

Unit 3

Lesson: Participles and Participial Phrases

Learning Target

- Explain the function of verbals, such as participles, in general and their function in particular sentences.

A **phrase** is a word group that does NOT have both a subject and a verb and that functions as a part of speech, such as a noun or modifier (adjective or adverb). There are different kinds of phrases. You can enliven your writing by using phrases to vary your syntax and add detail.

A **verbal** is a verb form that is used as a noun, adjective, or adverb. Verbals include *infinitives*, *participles*, and *gerunds*. A **verbal phrase** is a word group that contains a verbal and its modifiers and complements and that acts as a noun, adjective, or adverb. This mini-lesson focuses on participles and participial phrases.

Participle and Participial Phrases

A **participle** is a verb form that can be used as an adjective. Present participles end in *-ing*. Past participles often end in *-ed*.

A **singing** bird is outside my window. [The participle modifies *bird*.]

The **buried** treasure includes gold doubloons. [The participle modifies *treasure*.]

A **participial phrase** includes a participle and any modifiers or objects of the participle.

The bird **singing outside my window** is a mockingbird. [The phrase modifies *bird*.]

The treasure **buried by Spanish pirates** includes gold doubloons. [The phrase modifies *treasure*.]

If a participial phrase is not essential to the meaning of the sentence—if it adds extra information without changing the sentence's basic meaning—it should be set off by commas.

Elaine, **worrying about the weather**, suggested we cancel the picnic.

Playing for the first time ever, Ethan won the game.

Lesson: Participles and Participial Phrases (continued)

Check Your Understanding

Revise each of the following sentences by including at least two participles or participial phrases to add detail and make the sentences more interesting. You may reword the sentences to add some phrases. Underline each participle and participial phrase.

Answers will vary. Sample answers are shown.

1. The vine grew well. The blooming vine, twining up the trellis, grew well.
2. The cliff was mostly limestone. The looming cliff, towering above the waves, was mostly limestone.
3. Brenner saw a spider on the flower pot. Brenner saw a spider weaving a web on the broken flower pot.
4. Benjamin crossed to the other side of the river. Taking the ferry, Benjamin crossed to the other side of the raging river.
5. The glasses were behind the bookshelves. The lost glasses, missing for weeks, were behind the bookshelves.