Gerunds

A **verbal** is a word that is formed from a verb but acts as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

A **gerund** is a verbal that ends in -ing and acts as a noun. A gerund phrase consists of the gerund with its modifiers and complements.

- Allen enjoys **singing** more than acting.
- He feels that **singing well** is impossible **without** lengthy training.

In sentences, gerunds and gerund phrases may be used anywhere nouns may be used.

- **As subject**: Singing requires good breathing.
- **As predicate nominative**: My favorite activity is **singing**.
- **As direct object**: I love **singing**.
- **As object of a preposition**: Rebecca takes lessons in **singing**.
- **As indirect object**: I give **singing** my best effort.

**A. Identifying Gerunds**

In each sentence, underline every gerund.

1. Playing guitar well takes a great deal of skill.
2. Elena has a knack for composing ditties.
3. Francine likes performing for an audience but hates practicing.
4. Morgan isn’t interested in playing in an orchestra.
5. Developing an ear for music takes time and careful listening.
6. Dale’s goal is touring with a rock band.

**B. Identifying Gerunds**

Underline each gerund. On the blank, write how it is used: **S** for subject, **PN** for predicate nominative, **DO** for direct object, or **OP** for object of a preposition.

1. Eating **fast** before his performance gave Ben a stomachache.
2. Jorge is anxious about **learning** music.
3. We encouraged his **entering** the competition.
4. Ron’s problem was **thinking** he was the best player.
5. Once the season starts, skating is all Orville thinks about.
6. One of the **hardest** things in band is blending in **with** the other players.
7. Singing is the **most** fundamental form of **music**.
8. I appreciate your reading my composition.
9. Victor has a **talent** for **finding** words that fit the music.
10. Melanie’s favorite pastime is **listening** to her little sister **sing**.
Gerunds

A. Identifying Gerunds
Underline each gerund. On the blank, write how it is used: S for subject, PN for predicate nominative, DO for direct object, or OP for object of a preposition.

1. Thomas likes listening to classical guitar.  
   S AV DO

2. He’s interested in learning to play it, but needs a teacher.  
   S AV DO
   S LV PN

3. His least favorite activity is playing scales.  
   S AV DO

4. While fixing the engine, the mechanic played a classical music station.  
   S LV

5. Winning is not the only reason to enter the contest.  
   S AV DO

6. Gina enjoys studying with a real artist.  
   HV S

7. Is practicing two hours a day enough?  
   S LV PN

8. Devonna’s goal is entering a college with a highly rated music department.  
   S LV

9. In music and comedy, timing is everything.  
   S AV DO

10. The school solved the schedule conflicts by creating a new class.  
   S AV DO

B. Using Gerunds
Rewrite each sentence. Change the boldfaced word or words to a gerund. You may need to alter some other words in the sentence.

1. To play bluegrass has always been my goal.  
   Playing bluegrass has always been my goal.

2. I was afraid to have him as a teacher.  
   I was afraid of having him as a teacher.

3. The difficulty is to find time to practice.  
   The difficulty is finding time to practice.

4. To spend time with friends is important.  
   Spending time with friends is important.

5. He knows it is a sacrifice to work so hard.  
   He knows it is a sacrifice working so hard.
Participles

A participle is a verb form that acts as an adjective. It modifies a noun or pronoun. There are two kinds of participle: present participles and past participles. The present participle always ends in -ing.

A cheering crowd distracts him. (The present participle cheering modifies crowd.)

The past participle of a regular verb ends in -ed. For irregular verbs such as steal, the past participle has a different ending.

Stunned, she didn't know what to say. (past participle of regular verb)
The stolen diamond was worth millions. (past participle of irregular verb)

Gerunds, participles, and verbs all end in -ing. Here is how you can tell the difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Tip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerund</td>
<td>The grasshopper enjoyed fiddling.</td>
<td>Could be replaced by a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participle</td>
<td>The fiddling grasshopper did no work.</td>
<td>Could be replaced by an adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>He was fiddling all summer.</td>
<td>Always used with a helping verb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Identifying Participles and Gerunds

Write Participle or Gerund to identify the boldfaced verbal in each sentence.

1. The disappointed crow went hungry that day.  
2. The boasting hare lost the race to the tortoise.
3. Removing a bone from the wolf's throat was probably foolhardy.
4. The grasshopper laughed at the hardworking ant.
5. After barely escaping the cat, the country mouse returned to the farm.
6. The frightened rabbits, in turn, frightened the frogs.
7. Arguing with the wolf was stupid.
8. The fox tried to escape by running into the woods.
9. The choking wolf begged the crane for assistance.
10. The crane didn't get the promised reward.

B. Identifying the Role of Participles

Underline the word that each boldfaced participle modifies.

1. The characters in Aesop's fables are talking animals.
2. Reported to be a slave in classical Greek times, Aesop was a great storyteller.
4. The tales, retold for generations, still entertain us.
5. We laugh at, yet learn from, the animals acting like humans.
Participles

A. Identifying Participles and Gerunds
Underline the verbal in each sentence. On the line, write **Participle** or **Gerund** to identify the verbal.

1. The **smiling** man in the third row is my uncle.
2. The **slave** Aesop was a master at **telling** stories.
3. **Pleased** by the noisy applause, the singer gave an encore.
4. Have you heard our **whistling** teapot?
5. Kathy said she saw a **spotted** owl.
6. That nursery is famous for **growing** beautiful orchids.
7. All the candidates praise **working** people.
8. Evan bought all the materials for building a boat.
9. Taking this roundabout path was a mistake.
10. Shocked by the sight of her sister after many years, the old woman wept.

B. Identifying Participles and Participial Phrases
Underline the participle or participial phrase in each sentence. On the blank to the right, write the word that the participle or participial phrase modifies.

1. The **lying** fox only wanted to eat the chickens.
2. Stopping too often for naps, the **hare** lost his race with the **tortoise**.
3. Frustrated, the fox said the grapes were probably sour anyway.
4. The **eagle**, convinced by the **crow**, let go of the **turtle**.
5. The **lion** lay in front of his cave, gasping for breath.
6. The disappointed **crane** flew off sadder but wiser.
7. Running to the pond, the **rabbits** scared the **frogs**.
8. The fox, expecting a nice meal, arrived at the crane’s home.
9. Thoroughly upset by the cat, the country mouse quickly left the city.
10. Quarreling among themselves, the **oxen** became easy prey to the **lion**.
An **infinitive** is a verb form that usually begins with the word *to* and acts as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. In each example below, the infinitive is *to exercise*. An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive plus its complements and modifiers. The entire phrase functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

**As noun**

- *To exercise* is essential for good health. (subject of sentence)
- John plans *to exercise* daily. (direct object)
- His plan is *to exercise* daily. (predicate noun)

**As adjective**

A plan *to exercise* is necessary. (*to exercise* modifies *plan*)

**As adverb**

*To exercise* regularly, John made a schedule. (*To exercise* modifies *made*, telling why he made a schedule.)

To decide whether a phrase is an infinitive or a prepositional phrase, look at the word after *to*. If the word is a verb, the phrase is an infinitive. If the word is a noun or pronoun, the phrase is a prepositional phrase.

John is going **to the movies**. (prepositional phrase)
Would you like **to go** to the movies? (infinitive phrase)

**A. Identifying Infinitives**

Underline the infinitive in each sentence.

1. Kenneth’s goal is to **win** the race.
2. The committee decided to **present** a trophy to the winner.
3. Who wants to **race** on Saturday?
4. The runners wanted to **show** their appreciation.
5. To **compete**, you must be diligent in your training.
6. Ann wants to **run** all the hills.
7. After the second mile, the runners stopped to **get** water.
8. To **be** on the team, you must show up for every practice.
9. His desire to **win** is almost a sickness.
10. The team manager tried to **stay** with the runners.

**B. Identifying the Role of Infinitives**

Write how each bold-faced infinitive is used: **N** for noun, **ADJ** for adjective, or **ADV** for adverb.

1. To **play** basketball with grace is Michael’s gift.
2. The team struggled to **make** the playoffs.
3. Their desire to **win** the city championship is admirable.
4. To **achieve** their goal, they must work harder.
5. The team’s fans hope to **see** a victory.
Verbal Phrases

A verbal phrase consists of a verbal and any modifiers or complements it may have.

A gerund phrase consists of a gerund plus its modifiers and complements. Like a gerund, the entire phrase is used as a noun.

- Flying a kite can be fun. (Kite is the complement-object of flying; the gerund phrase Flying a kite is used as the subject of the sentence.)
- There are also useful reasons for flying a kite. (used as object of preposition)

A participial phrase consists of a participle plus its modifiers and complements. The entire phrase modifies a noun or pronoun.

- Flying a kite in a storm, Benjamin Franklin was almost hit by lightning. (The participial phrase Flying a kite in a storm modifies Benjamin Franklin.)

An infinitive phrase consists of an infinitive plus its modifiers and complements. The entire phrase functions as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

- Ben decided to fly a kite in a storm to test his theory about lightning. (The first infinitive phrase is used as a noun, telling what Ben decided; the second is used as an adverb, telling why.)

Identifying Verbs and Verbal Phrases

Identify each boldfaced verbal phrase by writing gerund phrase, participial phrase, or infinitive phrase on the line to the right.

1. Using the kite string as an electrical conductor, Franklin captured a bit of lightning.

2. The electricity captured during his experiment was safely stored in a Leyden jar.

3. Franklin's surviving the process was a kind of scientific miracle.

4. Knowing how dangerous it was, Franklin surely would never have attempted his kite experiment.

5. I remember how my father loved flying kites.

6. He loved to get out in the city park on a windy autumn afternoon.

7. But he always warned me never to fly a kite in a storm.

8. Using balsa sticks and tissue paper, he made me my first kite.

9. I remember thinking it was not very handsome.

10. I'd give anything to have that kite now.

11. Remembering my first kite brings back a lot of other memories.

12. Remembering my first kite, I'd like to make a kite for my son.
Verbal Phrases

A. Identifying Verbals and Verbal Phrases

Underline every verbal and verbal phrase in these sentences. If a sentence has more than one verbal or verbal phrase, use double underlining on the second one.

1. Anybody **devoted** to personal **fitness** should try to **walk** more.
2. After **running**, I only wanted to **take** a **nap**.
3. A **flying** trapeze is not the best **equipment** to **exercise** on.
4. Sailing inspired Henry to **write** poetry.
5. My least favorite exercise is **running**.
6. To build up muscles for **running**, Ari walked a mile a day.
7. Injured in the fall, Evelyn considered **dropping** out of the race.
8. Larry, **surrounded** by guards, decided to **toss** the ball at the basket.
9. Tony wanted to start a **career** in **acting**.
10. When people try to sail around the world, what do they do about receiving **mail**?

B. Identifying Verbals and Verbal Phrases

Identify each boldfaced verbal phrase in two ways. First, write **GP, PP, or IP** for gerund phrase, participial phrase, or infinitive phrase. Second, write **NS, NO, ADJ, ADV** (for Noun as Subject, Noun as Object of Verb, Adjective, Adverb)

1. To **do** your **best**, you must develop a positive **attitude**.
2. Abner wanted **to try out** for the basketball team.
3. **Watching** you **try out**, I decided I should too.
4. **To win** was not his **objective**.
5. Running **track** is what Jackie lives for.
6. Inspired by Ronald’s **attitude**, we tried harder.
7. In the sixth inning, Val scored the run **tying** the game.
8. I prefer **sailing** my **boat** to work.
9. My brother always likes a peanut butter sandwich after **swimming**.
10. Observing your **performance**, I learned a lot.