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The Book of Grammar
Lesson Nine

Mr. McBride
AP Language and Composition

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In the last grammar lesson we learned about:

- Participles
- Gerunds
- Infinitives
- Transitive and Intransitive Verbs
- Active versus passive voice

What this lesson covers:

- The use of phrases made from :
 - participles
 - gerunds
 - Infinitives
- Use of different kinds of clauses and phrases for variety and clarity in writing

Remember...

- A phrase is a group of related words used as a single part of speech and not containing a verb and its subject.
- In the last lesson we learned that there are three kinds of verbals:
 - Participles
 - Gerunds
 - Infinitives
- In this lesson we will learn how to make phrases from the various verbals.

Participial Phrases

- A *participial phrase* contains a participle and its modifiers and completers.
 - “modifiers and completers” are most often adverbs, objects of the participle, or prepositional phrases that fill out the phrase
 - Participial phrases act like big adjectives.

Participial Phrases Continued

- Participial phrases can be formed with a present or a past participle.
- A participial phrase will be modifying a noun or pronoun in the sentence.
- Errors in participial phrase usage occur when it is unclear what is being modified.

Examples of Participial Phrases

- We saw Michael Jordan playing basketball.
 - The phrase here consists of a present participle and its object.
 - The participial phrase is modifying Michael Jordan.

Examples of Participial Phrases

- Disappointed with his first shot, Jordan rebounded the ball and scored a basket.
 - When starting a sentence with a participial phrase, always set it off with a comma.
 - The participial phrase is modifying Jordan.

Examples of Participial Phrases

- Graciously accepting the trophy, Jordan thought how preferable this was to stitching sneakers together in Indonesia.
 - The phrase here consists of an adverb, the present participle, and its object.
 - The participial phrase modifies Jordan.

Common errors with participial phrases:

- People often use participial phrases incorrectly, a fact not lost on creators of standardized tests.
- The two most common errors are *dangling participial phrases* (also known as *dangling modifiers*) and *misplaced modifiers*.
 - The next two slides illustrate these errors.

The dangling participial phrase:

- A dangling participial phrase modifies an idea that is in the writer's mind but not in the actual sentence, making it unclear what is being referred to by the phrase.
 - **Incorrect:** "Walking down the street, the sun shone brightly."
 - **Correct:** "Walking down the street, I saw the sun shining brightly."
 - **Incorrect:** "Driving down the street, the dog ran across the road."
 - **Correct:** "Driving down the street, I saw the dog run across the road."

The misplaced modifier:

- A misplaced modifier is a participial phrase that modifies the wrong noun or pronoun in the sentence.
 - **Incorrect:** “The ant found the picnickers using a special insect sense.”
 - **Correct:** “Using a special insect sense, the ant found the picnickers.”

Gerund Review

- Remember that a **gerund** is a verb form that ends in *-ing* and is used as a noun.
- If a present participle form is acting as a noun in a sentence, it is actually a gerund.
 - “I enjoy eating.”
 - “Skiing requires ability.”
 - “Paula was afraid of falling.”

Gerund Phrases

- A **gerund phrase** contains a gerund and other words that describe, or modify, the gerund. It can vary in length, depending on how the gerund is expanded. It behaves like a big noun.
 - “Making a success of your academic career requires maturity.”
 - “Success in any field depends on planning well and on taking necessary risks.”

Possessive Pronouns with Gerund Phrases

- Use the possessive form of a pronoun before a gerund phrase, just like you would if it was a noun:
 - “John’s mother doesn’t like his staying up late.” (not *him*)
 - “I hope this lesson will improve the chances of my doing well on the SAT.” (not *me*)

Review of Infinitives:

- Remember that an infinitive is a verb form, usually preceded by the word *to*, that is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.
 - **Noun:** “To sleep is relaxing.”
“Everyone needs to sleep.”
 - **Adjective:** “I had a tendency to drowse.”
 - **Adverb:** “She was eager to read.”

The Infinitive Phrase

- An infinitive phrase contains an infinitive and other words that describe, or modify, the infinitive.
 - “They wanted to eat quickly.”
 - “It was fun to tell her the news.”
 - “My baby sister loves to nap holding her teddy bear.”
 - “We decided to hurry to arrive early for the party.”

Clause and Phrase Variation

- Most of the time, a Relative Clause can be re-written as a participial phrase:
 - The book, which caught on with college-aged readers, proved influential over time.
 - Catching on with college-aged readers, the book proved influential over time.
- Realizing this can add variety to your writing if you take advantage of both constructions.

What this lesson covered:

- Do you know the various rules for phrases made from:
 - participles
 - gerunds
 - Infinitives
- Use of different kinds of clauses and phrases for variety and clarity in writing

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The end of Lesson Nine

Quiz on Grammar Lesson Nine

Wednesday, March 27