

**PARTICIPLES,  
PARTICIPIAL PHRASES,  
AND PREPOSITIONAL  
PHRASES**

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GUM Unit 4

# WHAT IS A PARTICIPLE?

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- A **participle** is a verb form that can be used as an adjective.
- It ends in **-ing** or **-ed**.

# WHERE DOES THE WORD *PARTICIPLE* COME FROM?

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- The word **participle** comes from Old French (*participe*) through Latin (*participium*). It means “a sharing or partaking.”
- So basically, it means that it “partakes” of both **verb** and **adjective** characteristics.

# HMM...STILL CONFUSED?

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*Running* as a VERB:

**Mousie** was running from the cat.

And now...

Running as an ADJECTIVE:

Running, **Mousie** escaped the cat.

# EXAMPLES OF PARTICIPLES:

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**Rushing**, **Steph** hurried to class.

**Confused**, **Sara** looked at the map.

**Broken**, the **vase** lay on the hallway floor.

See how the **participles** describe the **subjects**?

# PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

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- The **participle** and all of its modifiers (the modifiers are all of the words related to the participle—such as prepositional phrases)
- The **participial phrase** functions as an **adjective** in the sentence.

# EXAMPLES:

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Rushing through the halls at breakneck speed, **Steph** ran to class.

Confused by the strange directions in the letter, **Sara** looked at the map.

Broken into a thousand pieces, the **vase** lay on the hallway floor.

Looking at the cats competing for the title, **Sue** chose the lovely Siamese.

Enchanted by its adorable personality, **Deb** played with the little Persian kitten.

*Again, do you see how the phrases describe (modify) the subject?*

# INTRODUCTORY PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

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- Always put a **comma** after an introductory participial phrase.
- When you write a sentence with an introductory participial phrase, make sure that you put a **noun** or **pronoun** immediately after the phrase so that it will have something to modify.



# EXAMPLE:

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Lying in front of the fireplace, the kittens dreamed of warm summer days. 😊

Comforted by the mother cat, it made a beautiful picture. 😞

Comforted by the mother cat, the kittens portrayed beauty and happiness.

Described as  
friendly, Siamese  
cats love people.

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Compared to silk, the Siamese  
cat's fur is soft and shiny.

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Blinking their almond-shaped eyes, it's easy to see why humans can't help but love them.

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Differing greatly from the Siamese, the Persian cat has a long coat.

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Known by its wide head and flat face, the Persian has large eyes.

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Requiring daily grooming, the owner must never forget that brushing daily is necessary.

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# PRACTICE

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1. Growing up in an active family, Carla had acquired many athletic skills.
2. Knowing her school was starting a football team, Carla decided to practice kicking.
3. Startled by the number of kickers warming up, Carla grew nervous.
4. Glancing at her competitors, she discovered that three of them were female.
5. Carla, worried about the tryouts, gave each student a ball.
6. Breathing deeply, Carla began to calm down.
7. The coaches holding the tryouts gave each student a ball.
8. Smiling at Molly, Carla suggested they help each other practice.
9. Running after the football, both girls forgot to be nervous.
10. Inspired by world cup competition, her oral report was about a famous soccer player.



# *Your Turn To Identify Participles-*

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- A peeled and sliced cucumber needs to be added to the salad.
  
- 1. Look for –ing and –ed words
- 2. Decide if the words act as adjectives or verbs
- 3. Those acting as adjectives are participles

# *Your Turn To Identify Participles-*

---

- A **peeled** and **sliced** cucumber needs to be added to the salad.
- **Peeled** describes cucumber...adjective, thus a participle
- **Sliced** describes cucumber...adjective, thus a participle
- **Needs** is the action of the sentence...verb

# *Your Turn To Identify Participial Phrases–*

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- **Tackled on the one-yard line, Sam fumbled the ball.**
  
- 1. Look for –ing and –ed words**
- 2. Decide if the words act as adjectives or verbs**
- 3. Those acting as adjectives are participles and begin the participial phrase**
- 4. Identify the related words which make up the phrase**

## *Your Turn To Identify Participial Phrases—*

---

- **Tackled on the one-yard line, Sam fumbled the ball.**
- **Tackled describes what happened to Sam...adjective, thus participle**
- **On the one-yard line is related to tackled... tells where Sam was tackled**
- **Fumbled tells what Sam did...verb**



# Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

8<sup>th</sup> Grade English  
GUM Unit 4



## VII. Gerunds

A. A participial form of the verb used as a noun.

B. A gerund phrase includes the gerund and other words that complete its meaning.

- We learned about participles and participial phrases.
- What can a participle be used as?
- How can you identify a:
  - Present Participle?
  - Past Participle?



# Good...

- Today we are going to learn about the next verbal...a verb with an identity crisis...
- We are going to learn about Gerunds!





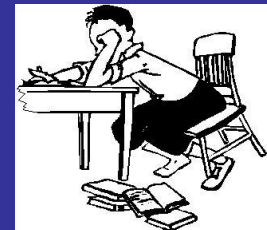
# Who has my subject?

- What is the subject of these sentences?
- Dancing is the love of Tiffany's life?
- Playing chess is Steve's secret passion!



# Gerunds

- In the previous lesson, you learned that a present or past participle may be used as an adjective.
- Well, a present participle is really, really confused...it can also be used as a noun!
- In this case, it is called a gerund!



# Gerunds



- A gerund is a verb form that ends in –ing and is used as a noun.
- The **playing** field is one hundred yards long. (participle/adjective)
- **Playing** is our favorite activity (gerund)



# Gerunds

- A gerund is a verb form that ends in –ing and is used as a noun.
- Like other nouns, a gerund can serve as the simple subject of a sentence. It can also be a direct object or the object of a preposition.
- It can be used, albeit infrequently, as a predicate noun.

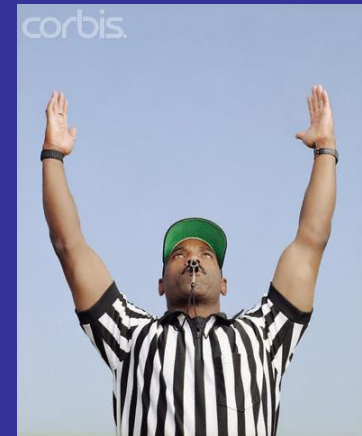
# Examples:

- **Blocking** requires strength. (Subject)
- The athletes enjoy **exercising** (Direct Object)
- They maintain endurance by **running** (Object of a Preposition)



# Gerund Phrases

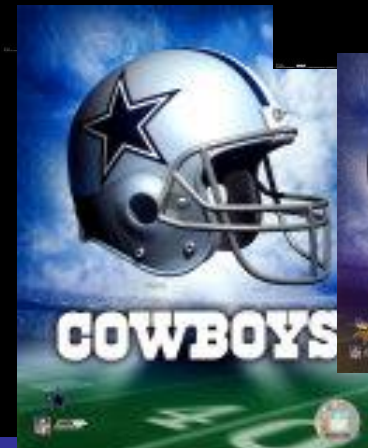
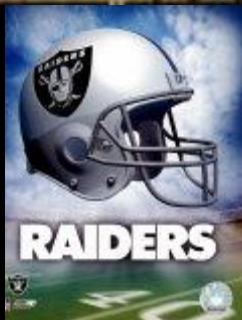
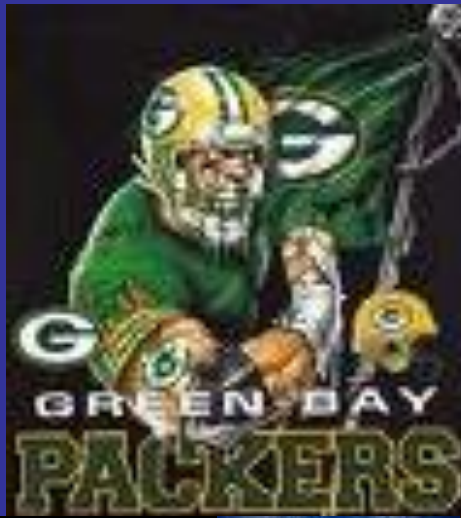
- A gerund phrase is a group of words that includes a gerund and other words that complete its meaning.
- Ex. Kicking the ball takes skill.
- Ex. A team tries **scoring a touchdown**.
- A touchdown results from **moving the ball across the goal**.





# Exercise A.

- Identify the gerund or gerund phrase.





## Exercise A.

1. A win requires earning more points than the opponent.
2. Kicking earns points in two different ways in this sport.
3. A team earns three points by kicking a field goal.
4. Teams also try converting for one point after a touchdown.
5. Defending the team's own goal is crucial.





## Exercise A.



6. A team's defense features tackling.
7. Blocking is another important element of a good defense.
8. Passing makes football exciting.
9. Testing your skills is an important part of football.
10. Skilled players increase spectators' enjoyment by adding dramatic action to the game.

# Gerunds and It

- Gerunds, like noun clauses, can always be replaced by the word it.
- Participles and Participial phrases NEVER can.
- Gerunds are ALWAYS singular so IT will always work!
  
- Ex. Rob enjoys **swimming**. Rob enjoys **it**.
- Ex. Rob is swimming in a meet today (doesn't work)



# But how do we know which is which?

- You can identify the three functions of –ing verb forms if you remember that a present participle can serve as a verb, an adjective, or as a noun (which is called a gerund)!
- *Ask yourself...what is the participle doing?*



# Examples



- The Bears are **winning** the game (main verb)
- The **winning** team scores the most points (adjective)
- **Winning** is everything! (Gerund)

# Exercise B.

- Find the verbal. Tell me if it is acting as a main verb, an adjective, or a gerund.





## Exercise B.



1. The coach or the captain chooses playing strategies.
2. The quarterback does not like guessing the next play.
3. The team members are hoping for a victory.
4. Scoring in football can occur in four different ways.
5. A team earns six points for crossing the opponent's goal line.



# TOUCHDOWN!!!





# Remember...

- A gerund is a verb form that ends in –ing and is used as a noun.
- A gerund phrase is a group of words that includes a gerund and other words that complete its meaning.
- You can replace a gerund with the word it and the sentence would still make sense.



# OWWWW...I AM BLIND!

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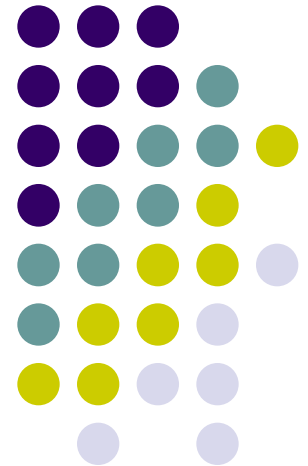
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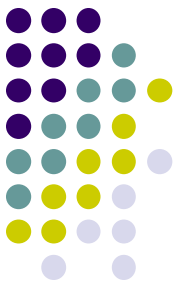
"It's a simple procedure. I'm blindfolded, spun around and then I attempt to reattach your tail."

[Speaking of football...](#)

# The Infinitive and the Infinitive Phrase

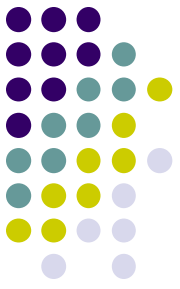
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# What is an Infinitive?

- An infinitive looks like a verb, but it begins with “**TO**”, and it functions as a noun (subject, direct object, predicate nominative), adjective, or adverb.



# Wait just a minute ...

- An infinitive phrase = to + verb
- BUT IT NEVER FUNCTIONS AS THE VERB IN A SENTENCE!!!!

NEVER, EVER, EVER ...

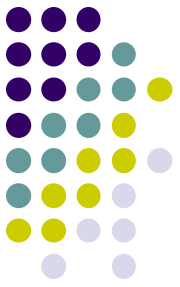
**EVER**

# Role #1

## Infinitive = Noun

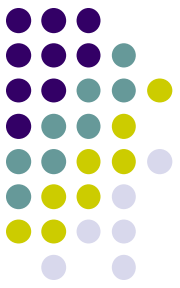
\*\*\*3 different types\*\*\*

- To leave the party would be rude.
- **To leave** ...infinitive as the subject
  
- No one wants to stay.
- **To stay** ...infinitive as the Direct Object
  
- Her goal is to win.
- **To win** ...infinitive as the Predicate Nominative or Predicate Noun



# Role #2

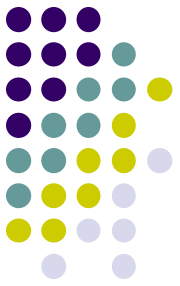
## Infinitive = Adjective



- Samuel White is the candidate to watch this election.
- **To watch** ...infinitive as an adjective  
Which candidate is Samuel...the one **to watch**.
- **To watch** gives more info. about candidate – a big hint is the adj. comes just after the noun it modifies.

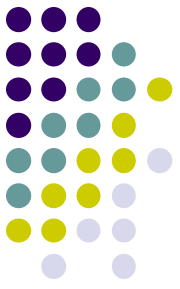
# Role #3

## Infinitive = Adverb



- We came to cheer.
- **To cheer** ...infinitive as an adverb  
Why did they come... **to cheer**
- **To cheer** gives more information about the verb.

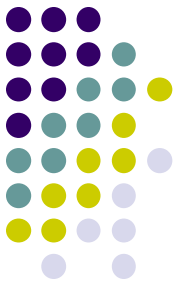
# WHAT IS AN INFINITIVE PHRASE?



- An infinitive phrase begins with the infinitive (starts with “to + verb”) and includes all of its modifiers.

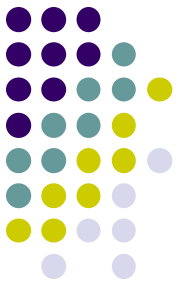


# The Infinitive Phrase



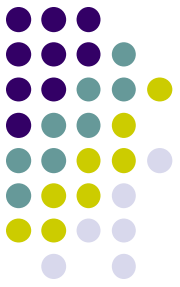
- To get a medical degree is her goal.
- To get a medical degree is her goal.
- We have time to walk to the game.
- We have time to walk to the game.
- He is eager to give Cory the award.
- He is eager to give Cory the award.

# INFINITIVE PHRASE OR PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE?

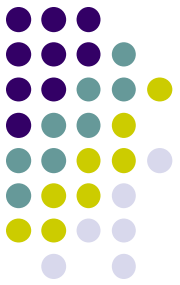


- Both phrases begin with “to”.
- Infinitive phrase is “to + verb”
- Prepositional phrase is “to + noun/pronoun”
  
- I wanted to walk to the beach.
- I wanted to walk (infinitive) to the beach (preposition).

# *What Are You Expected To Do With Infinitive Phrases?*

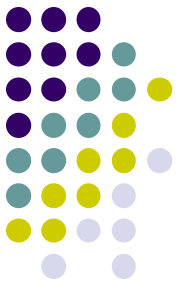


- Be able to locate, identify, and determine the function of infinitive phrases in sentences
- Be able to use infinitive phrases in your own writing to modify and enhance your thoughts, along with adding variety to your sentence beginnings



# Infinitive Order...

- S (is the subject of the sentence)
- PN (follows a linking verb)
- DO (follows an action verb; answers “what”)
- ADJ (follows and describes a noun or pronoun...answers “what or which”)
- ADV (follows and describes a verb, adjective, or adverb...answers “why”)



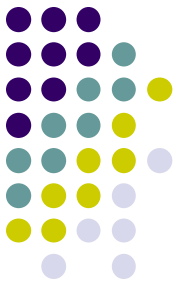
# Infinitive Order...Subject

1. Put prepositional phrases in parenthesis.
2. Find the verb.
3. Check and determine if the infinitive phrase is the subject...

To open the box required (verb) a hammer and crowbar.

# Infinitive Order...

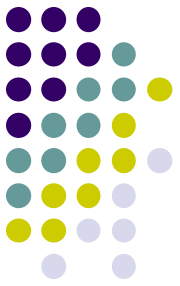
## Predicate Nominative



1. Put prepositional phrases in parenthesis.
2. Find the verb.
3. If the verb is a linking verb (am, is, are, was, were, etc.), the infinitive phrase is the PN.

Alex's hobby **is (verb)** to spend hours each day developing new computer programs.

# Common linking & helping verbs (used with PN)



Am	Be	Can	May	Have	Do
Are	Been	Could	Must	Has	Does
Is	Being	Shall	Might	Had	Did
Was	Became	Should			Done
Were	Become	Will			
		Would			

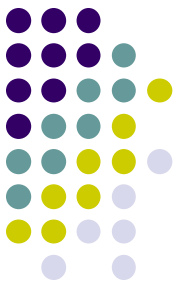
# Infinitive Order...Direct Object



1. Put prepositional phrases in parenthesis.
2. Find the verb.
3. If the verb is an action verb (it can be done – it's a DO), ask “WHAT” after the verb.
4. If the infinitive phrase makes sense, you have a DO.

The band and choir **try** (verb) to work together during the musical. (try what? To work together during the musical)

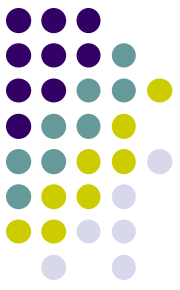




# Infinitive Order...Adjective

1. Cross out all prepositional phrases.
2. Find the verb.
3. Look at the last word directly before the infinitive phrase.
4. If the word is a noun or pronoun, the infinitive phrase is an adjective.

The **ability (noun)** for toddlers (prep...ignore) **to speak clearly** happens after four years of age. (answers “what/which ability”)



# Infinitive Order...Adverb

1. Put prepositional phrases in parenthesis.
2. Find the verb.
3. Look at the last word directly before the infinitive phrase.
4. If the word is a verb, adjective, or adverb, the infinitive phrase is an adverb.

We **went** (verb) to Italy (prep...ignore) to see our grandparents. (answers “why we went”)

# Do not “split” infinitives!! – It’s a pet peeve of mine.

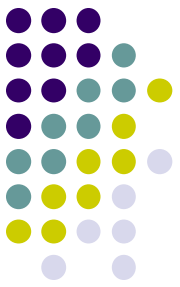


Split infinitives occur when additional words are included between *to* and the verb in an infinitive. Many readers find a single adverb splitting the infinitive to be acceptable, but this practice should be avoided in formal writing.

## ● **Examples:**

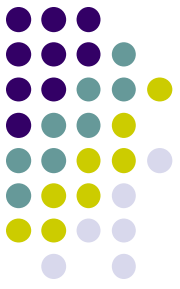
- I like to on a nice day walk in the woods. \* (unacceptable- NO-NO)  
On a nice day, I like to walk in the woods. (revised - YES)
- I needed to quickly gather my personal possessions. (unacceptable)  
I needed to gather my personal possessions quickly. (revised)

# How does the infinitive phrase function?



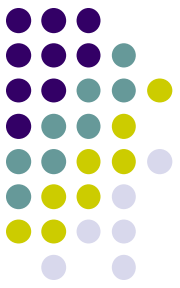
- Her plan to subsidize child care won wide acceptance among urban politicians.  
[modifies \_\_\_\_\_, functions as an \_\_\_\_\_]
- She wanted to raise taxes. [wanted *what?*  
Functions as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the sentence]

# How does the infinitive phrase function?



- To watch Uncle Billy at family reunions is an eye-opening experience. [functions as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the sentence]
- To know her in life is to love her. [functions as the \_\_\_\_\_, since the sent. has a \_\_\_\_\_]
- Juan went to college to study veterinary medicine. [tells us *why* he went, so it functions as an \_\_\_\_\_]

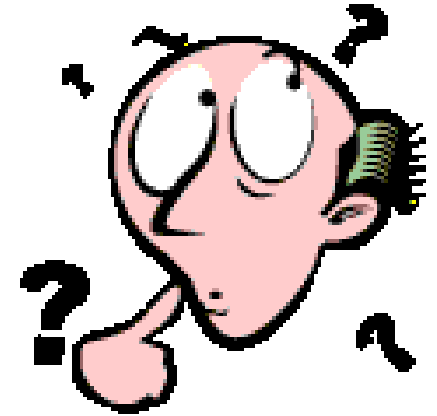
**In the following paragraph, underline the inf. phrases and place the prep. phrases in parenthesis.**



To be a great football player is more than just the ability to play well. The character of the team comes in to play because if the players acts without integrity, then the team tends to be divided. Now, I'm not talking about players and sissy stuff, rather I'm talking about respect and honor on the field. To be able to hold your head high is a key to success on the field and off the field.

# Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers: A Review

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# What Is A Misplaced Modifier?

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- ❑ A **modifier** is a word, phrase, or clause that describes or changes the meaning of another word, phrase or clause in some way.
- ❑ A **misplaced modifier** means that there is a separation of space between the word, phrase, or clause and the modifier.
- ❑ When a modifier is misplaced, your meaning gets really fuzzy.



# Let's Look At These for the Real Meaning....

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- On her way to work, Elaine saw the *silver woman's earring* laying on the park bench.
  - This sentence implies that there is a *silver woman* who left her earring on the park bench, not that the earring itself is silver.
- On her way to work, Elaine saw the *woman's silver earring* laying on the park bench.
  - Now the earring is silver instead of the woman.

# Watch Those Adverbs!

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- Placement of adverbs (many words that end in –ly are adverbs) can change meanings to funny things.
- We drove off in the car we had just bought quickly.
  - Did we *buy* the car quickly, or did we *drive* the car quickly?
- We quickly drove off in the car we had just bought.
  - Okay! We must have made a great deal and were afraid the dealership would change its mind!
- Other adverbs that don't end in –ly to watch:
  - Only, just, almost.

# What Was Stolen?

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- The *stolen man's wallet* was placed on the police department's counter.
  - Was the man stolen, or was the wallet stolen?
- The *man's stolen wallet* was placed on the police department's counter.
  - Oh.... So the *wallet* was stolen and not the *man*!



# Troublesome Words That Indicate Number....

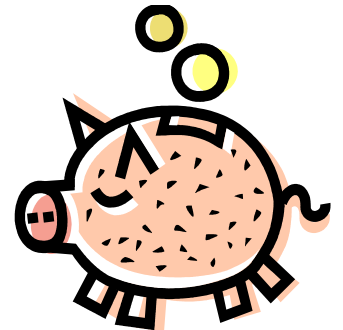
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- ❑ Almost and nearly mean *close to* – nouns can be counted; verbs cannot be counted, so these words should be next to the **noun**.
- ❑ He *nearly swam* for an hour.
  - How can somebody *nearly swim*? Is he in the water, or is he on dry land?
- ❑ He *swam for nearly* an hour.
- ❑ It *almost cost* me \$800 for my car insurance.
  - Do you have any car insurance? If it *almost cost* you, did you actually get the policy, or did you find a cheaper one someplace else?
- ❑ It *cost me almost* \$800 for my car insurance.

# Don't Forget *Merely* and *Only*!

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- Joey *only* gave his mother \$50.00 towards the rent.
  - Joey was the only one who gave anything.
- Joey gave his mother *only* \$50.00 toward the rent.
  - Shouldn't Joey be helping out more?
    - The same thing happens to these sentences if we replace the word *only* with *merely*.



# “Just” is Just a Pain In the Neck!

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- Placing the word *just* in different places can change your meaning completely:
  - *Just Evan* was rushed to the hospital from the accident scene to treat his wounds on his neck.
    - Evan was the only one injured in the accident.
  - Evan was *just rushed* to the hospital from the accident scene to treat his wounds on his neck.
    - Evan’s ambulance *just* got there!
  - Evan was rushed to the hospital from the accident scene to treat *just his wounds* on his neck.
    - Evan has wounds and contusions all over, but only the ones on his neck are really serious.

# Let's Try It... Fix These!

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1. I nearly made \$100.00 today.
2. When we opened the leather woman's purse, we found the missing keys.
3. The job scarcely took an hour to complete.
4. I only have five minutes to talk with you.
5. The striking Honda's paint job made everyone gasp.

Source: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDanglingEx1.htm>



## And the Correct Answers Are....

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1. I *made nearly* \$100.00 today.
2. When we opened the *woman's leather* purse, we found the missing keys.
3. The job *took scarcely* an hour to complete.
4. I *have only* five minutes to talk with you.
5. The *Honda's striking* paint job made everyone gasp.



# Misplaced Prepositional Phrases

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- When you place a prepositional phrase in the wrong place, all sorts of funny things can happen. Be careful!
- Christine made the brownies for her aunt *with chocolate icing*.
  - What is a woman doing running around covered in chocolate icing?
- Christine made brownies *with chocolate icing* for her aunt.

# Watch Out For Verbals!

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Verbals are verbs that end in –ing or that have the word “to” before them.

- Laila and Rachel talked about dancing in the kitchen *making grilled tuna*.
  - I wish **my** kitchen could make grilled tuna!
- Laila and Rachel, making grilled tuna, talked about dancing in the kitchen.
  - I guess Rachel Ray had Laila Ali as a guest.
- Drew and Alex drew pictures for Mom to show.
  - Is Mom showing the pictures, or are they showing the pictures to Mom?
- Drew and Alex drew pictures to show to Mom.
  - That makes more sense, doesn't it? Or is Mom a braggart?

# And Don't Forget Those Clumsy Clauses!

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- Make sure that clauses modify (describe) the noun you want them to modify.
- The mechanic drove out the car to Joe *that was lubricated*.
  - Was Joe just at the bar?
- The mechanic drove out the car *that was lubricated to Joe*.

# Another Example:

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- Next to the lamp, Dawn piled the books *that she turned on*.
  - Are these audio books? How did Dawn turn on a book?
- Dawn piled the books next to the lamp *that she had turned on*.



# Don't Play "Monkey in the Middle!"

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- When you move the phrase or clause that was a problem, don't plop it in between two nouns!
- The teacher said *on Monday* she would return our essays.
  - Did the teacher tell the class on Monday, or did she promise them for Monday?
- The teacher said she would return our essays *on Monday*.
- Or – *On Monday*, the teacher said she would return our essays.



# Let's Practice Again!

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1. The fans stood in line to buy tickets for the show for twenty minutes.
2. Marian read a chilling article in *The New York Times* about the effects of mercury poisoning.
3. The salesman sold the picture to that woman in the silver frame.
4. We gave the old clothes to a local charity that had been piled up in the basement.
5. The grass that was covered by the snow was creating a lush carpet of green.
6. The terrified patient spoke to the doctor with a terminal disease.
7. The student pleaded with the instructor who cheated on the test.

Source: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDanglingEx3.htm>

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDanglingEx2.htm>

# And The Answers Are...

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1. The fans stood in line *for twenty minutes* to buy tickets for the show.
2. ***In The New York Times***, Marian read a chilling article about the effects of mercury poisoning.
3. The salesman sold the picture *in the silver frame* to that woman.
4. We gave the old clothes *that had been piled up in the basement* to a local charity.
5. The grass that was *creating a lush carpet of green* was covered by the snow.
6. The terrified patient *with a terminal disease* spoke to the doctor.
7. The student *who cheated on the test* pleaded with the instructor.



# Dangling Modifiers

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- Live things and machines do actions – if there is an action verb in your sentence, there must also be a living thing or a machine that does the action.
- Whenever you have dangling modifier, you must add words to the sentence. Simply rearranging the sentence will **not** fix the problem.



# Examples of Dangling Modifiers

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- Staring out over the ocean, the hurricane force winds were daunting.
  - The hurricane is not alive, and it is not a machine. It cannot stare anywhere. Add a person.
- Staring out over the ocean, *Matt saw* the daunting hurricane force winds.
- When in third grade, my mother went back to college.
  - This is a matter of logic – my mother could not have gone back to college in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- When *I was* in third grade, my mother went back to college.

# Fixing Dangling Modifiers

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- Change the main part of the sentence so it **begins** with the term **actually modified**.
  - This change will put the modifier **next to** the term it modifies.
- **Looking toward the west**, a funnel shaped cloud stirred up dust. (Incorrect)
- **Looking toward the west**, *I saw* a funnel shaped cloud stir up dust. (Correct)
- **Walking to the movies**, the cloudburst drenched Jim. (Incorrect)
- **Walking to the movies**, *Jim was drenched* by the cloudburst. (Correct).

# Another Way to Fix Dangling Modifiers

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- Change the dangling modifier phrase to a subordinate clause, creating a subject and verb.
  - Leave the rest of the sentence as it is.
- **When nine years old**, my father enrolled in medical school. (Incorrect)
- **When *I was* nine years old**, my father enrolled in medical school. (Correct)
- **Having been fixed the night before**, Priscilla could use the car. (Incorrect)
- **Since *the car had been* fixed the night before**, Priscilla could use it. (Correct)

Source: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDangling.htm>

# Let's Fix Dangling Modifiers

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1. Leaving quickly, my car lights were left on.
2. After explaining that I had lost my wallet, the waiter allowed me to pay by check.
3. To complete a degree in anthropology, at least two history courses must be taken.
4. Once filled with ink, Gina can write for hours before the pen runs dry.
5. In selecting her next car, cost was determined by Linda's paycheck.

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDanglingEx4.htm>

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDanglingEx5.htm>

# And The Answers Are...

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1. Leaving quickly, *I left* my car lights on.
2. After *I explained* that I had lost my wallet, the waiter allowed me to pay by check.
3. To complete a degree in anthropology, *a student must take* at least two history courses.
4. Once *the pen is* filled with ink, Gina can write for hours before the pen runs dry.
5. In selecting her next car, *Linda determined the cost by her paycheck*.

# Main Source:

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- <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDangling.htm#%20Misplaced%20phrases>
- This website has lots of great self-teaching units for different grammar issues, including:
  - Verbs
  - Conjunctions
  - Pronoun Case
  - Commas
  - Commonly Confused Words