

24. writing a poem on baseball

25. having arrived at the restaurant early

26. stuffed and roasted

27. having seen that movie already

28. laughing
Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

A **verbal** is a form of verb used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. The three kinds of verbals are the **participle**, the **gerund**, and the **infinitive**. A **verbal phrase** consists of a verbal and its modifiers and complements.

A **gerund** is a verb form ending in –ing that is used as a noun.

Like nouns, gerunds can be subjects, predicate nominatives, direct objects, or objects of prepositions.

**EXAMPLE:** Yodeling is my favorite type of music. [subject]
One good aerobic sport is **skating**. [predicate nominative]
I do not like **collecting** stamps as much as I used to. [direct object]
In school we heard a lecture on **voting**. [object of a preposition]

A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund and any modifiers and complements it may have. The entire gerund phrase acts as a noun.

**EXAMPLE:** Walking in deep sand is good for your feet. [The phrase is the subject of the sentence.]
His problem now was getting the part back into the box. [predicate nominative]
I really like **riding** my skateboard fast. [direct object]
You don’t need boots for hiking along this trail. [object of the preposition for]

When a noun or pronoun comes immediately before a gerund, it is in the possessive form and is considered part of the gerund phrase.

**EXAMPLE:** Demi’s **whistling** woke the baby.
When he’s awake, the baby likes her whistling.

Directions: Underline the gerund or gerund phrases in the sentences below. Then on the line before each sentence, identify how the gerund or gerund phrase is used by writing **s** for subject, **p.n.** for predicate nominative, **d.o.** for direct object, or **o.p.** for object of the preposition.

**EXAMPLE:** o.p. 1. I feel like washing the windows today.

_______ 1. Some people deal with their feelings by talking about them.

_______ 2. Sweeping that barn will take some time.

_______ 3. I don’t like being here any more than you do.

_______ 4. Much effort goes into throwing a good party.

_______ 5. I’d advise wearing a sweater when you go.

_______ 6. Mom got a ticket for running a red light.
7. “How do you like using your new desk, Jo?”

8. Suturing the incision is one of the last steps in surgery.

9. The choir was going to the meeting hall for singing and ice cream.

10. The tar’s sticking to Melba’s shoe posed a problem.

11. Printing was invented in Europe in the 1450s.

12. I like collecting shells and cataloging them.

13. Do you enjoy working at the clinic?

14. Reading the newspaper is a daily activity for me.

15. The pioneer family’s dream was owning their own farmland.

16. He signaled by raising his right hand.

17. Guessing the number of beans in the jar is almost impossible.

18. The problem is getting someone to donate furniture for the play.

19. Phyllis always makes time for reading to the kindergarten class.

20. There is a renewed interest in raising funds for a new gym.

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