

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. There are three kinds of verbals: the *participle*, the *gerund*, and the *infinitive*. A verbal that has modifiers or complements is called a *verbal phrase*. Below are some examples of verbal phrases.

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| PARTICIPIAL PHRASE | The language spoken by the greatest number of people is Mandarin. [The past participle <i>spoken</i> begins a phrase that modifies the noun <i>language</i> .] |
| GERUND PHRASE | For some people, learning a foreign language can be a challenge. [The gerund <i>learning</i> begins a phrase used as the subject of the verb <i>can be</i> .] |
| INFINITIVE PHRASE | I am learning to speak Japanese . [The infinitive <i>to speak</i> begins a phrase used as the direct object of the verb <i>am learning</i> .] |

EXERCISE A Underline the verbal or verbal phrase in each of the following sentences. Above each verbal or verbal phrase, write *gerund*, *gerund phrase*, *participle*, *participial phrase*, *infinitive*, or *infinitive phrase*.

Example 1. Kevin researched different methods of ^{*gerund phrase*} measuring time.

- The plan accepted by the mayor involved a tax cut.
- Paula expected the paper airplane to fly.
- Feeling dizzy, Helena stopped and took a break.
- The weight of the sack made it difficult to carry.
- My uncle from Michigan enjoys canoeing.
- The squeaking wheel alerted the mechanic to a potential problem.
- Getting up early in the morning is sometimes a challenge.
- We bought a new wrench to fix the leaky faucet.
- The forgotten treasure lay at the bottom of the sea for three hundred years.
- Fascinated, Pepe stood and admired the mural for several hours.

EXERCISE B Decide how the underlined word groups are used in each of the following sentences. Options for each sentence are given in parentheses. Circle the correct option.

Example 1. Coughing and sneezing, Doug stayed home from band practice. (adjective or noun)

- The easiest part of the project is cutting out the pattern. (direct object or predicate nominative)
- The tools used by some ancient cultures are impressive. (adverb or adjective)
- Running five miles per week is Joanna's goal. (subject or direct object)
- They went to the park to have a picnic. (adverb or adjective)
- The coach's philosophy is to practice every day. (predicate nominative or direct object)

Directions: Underline the verbal phrase. Decide if the phrase is a gerund, participial, or infinitive phrase in the blank provided.

1. _____ Swimming is my favorite exercise.
2. _____ Attending the concert was the highlight of our week.
3. _____ Space science is an ever-expanding field of study.
4. _____ We drove to the mall to buy our new furniture.
5. _____ Each summer our library gives a prize to the person reading the most books.
6. _____ Parking in the drive in front of the school is restricted.
7. _____ They have closed the street to repair the railroad crossing.
8. _____ Elected to the position of county auditor, he purchased a home closer to his new office.
9. _____ Breaking the light barrier is simply not a possibility.
10. _____ I plan to pay all my bills by June.
11. _____ Beginning Friday, there will be a huge inventory reduction sale.
12. _____ Overwhelmed by calculus, I rearranged my schedule, so I could take geometry instead.
13. _____ The high school awards banquet, followed by a dance, will be held at the hotel.
14. _____ Bass fishing in Smith Lake is my father's favorite pastime.
15. _____ Last night's sunset seemed to color the sky.
16. _____ I have special shoes for running the marathon.
17. _____ My sister loves cleaning the house on Sundays.
18. _____ Feeding the pigeons on the roof is my sister's favorite chore.
19. _____ Searching for unusual paperweights for our collection, we visited a number of stores.
20. _____ My brother was asked to drive my Aunt to Texas.