Understanding Verbs Study Sheet

Gerund, Participle, Or Infinitive?

**Definition:** A verbal is a verb form used as another part of speech.

There are 3 types of verbals: Gerunds, Participles, and Infinitives.

**Gerund**

Gerunds are verbals that function as nouns and have an –ing ending.

Thus it can be in the position of subject, direct object, object of the preposition, or predicate noun.

**Subject**

Reading is my favorite activity.  
**Direct Object**

I enjoy reading.  
**Object of the Preposition**

Rainy days are good days for reading.  
**Predicate Noun**

My favorite subject is reading.

**Remember**

A word ending in -ing can be either a verb, a participle or a gerund.  To determine which one it is, you must determine how it is used in the sentence.

**Do these steps**:

1) Find the simple subject and simple predicate.

2) If the -ing form of the verb is not part of the simple predicate (verb), then determine how it is used in the sentence.  Is it in a noun position?  Then it is a gerund.  If it is used as an adjective, then it will be a participle.

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| **Test**  To determine whether a word in a sentence is a gerund, look at the word(s) ending in –ing in the sentence. If this word can be replaced by the pronoun it, then the word is a gerund. If the word it replaces other words in addition to the gerund, then these make up the gerund phrase.  My grandfather loves getting together at Christmas.  My grandfather loves it. |

**Participles**

Participles are verbals that usually function as adjectives or adverbs. Participles generally end with an –ed or –ing ending.

When participles function as adjectives, they are usually found preceding the nouns and pronouns in a sentence. When participles function as adverbs, they are typically found following the verb in a sentence.

There are two types of participles: present participles and past participles. Present participles have an –ing ending. Past participles may have one of several past tense endings, including –ed, -en, and -d. As with gerunds, participles may occur as one word, or they may be part of a participial phrase.

**Present participles**

The running water provided a picturesque view. (adjectival)

**Past participles**

The crushed bug was an unpleasant sight. (adjectival)

He was able to repair the broken lock. (adjectival)

**Present participial phrases**

The car stopping at the light was hit by the truck. (adjectival)

The bull came running towards the rodeo clown. (adverbial)

**Past participial phrases**

Shaken from his near-death experience, John was unable to speak. (adjectival)

**Infinitives**

Infinitives are verbals made up of the word “to” + a verb. Infinitives may function as nouns, adjectives or adverbs.

When infinitives function as adjectives and adverbs, they are usually found preceding nouns and pronouns in sentences, and when they function as nouns, they are used as subjects, direct objects and objects of prepositions.

Infinitives (to + verb) should not be confused with prepositional phrases (to + noun or pronoun). Infinitives may occur as to + one verb, or they may be part of an infinitive phrase.

**Infinitives functioning as nouns**

To love is the greatest achievement.

**Infinitives functioning as adjectives**

Jason’s group was the last to arrive.

**Infinitives functioning as adverbs**

The students must pass the GRE tests to graduate.

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| This only works for infinitives and infinitive phrases that function as adverbs.  “If an infinitive or infinitive phrase can be moved to the beginning of the sentence, then that infinitive or infinitive phrase modifies the verb  You must study hard to get good grades.  To get good grades, you must study hard. |