

Verbals

Participle

A **participle** is an adjective formed from a verb. It answers the questions: *Which one?* or *What kind?* about the noun or pronoun it modifies. Some endings are: *-ing, -ed, -t, -n, or -en.*

In the following examples, each of the underlined words has a **verb** root:

I studied the clown's painted face for a very long time. (*to paint*)
Mary was acting like a grown woman. (*to grow*)
The fallen branches littered the ground. (*to fall*)
We tried to straighten the bent wire. (*to bend*)
Ours was the winning team last Saturday. (*to win*)
Melissa, coughing loudly, finally got my attention. (*to cough*)

Exercise A. In the space provided, write the verb form of the underlined participle.

1. Are you coming to my swimming party? **to swim**
2. By the hurt look on his face, I knew I'd said the wrong thing. _____
3. We finally found the lost gold coins. _____
4. Proper training can develop a good speaking voice. _____
5. The poor, forgotten puppy whined anxiously. _____
6. It was a crying baby that I heard in the woods. _____
7. Nothing smells fresher than newly mown grass. _____
8. Smiling parents watched their children on the playground. _____
9. Betty, standing tall, received the citizenship award. _____
10. Sitting Bull was a famous Indian chief. _____

Exercise B. Underline each participle in the following sentences.

1. Are you part of the swimming team?
2. My pickled beets won first prize at the fair.
3. Have you ever seen Mexican jumping beans?
4. Dried fruit can be a healthy snack.
5. The shorn sheep looked so forlorn.
6. I watched the boxing match with keen interest.
7. Grandmother's hearing aid needed to be repaired.
8. The boys were always looking for buried treasure.
9. Mr. Wilson's grown children surprised him.
10. Tested theories can become facts.

Exercise C. Can you distinguish between a participle and a verb? In the space provided, write verb or participle for the underlined word in each sentence.

1. Not a word was written on his test when the bell rang. _____
The written word can be a powerful influence. _____
2. That fox poached three chickens from the hen house. _____
I love poached eggs with bacon and toast. _____
3. Do you like easy-listening music? _____
Mother said, "I'll listen to you if you listen to me." _____
4. We shredded newspapers to make our pompoms. _____
The shredded newspapers made nice pompoms. _____
5. The cat dangled from the limb helplessly. _____
This is not a dangling participle. _____
6. Is there an underlined participle in this sentence? _____
A word is underlined in this sentence, too. _____
7. Come over to the house tonight. _____
This coming Saturday, I'm going to the basketball game. _____
8. The stolen papers were in the briefcase. _____
George stole into the cloak room without being noticed. _____
9. Sports cars often have racing stripes. _____
The three girls were racing to the next corner. _____
10. I like burnt toast. _____
The house burned to the ground. _____

Exercise D. In the following sentences, identify the underlined as gerund (**Ger**), participle (**Part**), progressive verb form (**PV**), or verb in the past tense (**V**).

1. Stealing is a crime. _____
2. The kids, laughing and shrieking, loved clowns. _____
3. Rock climbing is quite strenuous. _____
4. I like eating donuts while I am drinking coffee. _____
5. This is my certificate for winning the spelling bee. _____
6. My better subjects are reading and writing. _____
7. As I was driving uphill, the car coughed and sputtered and finally died.

8. Seeing is believing. _____
9. I'm studying for the exam. _____
10. Those were the best baked beans I've ever eaten. _____
11. It made me mad to see the torn page. _____
12. Mary, feigning innocence, told a lie. _____
13. Joe had been listening intently to the speaker. _____
14. The kids laughed and shrieked at the clowns. _____
15. Waiting impatiently, a frowning passenger checked his watch.

Participles

You have already seen that one of the principal parts of the verb is the **past participle**. For most verbs, it is formed by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the present tense. The past participles of irregular verbs do not follow this rule and must be learned separately. Another kind of participle, called the **present participle**, is formed by adding *-ing* to the present tense of the verb.

The backpackers carried *dried* meat. (past participle)
 Our *howling* dog awakened our neighbors. (present tense)

Because participles are formed from verbs, they may also have objects. They may also be modified by adverbs or prepositional phrases. The participle with its objects and modifiers is called a **participial phrase**. Participial phrases act like adjectives by modifying nouns or pronouns.

Sounding its siren, the ambulance raced downtown. (*Siren* is the object of the participle *sounding*.)

The people standing in line have waited for hours. (*In line* is a phrase modifying the participle *standing*.)

Find the participles. Underline the participles and participial phrases. Draw an arrow to the word modified.

1. Standing in her room, Susan rehearsed her speech.
2. Overflowing its banks, the river flooded the valley.
3. The ball, fumbled by Martin, went out of bounds.
4. A retired army officer wrote that book.
5. Grinning, Alison told the joke.
6. The badly beaten Chargers trailed off to the locker room.
7. Walking down the runway, one model tripped.
8. David opened a letter addressed to Doug.
9. The girl holding the stopwatch is Trisha.
10. Turning, Deedee started the last lap.
11. Mark sketched the gracefully moving skaters.
12. Exhausted, Keith finished the cross-country run.
13. Tim gave the howling dog a small piece of meat.
14. Have you ever tried a frozen banana on a stick?
15. Do you like chopped nuts on top of your sundae?

