



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.

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)