

The Participle and the Participial Phrase

Participles

5e. A **participle** is a verb form that can be used as an adjective.

EXAMPLES a **shining** smile [The participle *shining* describes the noun *smile*.]
his **wrinkled** brow [The participle *wrinkled* describes the noun *brow*.]
the **broken** one [The participle *broken* describes the pronoun *one*.]

NOTE There are two types of participles—present participles and past participles. All present participles end in *-ing*. However, the form of past participles is not always the same. Notice in the examples above that past participles may end in *-ed* or *-en* or *-t*. Some past participles are formed in other ways.

A participle may come before or after the word that it modifies.

EXAMPLES The crowd remained **standing**.

Standing, the crowd applauded.

The **standing** crowd applauded wildly.

EXERCISE A Underline the participle in each of the following sentences.

Examples 1. Beneath the porch, the cat hid from the pouring rain. [*Pouring* is a participle that describes the noun *rain*.]

2. Honored, she accepted the award. [*Honored* is a participle that describes the pronoun *she*.]

1. Oh, no. I smell burnt toast again. [Which word is a verb form that describes a noun?]
2. Add two beaten eggs to the mixture. [Which word is a verb form that describes a noun?]
3. They need two signed copies of the contract.
4. Have you found the lost remote control yet?
5. What is a “running foot” anyway?
6. One excited little girl could hardly stand still.
7. Exhausted, she stumbled across the finish line.
8. A folding chair sat beside the door.
9. Ten dripping shirts hung from the line.
10. Carved stones lined the garden bed.

Participial Phrases

- 5f.** A **participial phrase** consists of a participle together with its modifiers and complements. The entire phrase is used as an adjective.

A participle can be modified by an adverb and by a prepositional phrase. A participial phrase can also have a complement and all of the complement's modifiers. A complement is a word that completes the meaning of a verb. *Direct objects* and *indirect objects* complete the meaning of an action verb. *Predicate nominatives* and *predicate adjectives* complete the meaning of linking verbs.

EXAMPLES Mr. Johnson, **being a tall man**, was not comfortable in the small car. [The participle *being* is completed by the predicate nominative *man*. *Man* is modified by the adjectives *a* and *tall*. The entire participial phrase is used as an adjective to modify the noun *Mr. Johnson*.]

Giving us a copy of the report, Jim began his speech. [The participle *Giving* has an indirect object, *us*, and a direct object, *copy*. The direct object is modified by an article, *a*, and a prepositional phrase, *of the report*. The entire participial phrase is used as an adjective to modify the noun *Jim*.]

EXERCISE B Underline the participial phrase in each of the following sentences.

Examples 1. Done with his tricks and stunts, the clown accepted everyone's applause. [*Done* is a participle that describes *clown*. *With his tricks and stunts* is a prepositional phrase modifying *Done*.]

2. Charcoal grills glowing with embers dotted the park. [*Glowing* is a participle that describes *grills*. *With embers* is a prepositional phrase that modifies *glowing*.]

11. Streaming into the starry sky, fireworks exploded over the bay. [Which word is a verb form that describes *fireworks*? Which prepositional phrase modifies that word?]
12. "Seventy-six Trombones" blared from a band performing onstage. [Which word is a verb form that describes *band*? Which word modifies that word?]
13. Blankets laid out over the grass held small family groups.
14. Picnic tables were covered with food and ice chests holding cold drinks.
15. Some dogs chased a ball decorated with red and white stripes.
16. Later, a group of American Indians dancing in full costume entertained the crowd.
17. Earlier, a dozen Thai girls had performed an elegant dance handed down for generations.
18. Unpacking their instruments, a Dixieland jazz band got ready for their turn.
19. A group of folk dancers, specially flown in from San Antonio, swirled in a rainbow of skirts.
20. Sleepily nodding in car seats, children and babies were driven home.