**University of Batna 2/ Department of English/ Second-Year Classes**

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**GERUND AND PARTICIPIAL PHRASES**

**PART TWO: NON-FINITE AND VERBLESS CLAUSES**

**INTRODUCTION TO PHRASES**

There are two types of phrases in English: ***verbal*** and ***verbless*** phrases.

A **verbal** is a verb form which functions in the sentence as **a noun, an adjective,** or **an adverb** while at the same time retaining some of its verbal properties. Although it does not function in the sentence as a predicate, a verbal can be modified by adverbs, it can have qualities of tense and mood, and it can be preceded or followed or both by nouns and pronouns which function as its subjects and objects. A verbal plus its subjects, objects, and other modifiers make up a **verbal phrase**. The phrase, like the simple verbal, can function in the sentence as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. There are three kinds of verbals: **gerunds, participles,** and **infinitives.**

A **verbless phrase** is a phrase without any verbal element. Like the verbal phrases, a verbless phrase can function in the sentence as **a noun, an adjective,** or **an adverb**.

1. **THE GERUND AND THE GERUND PHRASE**
2. **Structure**

The gerund is the -ing form of the verb used as a noun. Notice that the gerund has the same form as the present participle, but it functions differently in the sentence. **It is always a noun.**

**Swimming** is excellent exercise.

He enjoys **dancing.**

A gerund may have an object. It may be preceded by adjectival modifiers and it may be followed by adverbial modifiers. If a noun or pronoun precedes a gerund, it must be in the possessive, or adjectival form. Gerunds never have subjects.

**Your singing** was beautiful.

We admired **his expert dancing**.

He was grateful for **our attending his graduation**.

I appreciate **Mary’s going to the hospital with me.**

They did **a lot of loud arguing last night**.

The gerund with its object(s) and modifiers make up **the gerund phrase**.

1. **Use**

Either the simple gerund or the gerund phrase is used in the sentence in a noun position.

It can function as subject, direct object, indirect object, subject complement, object of preposition, apposition, or adjectival complement.

**Subject: Listening** requires patience.

**Listening to the radio** is good practice in understanding English.

**Running with scissors on a slippery floor** was a terrible idea.

**Direct object:** He enjoys **camping.**

He enjoys **camping in the mountains**.

We would not recommend **travelling without insurance**.

**Indirect object:** The children gave **making sandcastles** their full attention.

Clinton gave **running for president** her best shot.

**Object of preposition:** I am tired of **arguing**.

I am tired of **arguing with you all the time**.

By **crying like a baby**, you won’t get anywhere in life.

**Subject complement:** His favourite sport is **swimming**.

His hobby is **making model airplanes**.

The critical issue of his arrest wasn’t **driving without a license**.

**Appositive:** His hobby, **making model airplanes**, is not expensive.

**Adjectival complement:** My mother was busy **making dinner**.

Try using a gerund phrase to combine two choppy sentences. It will make your writing flow more smoothly.

**Original:** I play tennis. Tennis is one of my hobbies.

**Combined: Playing tennis** is one of my hobbies.

One of my hobbies is **playing tennis**.

**Original:** We will fly to California. We will save time travelling.

**Combined:** We will save time travelling by **flying to California**.

**Flying to California** will save time travelling.

**Original:** We made homemade ice cream. It was fun.

**Combined: Making homemade ice cream** was fun.

**Note:** When you use a gerund phrase to combine sentences, you need to delete some words and change others. Be sure to read over your revision carefully to insure that it makes sense and is correctly punctuated.

1. **THE PARTICIPLE AND THE PARTICIPIAL PHRASE**
2. **THE SIMPLE PARTICIPLE**

A participle is a word formed from a verb that is used to modify nouns. Notice how an active voice verb is changed to a present participle by adding the suffix –ing to the verb.

**Changing Active Verbs to Participles**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verbs** | **Present Participles** |
| The custom fascinates me. (present simple)  The woman jogged in the park. (past simple)  The hostages will return soon. (future simple) | Fascinating  Jogging  Returning |

***An active voice verb (present, past, or future tenses) becomes a present participle.***

Now notice how a passive voice verb becomes a past participle.

**Changing Passive Verbs to Participles**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verbs** | **Past participles** |
| The steak was burned.  My heart was broken. | Burned  Broken |

***A passive voice verb (present, past, or future tenses) becomes a past participle.***

**Note:** The terms present and past participle are misleading because these forms have nothing to do with present tense or past tense. Rather, they are based on active or passive voice. **The present participle comes from an active voice verb, and the past participle comes from a passive voice verb.**

There are also perfect and continuous forms of participles, as shown on the following chart.

**Summary of Participial Phrase Forms**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Forms** | **Active** | **Passive** |
| **The general forms**  Do not indicate time: time is determined by the main clause verb | Verb + ing  Opening | Verb+ ed, en, t, d  Opened, bought, taken, sold |
| **The continuous form**  Emphasizes action going on right now; may also express future time |  | Being + past participle  Being opened |
| **The perfect form**  Emphasizes that the action happened before the time of the main verb action | Having + past participle  Having opened | Having been + past participle  Having been opened |

There is a sixth participle form, the perfect continuous active: **Having been opening jars all morning**, my hands has become cramped.

It is not included here because it is not commonly used.

1. **PARTICIPIAL PHRASES**

Participles commonly have objects and adverbial modifiers. The participle plus whatever objects and modifiers may occur make up the participial phrase.

A participial phrase is a reduction of a relative (adjective) clause or an adverbial clause. A participial phrase is:

***Participle + object (s)/ complement (s) + modifiers***

**2.1.** **Participial phrases from relative clauses**

Participial phrases may be formed by reducing subject-pattern relative clauses. To do this, delete the relative pronouns (who, which, or that) and change the verb to a participle.

Just like relative clauses, participial phrases can be restrictive or non-restrictive. If the original relative clause was restrictive, the participial phrase from it will be also. Conversely, if the original clause was non-restrictive, so will the phrase be.

Participial phrases are made negative by placing the word ‘not’ in front of the participle.

**2.1.1.** **General forms in the active voice**

In the following sets of sentences, the relative clause in the first sentence has been changed to a participial phrase in the second. Notice that the general form in the active voice can be made from a present, past, or future tense verb. Also notice the similar punctuation of restrictive and non-restrictive clauses and phrases.

1. a. Many students **who study at this university** are from foreign countries.

b. Many students **studying at this university** are from foreign countries.

2. a. Many students **who are studying at this university** are from foreign countries.

b. Many students **studying at this university** are from foreign countries.

3. a. The President’s wife**, who looked tired after the long trip,** could hardly smile at the cheering crowd.

b. The President’s wife**, looking tired after the long trip,** could hardly smile at the cheering crowd.

4. a. Commercial airlines **that were arriving at the same time as the President’s plane** couldn’t land immediately.

b. Commercial airlines **arriving at the same time as the President’s plane** couldn’t land immediately.

5. a. Everyone **who will go on our field trip next weekend** must sign up now.

b. Everyone **going on our field trip next weekend** must sign up now.

6. a. Linda**, who did not understand physics,** failed the course.

b. Linda**, not understanding physics,** failed the course.

**2.1.2. General forms in the passive voice**

The next sets of sentences show the general participial forms in the passive voice. Notice that the general form in the passive can be formed from present or past tense verbs.

a. The President**, who was surrounded by bodyguards,** was only slightly wounded in the assassin’s attack.

b. The President**, surrounded by bodyguards,** was only slightly wounded in the assassin’s attack.

**a. The continuous form**

The continuous form emphasizes that the action is happening now. It uses only one form of the verb ‘to be’ as an auxiliary.

a. The law **that is currently being debated** is about immigration.

b. The law **currently being debated** is about immigration.

**b. Perfect forms**

Remember that the perfect forms, whether active or passive, emphasize the completion of that action before the action of the main verb.

1. a. The secrets of the universe**, which have fascinated men for centuries,** are slowly being revealed.

b. The secrets of the universe**, having fascinated men for centuries,** are slowly being revealed. (**Present perfect, active**)

2. a. The film**, which had been shown too often in movie theatres,** did not attract a large audience when it was aired on television.

b. The film**, having been shown too often in movie theatres,** did not attract a large audience when it was aired on television. (**Past perfect, passive**)

**2.2. Punctuating participial phrases**

Punctuating participial phrases is the same as for restrictive clauses-that is, it depends on whether the participial phrase is restrictive or non-restrictive.

A restrictive participial phrase is not set off with commas because it is necessary to correctly identify the noun phrase it modifies.

A person **belonging to the Sierra Club** can participate in many outdoor activities.

A non-restrictive participial phrase is set off by commas because it gives unnecessary additional information about the noun it modifies.

The Browns**, belonging to the Sierra Club,** participate in many outdoor activities.

The position of the participial phrase depends on whether it is restrictive or non-restrictive.

A restrictive participial phrase follows the word it modifies.

The computer science course **offered this semester** is very interesting.

A non-restrictive participial phrase may be in the following positions:

1. At the beginning of a sentence, before the noun it modifies.

2. In the middle of a sentence, after the noun it modifies.

3. at the end of a sentence if it modifies the entire sentence.

**Beginning of sentence:**

**Working on computers for cars,** the American car industry will soon put electronic controls into every automobile.

**Middle of sentence:**

The future cars**, using safer fuels,** will pollute the air less.

**End of sentence:**

The jury’s verdict was guilty**, shocking the defendant.**

**2.3. Participial phrases from adverbial clauses**

Participial phrases can also be formed from certain adverbial clauses, but only from those dealing with time and reason.

**2.3.1. Participial phrases from time clauses**

Adverbial clauses introduced by time subordinators after, while, when, before, since and as may be reduced to participial phrases if the subjects of the adverbial clause and the independent clause are the same.

To change a time adverbial clause into a participial phrase:

1. Make sure that the subjects of the adverbial clause and the independent clause are the same.
2. Transfer the subject to the independent clause.
3. Change the verb form into a participle.
4. Delete or retain the subordinator according to the following rules:
5. Before and since must be retained.
6. As must be deleted.
7. After, while, and when must be retained if the participial phrase follows the independent clause; otherwise, they may be omitted.

**As I was walking rapidly past the burning building,** I saw a man escape through a downstairs window.

**Walking rapidly past the burning building,** I saw a man escape through a downstairs window.

**2.3.2. Participial phrases from reason clauses**

Reason adverbial clauses introduced by the subordinators because, since and as may also be reduced to participial phrases. Here, however, the subordinator must be deleted.

**Because Mary had asked for our opinions,** she had to listen to our replies.

**Having asked for our opinions,** Mary had to listen to our replies.

**2.3.3. Participial phrases from simple sentences**

Participial phrases can also be used to combine simple sentences that have the same subject.

1. a. Laser-light shows were shown at many concerts. They produced exciting designs with coloured lights.

b. Laser-light shows**, producing exciting designs with coloured lights,** were shown at many concerts.

2.a. Laser beams can cause instant and permanent damage. They are directed or reflected into the human eye.

b. Laser beams **directed or reflected into the human eye** can cause instant and permanent damage.

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