

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES


14a A *phrase* is a group of related words that is used as a single part of speech and does not contain both a subject and a verb.

EXAMPLES will be studying [phrase, no subject]
from that country [phrase, no subject or verb]

14b A *prepositional phrase* is a group of words consisting of a preposition, a noun or pronoun that serves as the object of the preposition, and any modifiers of that object.

EXAMPLES The boat **on the water** was swaying.
For this reason, I am trying to finish the race.
Will the wagons go **into the wilderness**?

A preposition is used to show the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in a sentence.

 **REFERENCE NOTE:** Prepositions are words like *across*, *after*, *by*, *over*, and *to*. For a list of prepositions, see page 117.

The object of a preposition may be compound.

EXAMPLES Are you going to the concert **with Atul and Mady**?
The judges divided the prize money **between them and us**.

EXERCISE 1 Identifying Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases

Underline the prepositional phrases in the following sentences. Circle the preposition in each phrase.

- EX. 1. Children often like shoes with colorful designs.
- Some people think about comfort when they buy shoes.
 - Others are more interested in a shoe's style and color.
 - Over the years, fashion has influenced shoe styles.
 - Ancient Romans wore high boots with open toes.
 - Only the emperor of Rome could wear purple boots.
 - Did you know that during the Middle Ages soft leather shoes were popular?

7. Lords and ladies walked in wide, floppy shoes.
8. Knights had long toe pieces on their armor.
9. Hip boots gave protection from rough weather.
10. In recent years, sneakers with fancy designs and bright colors have become popular.

EXERCISE 2 Identifying Prepositional Phrases and Objects of Prepositions

Underline the prepositional phrases in the sentences below. Circle the object of the preposition in each phrase.

- EX. 1. Jonas and I often go to the park.
1. No one except Rosa completed the assignment.
 2. Prizes will be awarded to them tomorrow.
 3. The first African American governor of a state was Louisiana's P.B.S. Pinchback.
 4. The largest animal in the world is the blue whale.
 5. We met many immigrants from Southeast Asia.

EXERCISE 3 Writing Sentences with Prepositional Phrases

On your own paper, write five sentences. Include one of the prepositional phrases below in each sentence. Use each prepositional phrase only once. Underline each phrase.

- EX. 1. by the wind
1. The red-and-blue fishing boat was tossed by the wind.
- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. under his hat | 4. of the city |
| 2. at that moment | 5. to the mall |
| 3. with brown eyes | |

VERB PHRASES AND VERBALS

14e A *verb phrase* combines an action verb or a linking verb with one or more auxiliary, or helping, verbs.

EXAMPLES He **has been swimming** for an hour. [The action verb is *swimming*, and the helping verbs are *has* and *been*.]
 I **will buy** a cookbook for my brother. [The action verb is *buy*, and the helping verb is *will*.]
 Bernice **should be** the team's captain. [The linking verb is *be*, and the helping verb is *should*.]



The parts of a verb phrase may be separated by other words.

EXAMPLES **Have you changed** your mind?
 He **did not know** the answer.

14f A *verbal* is a verb form used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Do not confuse verbals with verbs.

EXAMPLES **Swimming** is good exercise. [*Swimming* is a verbal used as a noun.]
 The **waxed** floors were slippery. [*Waxed* is a verbal used as an adjective to describe floors.]
To arrive at daybreak, the emergency supplies must be flown out before ten o'clock. [*To arrive* is a verbal used as an adverb to modify the verb phrase *must be flown*.]

EXERCISE 9 Identifying Verb Phrases and Verbals

Identify the italicized verb phrases and verbals in the following sentences by writing *v.* for verbal or *v. phr.* for verb phrase on the line before the sentence.

- EX. *v.* 1. a. *Eating* watermelon is fun.
 v. phr. b. The man *is eating* watermelon for breakfast.
- _____ 1. a. *Replacing* the food was expensive for the shopkeeper.
- _____ b. The shopkeepers *were replacing* the food in their stores.

- _____ 2. a. Ethan wants *to shop* at the mall on Saturday.
 _____ b. Ethan *will shop* at the mall on Saturday.
- _____ 3. a. Brook *was giving* the closing speech.
 _____ b. Brook likes *giving* the closing speech.
- _____ 4. a. She *will take* your orders.
 _____ b. By *taking* our orders, she helped the hostess.
- _____ 5. a. *Losing* the dogs' leashes caused many problems for the trainers.
 _____ b. The trainers *have lost* the dogs' leashes.

EXERCISE 10 Using Verb Phrases and Verbals

Use the verb given before each pair of sentences to create a verb phrase and a verbal that will complete the meaning of the sentences. Remember to add helping verbs to create verb phrases.

- EX. rest 1. a. The resting dog stretched its back feet.
 b. The team is resting before the last match.
- drive 1. a. Mr. Torres _____ his new car last night.
 b. The _____ rain caused floods in the valley.
- hide 2. a. The boys looked for hours for the _____ toy.
 b. For this game, Miriam _____ under the bed.
- lose 3. a. The _____ earring was found by Maria.
 b. We _____ money on this project.
- cook 4. a. Aunt Salema _____ the dinner this year.
 b. We all enjoyed the juicy, _____ meat.
- worry 5. a. _____ is simply a waste of time.
 b. The students _____ about their tests.

PARTICIPLES AND PARTICIPIAL PHRASES**THE PARTICIPLE**

14g A *participle* is a verb form that can be used as an adjective.

There are two kinds of participles: *present participles* and *past participles*.

(1) *Present participles* end in *-ing*.

EXAMPLES The detective searched for the **missing** necklace. [*Missing* is the present participle of the verb *miss*. The participle modifies the noun *necklace*.]

The **barking** dogs chased the truck. [*Barking* is the present participle of the verb *bark*.] The participle acts as an adjective modifying the noun *dogs*.]

(2) *Past participles* usually end in *-d* or *-ed*.

EXAMPLES When he saw the **broken** bat, Spiro cried. [*The irregular past participle broken* modifies the noun *bat*.]

Disliked by the public, the television show was canceled. [*The past participle Disliked* modifies the noun *show*.]



REFERENCE NOTE: Some past participles are irregularly formed. See the list of irregular verbs on pages 193–194.

EXERCISE 11 Identifying Participles and the Words They Modify

Underline the participles used as adjectives in the following sentences. Then circle the noun or pronoun each participle modifies.

EX. 1. The children didn't hear their friends calling them.

1. A fallen tree blocked our path.
2. The tourist next to us took a photograph of the setting sun.
3. The men searched the ruins for the buried treasure of the Pharaohs.
4. Deep in the jungle the explorers found a deserted village.
5. Mr. Ling held the winning ticket in his hand.

PARTICIPIAL PHRASES

14h A *participial phrase* consists of a participle together with its modifiers and complements. The entire phrase is used as an adjective.

A participial phrase should be placed close to the word it modifies. Otherwise, the phrase may appear to modify another word, and the sentence may not make sense.

EXAMPLES **Humming softly**, she swept the sidewalk. [The participle *humming* is modified by the adverb *softly*. *Humming softly* is used as an adjective to modify the subject *she*.]

The directions, **written in Spanish**, were difficult for me to read. [The participle *written* is modified by the prepositional phrase *in Spanish*. *Written in Spanish* is used as an adjective to modify the subject *directions*.]

EXERCISE 12 Identifying Participial Phrases

Underline the participial phrase in each of the sentences below. Then draw an arrow from the phrase to the word or words that each phrase modifies.

- EX. 1. Two cowboys, riding on a snowy day, discovered Mesa Verde.
- The ruins, lining the canyons, seemed to rise out of the rock.
 - Dating from the thirteenth century, they remain a wonderful sight.
 - The ruins, known as pueblos, were home to the Anasazi, ancestors of today's Pueblo Indians.
 - Developing their skills, the people became expert stoneworkers.
 - The people, working hard, built their homes in rocky terrain.
 - Chaco Canyon's Pueblo Bonita, started in A.D. 920, had several hundred rooms.
 - Pueblo Bonita was five stories high with ladders connecting each level.
 - The Anasazi, using dry-land farming, raised beans and squash.
 - A drought lasting for many years may have forced them to move.
 - Abandoning these homes, the Anasazi moved to new villages south and east of their earlier dwellings.

INFINITIVES AND INFINITIVE PHRASES**THE INFINITIVE**

14i An *infinitive* is a verb form, usually preceded by *to*, that can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

EXAMPLES I want **to try**. [*To try* is an infinitive used as a noun. It is the direct object of the verb *want*.]

Anna is the one **to ask**. [*To ask* is an infinitive used as an adjective. It modifies the pronoun *one*.]

Are you well enough **to run**? [*To run* is an infinitive used as an adverb. It modifies the adverb *enough*.]



To plus a noun or a pronoun (*to Jaime, to me*) is a prepositional phrase, not an infinitive.

EXERCISE 13 Identifying Infinitives

Underline the infinitive in the sentences below.

- EX. 1. Is this game easy to play?
1. Would you like to travel on a boat, far away across the sea?
 2. Having large brains, dolphins are quick to learn.
 3. To leave so early during the performance would be rude.
 4. Those are the poems to memorize for speech class.
 5. To prepare for the test, Hala studied for two hours.
 6. How expensive is this bicycle tire to repair?
 7. To escape the snarling lion was Nora's only thought.
 8. Wong needs to practice his part for the play.
 9. To succeed, you must study every day.
 10. It was exciting to read the novel by Margaret Craven.

INFINITIVE PHRASES

- 14j An *infinitive phrase* consists of an infinitive together with its modifiers and complements. The entire phrase may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

EXAMPLE To design a computer program takes skill. [The infinitive phrase is used as a noun. The infinitive *to design* has a complement, *a computer program*.]

Which is the best stroller to buy for a baby? [The infinitive phrase is used as an adjective to modify the noun *stroller*. The infinitive *to buy* is modified by the prepositional phrase *for a baby*.]

It was exciting to win at chess yesterday. [The infinitive phrase is used as an adverb to modify the adjective *exciting*. The infinitive *to win* is modified by the prepositional phrase *at chess* and by the adverb *yesterday*.]

EXERCISE 14 Identifying Infinitive Phrases

Underline the infinitive phrase in each of the sentences below.

EX. [1] Lizards are interesting to study in school.

[1] Lizards are able to protect themselves in many ways. [2] Some lizards seem to match their surroundings. [3] The chameleon, for instance, likes to change its color for protection. [4] Other lizards like to play tricks on their enemies. [5] For example, some lizards will break off their tails to escape their enemies. [6] To replace their old tails, these lizards grow new ones. [7] A third way lizards defend themselves is to fly short distances. [8] The so-called flying dragon seems to sail from tree limb to tree limb. [9] Several lizards will fight to defend themselves. [10] One of these fighters, the monitor, thrashes its tail to whip its enemy.

REVIEW EXERCISE 2**A. Identifying and Classifying Participles and Infinitives**

Underline the verbal in each sentence. Then label it participle or infinitive by writing *part.* or *inf.* on the line before the sentence.

- EX. inf. 1. Are you ready to go?
- _____ 1. Exhausted, the hikers walked slowly into the camp.
- _____ 2. Do you know the name of the person to interview?
- _____ 3. The relay racers need time to rest.
- _____ 4. Gloria put the frozen dinner into the oven.
- _____ 5. The laughing children enjoyed the playfulness of the harp seals.
- _____ 6. To succeed requires determination.
- _____ 7. Most of the questions were easy to answer.
- _____ 8. Broken glass was all over the cellar floor.
- _____ 9. The librarian will help you to find a book about turtles.
- _____ 10. Soccer can be a challenging sport.

B. Identifying and Classifying Participial and Infinitive Phrases

In each of the following sentences, underline the participial phrase or the infinitive phrase. On the line before the sentence, label each phrase by writing *part. phr.* for a participial phrase or *inf. phr.* for an infinitive phrase.

- EX. part. phr. 1. Singing the song, the children marched in the parade.
- _____ 1. Jupiter takes almost twelve Earth years to circle the sun once.
- _____ 2. It is hard to imagine a world like Jupiter.
- _____ 3. Covered by thick clouds, its atmosphere is almost entirely liquid hydrogen.
- _____ 4. The clouds, swirling constantly, form colorful belts or zones.

- _____ 5. The Great Red Spot, discovered three hundred years ago, lies near its equator.
- _____ 6. According to astronomers, the red spot seems to vary in color.
- _____ 7. From Earth it is impossible to photograph the surface of Jupiter.
- _____ 8. The Pioneer and Voyager series spacecrafts were launched to get a close-up view of the planet.
- _____ 9. Moving at great speeds, the spaceships traveled for more than a year.
- _____ 10. To reach the distant planet was an incredible accomplishment.

C. Writing a Paragraph Using Participial Phrases and Infinitive Phrases

As part of a social studies project, your classmates are compiling a photo album of your community. You want to include a photograph and a description of your favorite place in the community. On your own paper, make a chart such as the one that you see here. Answer the following questions about this place for prewriting. Include either infinitive phrases or participial phrases in some of your answers. Underline and label each phrase. Then use your prewriting notes to write a first draft of a paragraph describing the place.

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
Where is this place?	<i>beside the river; across the city bridge</i>
Why is it special to you?	<i>inf. It's where I used <u>to fish with my friends</u></i>
What sounds do you hear?	<i>part. part. <u>loudly chirping birds</u>; cars <u>honking at people</u></i>
What do you see?	<i>part. tall oak trees <u>bending over</u>; clear blue water</i>

CHAPTER REVIEW**A. Identifying Prepositions, Objects, and the Words Modified**

In each of the sentences below, find all of the prepositional phrases. Underline the preposition, and circle the object of the preposition. Then, on the line before each sentence, write the word or words the phrase modifies. [Note: A sentence may contain more than one phrase.]

- EX. liked 1. On the farm Mr. Orizini liked milking the cows.
 _____ 1. Pioneer women made colorful quilts from fabric scraps.
 _____ 2. A huge bowl of fruits decorated the table.
 _____ 3. We often climb the hill behind our house.
 _____ 4. During World War I, armies dug long trenches.
 _____ 5. Some cacti can live for years without any water.
 _____ 6. Early in the morning, we see Pedro jogging.
 _____ 7. The difference between a toad and a frog is obvious.
 _____ 8. A triangle is a polygon with three sides.
 _____ 9. Instead of paste, please buy paper.
 _____ 10. Holland is famous for its tulips.

B. Identifying Phrases

In the sentences below, underline all verbal phrases, and circle all prepositional phrases. [Note: A sentence may contain more than one phrase.]

- EX. 1. Tourists love to visit Switzerland in the winter.
 1. The Swiss mountains are popular spots for hot-air balloon trips.
 2. Balloonists travel together on an adventurous trip.
 3. Guided by wind currents, the balloon glides over the mountain.
 4. To float over the snow-clad Alps is a marvelous experience.
 5. Never miss the opportunity to make a hot-air balloon flight.

C. Identifying Phrases

Underline the prepositional, participial, and infinitive phrases in the paragraph below. Label these phrases *prep. phr.* for prepositional, *part. phr.* for participial, or *inf. phr.* for infinitive. [Note: In this exercise, “writing” is used as a noun, not a participle.]

EX. [1] Early civilizations used types ^{*prep. phr.*} of symbols ^{*inf. phr.*} to represent words.

[1] To record language was a major step in civilization’s development. [2] The Sumerians used the earliest system of true writing about five thousand years ago. [3] Living in Mesopotamia, the Sumerians carefully pressed tools into wet clay tablets to make impressions. [4] This type of writing, known as cuneiform, was later refined by the Babylonians. [5] Today, scholars study cuneiform to learn the history of the Sumerians.