



## Verbals

Verbals are verb parts. Verbals function as nouns, adjectives or adverbs. Sometimes these verb forms can be misplaced in a sentence and distort the meaning of the entire sentence. Examples of the three verbals are listed below.

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**Participle:** A participle is a verb form that functions in a sentence as an adjective or as part of a verb phrase.

*Example:* adjective-- *the running water, the wounded deer* verb phrase--*The boy is running down the street.*

If a participial phrase begins a sentence, it is often set off by a comma. However, when beginning a sentence with a participial phrase, be sure the next word in the sentence can be modified by the phrase. When a participial phrase does not modify the next word in the sentence, it is called a "dangling participle."

*Example:* dangling participle--*Hanging in the closet, she* grabbed her coat.

*Revised Example:* She grabbed her coat, which was *hanging in the closet.*

A participial phrase must also be set off by commas when it is a parenthetical element.

*Example:* The stone steps, *shining in the sun,* were beacons for the tourists.

**Infinitive:** An infinitive is a verb's simple or base form, usually preceded by the word *to*. It functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

*Example:* **adjective**--His plan *to build the bird house* won first prize. (modifies plan, functions as an adjective)

**noun**--*To listen to the Indian story teller* is an exciting experience. (noun functions as the subject of the sentence)

**adverb**--Rachel went to school *to learn her ABCs.* (tells why she went to school, so it is an adverb)

An infinitive is "split" when a word (often an adverb) or phrase is placed between the *to* of the infinitive and the root of the verb. Split infinitives are usually considered awkward, although some adverbs do not cause a distraction. It is best to rewrite all split infinitives.

*Example:* split infinitive--*To actually run* in the park could be dangerous.

*Revised Example:* *Running* in the park could be dangerous.

**Gerund:** A gerund is a verbal that ends in -ing and acts as a noun. Other phrases, especially prepositional phrases, are sometimes included in the gerund phrase.

*Example:*                    *Studying for tests* usually makes me hungry. (gerund phrase as subject)

Rebecca enjoyed *taking the dog for a walk*. (gerund phrase as object)

Phil is not interested in *becoming a teacher after he graduates*. (gerund phrase as object of the preposition in)

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