Participial and Infinitive Phrases

- Introduction
- Clauses vs. Phrases
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The purpose of this chapter is to—

• Introduce students to strategies for improving their writing.

• Explain how to use these strategies correctly.

• Discuss common errors to avoid when using these strategies.*
START BY COMPARING TWO SENTENCES

SENTENCE 1

Eniko sold her netsuke collection.

SENTENCE 2

After much soul searching, and after seeking the advice of her mother, her brother, and her best friend, Eniko, a person who always carefully considered important decisions, sold her netsuke collection, which was worth several thousand dollars.
Essentially, both sentences say the same thing.
After much soul searching, and after seeking the advice of her mother, her brother, and her best friend, **Eniko**, a person who always carefully considered important decisions, **sold her netsuke collection**, which was worth several thousand dollars.
THE DIFFERENCE IS THE ADDITION OF MODIFYING CLAUSES AND PHRASES

[After much soul searching], and [after seeking the advice of her mother, her brother, and her best friend], Eniko, [a person who always carefully considered important decisions], sold her netsuke collection, [which was worth several thousand dollars].
CLAUSES VS. PHRASES

CLAUSE: a word group that contains a subject and a verb.

PHRASE: a word group that does not contain a subject and a verb.
As he drove to work, Harry saw a black cat run in front of his car.
Driving to work, Harry saw a black cat run in front of him.
SIMILAR MEANINGS
DIFFERENT GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE

Subordinate Clause as Modifier

As he drove to work, Harry saw a black cat run in front of his car.

Participial Phrase as Modifier

Driving to work, Harry saw a black cat run in front of him.
VERBAL PHRASES

PRESENT PARTICIPIAL PHRASE
PAST PARTICIPIAL PHRASE
INFINITIVE PHRASE
PRESENT PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

FEATURES
Form of the verb that ends in –ing.

Without a helping verb, it cannot be the main verb of a sentence.

Can be a single word modifier.

Can be an entire phrase modifier.

EXAMPLES
Running, singing, dancing, laughing, explaining, etc.
[“singing” is not the main verb]  [main verb]
Singing in the rain is fun.

The running man stumbled.

Rounding the corner, the man fell.
PAST PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

FEATURES
Form of the verb that you use with helping verbs (have, has, had) along with the past form of a verb (–ed, -en)

Can be a single word modifier.

Can be an entire phrase modifier.

EXAMPLES
Have eaten, has defeated, had bought

The defeated army retreated.

Pursued by the enemy, the army retreated.
**INFINITIVE PHRASE**

**FEATURES**
- To + Present Tense Form of a Verb
- Can be used as a **noun**.
- Can be used as an **adjective**.
- Can be used as an **adverb**.

**EXAMPLES**

*To think, to be, to reason*

- [subject] [verb]

*To create great art is a challenge.*

- [infinite phrase modifies the noun “book”]

*I have written a book to help students.*

- [infinite phrase modifies the adjective “easy”]

*The book is easy to read.*

**Note:** this is a bit challenging!
TO SUM UP

- The **present participle** is a verbal that ends in –ing and is used as an adjective (note: this is different from –ing words that are used as nouns).
- The **past participle** is the form of the verb used with the helping verbs have, has, and had, along with the past tense form of a verb.
- An **infinitive** is formed by adding “to” to the present tense of a verb.
- The infinitive (to + verb), the present participle (verb + ing) and the past participle (have/has/had + past tense of verb) are not the main verbs in a sentence—that’s why they’re called VERBALS.
- **Correctly punctuating** these verbal phrases is important! Follow the rules and guidelines presented in this section of our text.