

Participial Phrases

I. Identifying a Participle and a Participial Phrase

A. When an *-ing* or *-ed* verb is used as an adjective, it is called a participle.

Examples of participles:

The singing chef entertained us while he cooked.
adjective/participle

The abandoned house needs a thorough cleaning.
adjective/participle



B. The combination of the participle and all the words that related to it is called a participial phrase.

Example: The monster shrieks, causing everyone to howl.
participial phrase



II. Where to Place the Participial Phrase

The participial phrase must be close to the noun or pronoun it describes.

A. Example:

Incorrectly written: The gnarled trees dance to the wind's ghostly song, swaying back and forth.
(Here it seems as if the song is swaying.)

Correct: Swaying back and forth, the gnarled trees dance to the wind's ghostly song.
(Here the trees are swaying back and forth.)

B. Example:

Incorrectly written: Sitting in the middle of her plate, she saw a fly.
(Here it seems as if she is sitting on her plate.)

Correct: She saw a fly sitting in the middle of her plate.
(Here the fly is sitting in the middle of her plate.)



C. Example:

Incorrect: Engaging in a fun activity, my wallet is emptied.
(Here the wallet is engaging in a fun activity.)

Correct: Engaging in a fun activity, I spend so much money that I empty my wallet.
(Here the person is engaging in a fun activity.)