Lesson 50
Participles and Participial Phrases

A **present participle** is formed by adding *-ing* to a verb. A **past participle** is usually formed by adding *-ed* to a verb. Sometimes a participle acts as the main verb in a verb phrase. As a verb, the present participle is used with forms of the helping verb *to be*, and the past participle is used with forms of the helping verb *to have*. A participle can also act as an adjective to describe, or modify, a noun or a pronoun.

The robin was **singing** in the tree. (present participle as a main verb)
Our cat stared at the **singing** robin. (present participle as an adjective)
Tammy has **tossed** the water balloon. (past participle as a main verb)
The **tossed** water balloon hit the sidewalk. (past participle as an adjective)

**Exercise 1** Underline each participle. Write in the blank *pres.* if it is a present participle and *past* if it is a past participle.

1. The nervous bird was pecking at the girl.
2. A printout of the results has been taped to the door.
3. The freezing lady put on her sweater.
4. The spilled oil spread over the floor.
5. By evening, they will have finished their assignment.
6. Everyone has wondered what the great detective was thinking.
7. Carol has rescued the trembling cat.
8. The elected chairperson must work hard.
9. David is throwing the rings at the milk bottles.
10. They found out too late that they had entered by the wrong door.
11. I made a running leap to clear the last hurdle.
12. The engaging film star has smiled and posed for pictures.
Lesson 51
Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

In addition to being used as an adjective (as in participles and participial phrases), a verb form ending in -ing may also serve as a noun. A gerund is a verb form that ends in -ing and is used as a noun. It can be the subject of a sentence, the direct object, or the object of a preposition.

Flying is a skill birds must learn. (subject)
Young birds practice flying. (direct object)
They can escape from dangers by flying. (object of a preposition)

A gerund phrase is a group of words that includes a gerund and other words that complete its meaning.

Flying in a storm takes practice. (subject)
Birds learn flying in high winds at a young age. (direct object)
Many birds owe their survival to flying away from enemies. (object of a preposition)

Exercise 1 Circle each gerund. Underline each gerund phrase.

One way people share good times is by observing holidays together.

1. Some people keep Valentine’s Day by sending heart-shaped cards to friends.
2. Sharing valentines with others can brighten a wintry February day.
3. The custom of celebrating Valentine’s Day stretches back a long way.
4. Many historians believe the holiday sprang from an ancient Roman custom of honoring two brothers by the name of Valentine.
5. Coloring eggs is an activity that belongs to another holiday.
6. Easter is often associated with the blooming of spring flowers.
7. In Christian traditions, Easter marks the rising of Jesus from the dead.
8. At the same time as Easter, Jews observe Passover by preparing a special meal, a seder.
9. By eating the special foods at the seder, Jews remember the flight of their ancestors from slavery in Egypt.
Lesson 52
Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases

An **infinitive** is another verb form that may function as a noun. It may also function as an adjective or an adverb. An infinitive is formed from the word *to* followed by the base form of a verb. The word *to* is not a preposition when it is used immediately before a verb.

Jenny is always looking for a chance **to read**. (infinitive)
She goes **to the library** at least once a week. (not an infinitive; the word *to* is used as a preposition)

An infinitive used as a noun can be the subject of a sentence or the direct object of a verb.

**To read** is enjoyable. (subject) Jenny tries **to read** every day. (direct object)

An **infinitive phrase** is a group of words that includes an infinitive and other words that complete its meaning.

Jenny has decided **to read all of Sue Ellen Bridgers’s books this summer**.

▶ Exercise 1 Circle each infinitive. Underline each infinitive phrase.

My sister is teaching me **to play chess**.

1. Do you like to eat Chinese food?
2. It’s hard to choose a video because the selection here is so large.
3. I’m lucky to go to such a good school.
4. My little brother finds it almost impossible to wait until his birthday.
5. To ignore a sore throat is not a very good idea.
6. We have to leave immediately to go to the meeting at the recreation center.
7. To win the last three games of the season will not be easy.
8. To get a *B* on the next test is her objective.
9. To grow a moustache in time for the play became my dad’s plan.
10. Let’s get together to watch old Laurel and Hardy movies.
11. I know how to fix the glitch in your computer program.
12. To take a cruise in the Caribbean would be wonderful.
Unit 8 Review

Exercise 1 Underline each participial, gerund, or infinitive phrase. Write in the blank what kind of phrase it is: part. for participial phrase, ger. for gerund phrase, or inf. for infinitive phrase. Write none if the sentence has none of these phrases.

ger. Lila greatly enjoys planting rose bushes.

1. The news showed pictures of houses destroyed by the hurricane.
2. Would you ever want to go on a two-week trip to Colorado?
3. Taking it easy is my brother’s idea of a good vacation.
4. To eat too many desserts is not a very good idea.
5. Rod is playing the piano in the school jazz band.
6. Hearing my dad’s voice on the phone, I answered quickly.
7. She doesn’t really enjoy working after school.
8. Nicole was wondering which class would be better for her major.
9. In soccer, players use their feet to do almost everything.
10. Thomas prefers swimming in a pool rather than in the ocean.
11. We opened the door for the carolers touring the neighborhood.
12. We took the subway to Columbia Square.
13. I have talked to almost everyone about the talent show.
14. I love to watch the fireworks display on the Fourth of July.
15. Accepted by every college she applied to, my sister must make a difficult decision.
16. Deciding on one will be hard.
17. Please take the laundry basket to the bedroom.
18. Finishing all my homework by eight o’clock won’t be easy.
19. Do you want to go to the early movie or the late one?
20. The dog lapping up water so fast must have been very thirsty.