

A **verbal** is a verb form that acts as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. There are three types of verbals: participles, gerunds, and infinitives. Each of these verbals can be used to form phrases. A **verbal phrase** consists of a verbal plus its modifiers and complements.

## 1 Here's the Idea

▶ **A participle is a verb form that functions as an adjective.**

There are two kinds of participles: present participles and past participles. The present participle always ends in *-ing*. Most past participles end in *-d* or *-ed*. Others are irregularly formed.

PRESENT PARTICIPLE

The **falling** prices were good news for would-be buyers.

PAST PARTICIPLE

The **improved** designs made the automobiles cheaper and more reliable.

PAST PARTICIPLE

**Known** as “motoring,” car travel soon became a popular pastime.

Auxiliary verbs can be added to past participles, as in *having improved*, *being improved*, and *having been improved*. Even though the auxiliary verb may end in *-ing*, the participle is still past.

## Present and Past Participles as Adjectives

A participial phrase consists of a participle plus its modifiers and complements.

PARTICIPLE                      PARTICIPIAL PHRASE                      MODIFIES

**Launching the first moving assembly line,** Henry Ford revolutionized the automobile industry.

Because a participle is formed from a verb, it may have an object. If it does, the object is part of the participial phrase, as are any modifiers of the object.

PARTICIPIAL PHRASE                      OBJECT

**Driving their own automobiles,** middle-class Americans enjoyed a sense of freedom and prosperity.

Don't confuse a participle with the main verb in a verb phrase. Note the difference in these examples.

VERB: The trip to Venus was **cancelled**.

VERBAL: Another passenger filled the **cancelled** appointment.

## Absolute Phrases

▶ **An absolute phrase consists of a participle and the noun or pronoun it modifies.** An absolute phrase has no grammatical connection to the rest of the sentence. It does not function as a part of speech, and it does not belong to either the complete subject or the complete predicate. Usually, an absolute phrase relates to the rest of the sentence by providing additional details about circumstances or time.

ABSOLUTE PHRASE

**Its popularity waning,** the Model T was retired from production in 1927.

ABSOLUTE PHRASE

**Our deadline fast approaching,** we realized that we would have to test our solar-powered lawn mower or else go back to our first idea.