



An expanded treatment of verbal phrases appears in *The Magic Lens, Volume II*, but let us look at a few more variations of gerund phrases. We have seen a gerund phrase used as the subject of the sentence; now let us look at one that serves as the direct object:

Euclid	liked	solving	geometrical	puzzles.
n.	v.	n.	adj.	n.
subj.	AVP	-----D.O.-----		
-----gerund phrase-----				

The entire gerund phrase is the direct object. It acts like a single noun. Note that on line one of the analysis, we identify *solving* as a noun. It is a noun because it is the direct object, and by definition a direct object is a noun or a pronoun. We identify it based on what it is doing here—its function—not based on where it came from.



In this sentence the gerund phrase is the direct object. The verb *liked* is a regular past tense active voice transitive action verb. Not understanding gerund phrases means not understanding direct objects because many direct objects are gerund phrases. This is an everyday structure: *She enjoyed painting with watercolors.*





A participle is any verb form used as an adjective.

Participial phrase: A **participle** is an adjective made out of any verb form. Note that gerunds always end in *-ing*, but participles can end in *-ing*, *-ed*, *-en*, or any verb form. Participles always act as adjectives to modify nouns or pronouns. A participle might be by itself, or it might join with other words to make a **participial phrase**:

- a participle: **The leaning fence needed to be reinforced.**
- a participle: **Cleopatra eyed the broken dish.**
- a participle: **The cracked window let in a draft.**

A **participial phrase** is a participle that has its own modifiers or its own object:

- a participial phrase: **Hunting the whale, Ahab was obsessed.**
- a participial phrase: **Queequeg watched his captain plotting daily.**
- a participial phrase: **The *Pequod*, descending rapidly, sank.**

The introductory participial phrase: There is a special type of participial phrase that we must master because when used correctly, it is one of the most powerful elements that we can bring into our writing, and when used incorrectly, it makes us sound foolish. The **introductory participial phrase** is a participial phrase that comes at the beginning of the sentence, that modifies the subject, and that is set off by a comma:

- Watching from a distance, the monster studied Dr. Frankenstein.**
- Crying in terror, the villagers fled from the monster.**

The introductory participial phrase lets us inject energy and power into the sentence, but if we break the rules, we get disaster—a **misplaced modifier**:

- Chewing his gum, a fly flew past Dillon's ear.**
- Covered in new leaves, Maya planted the tree.**