

The students *walked* into the classroom. (simple past or preterit)

The students *have walked* into the classroom. (past participle)

The phone *rang* frequently. (simple past or preterit)

The phone *has rung* frequently. (past participle)

(2) Participle = verb form functioning as an adjective

We use single-word participles before a noun so commonly that we don't think about them as verbals:

the *ringing* phone

the *bouncing* ball

my *tired* feet

Participles that require more attention are those that occur in participial phrases. The participial phrases below modify the subject, "students." Notice the versatility of participles; while acting as adjectives, they retain the force of action associated with verbs. Notice also that the participle can occur in present tense ("taking") or past tense ("taken") and can also be joined to a helping verb ("having taken").

Taking the test, the students looked anxious.

Taken by surprise, the students were anxious about the test.

Having taken the test, the students looked relieved.

EXERCISE 9.1 *

In the sentences below, indicate whether the italicized word is used as a verb (V) or as a participle (P) functioning as an adjective.

1. ✓ The new machine was *printing* at top speed.

2. P She handed me a resume *printed* on yellow paper.

P ~~X~~ ✓ *Screaming* frantically, the fans cheered the team to victory.

4. ✓ The crowd was *listening* carefully to the speaker.

5. P No one heard the alarm *sounding* in the background.

see answer key, p. 463

EXERCISE 9.2 ✕

In each sentence below, underline the participial phrase, and then indicate whether it is correctly used (C) or is dangling (D). Correct each sentence that contains a dangling participle.

1. D Left on the table, the executive forgot her briefcase.
2. D C Flying to the highest branch of the tree, we spotted the red hawk.
3. C Hopping through the yard, the rabbit evaded the dog.
4. C Having been baked too quickly, the pie crust was black.
5. D Crying hysterically, her favorite doll finally calmed down the toddler.

see answer key, p. 463

Punctuating Participles

Now let's compare two versions of our original sentence, using two different subjects. Note that a **comma always follows an introductory participial phrase**:

Taking the test, the students looked anxious.

Taking the test, Marcus looked anxious.

Because the participial phrase modifies the subject, we can move it to a position following the subject. Notice the difference in punctuation, though, once the subject changes from "the students" to a specific student, "Marcus."

The students *taking the test* looked anxious.

Marcus, *taking the test*, looked anxious.

Why does the second sentence require commas while the first does not? **Participial phrases that occur within a sentence follow the punctuation rules for relative clauses.** Let's review those rules:

The students *who were taking the test* looked anxious. (restrictive relative clause since "who were taking the test" is necessary information to determine which students looked anxious; necessary information = no commas.)

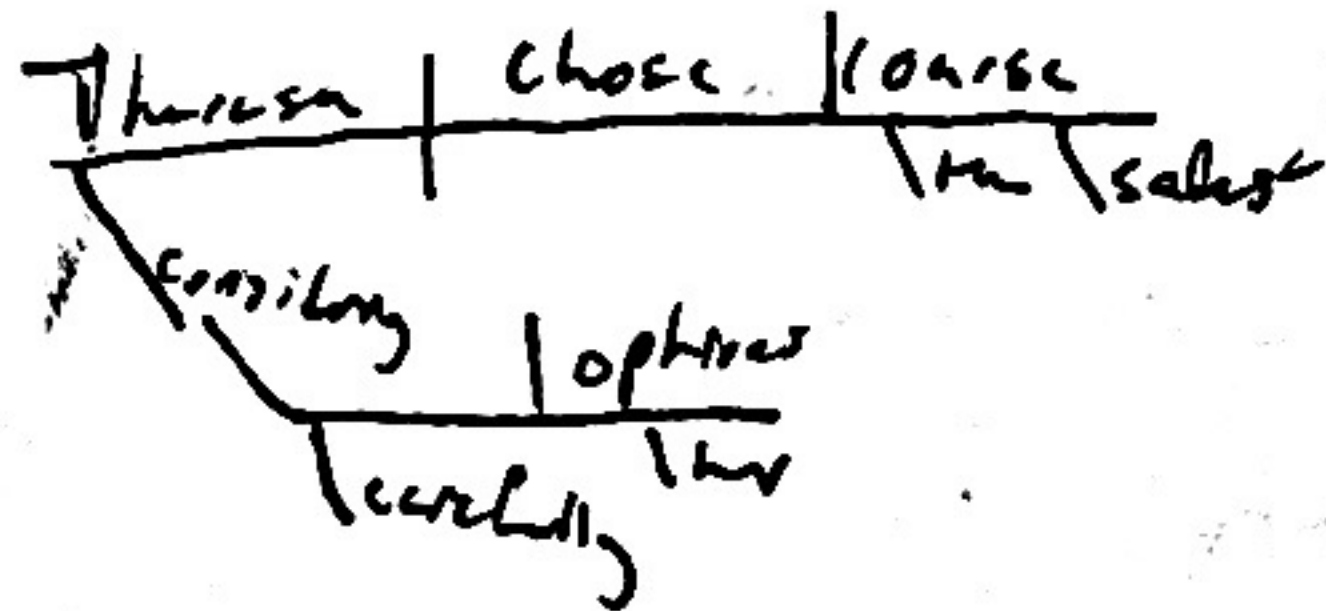
Marcus, *who was taking the test*, looked anxious. (nonrestrictive relative clause since "who was taking the test" is extra information following the name of a specific individual who looked anxious; extra information = extra commas.)

The same rules apply when a participial phrase ends a sentence but modifies the subject:

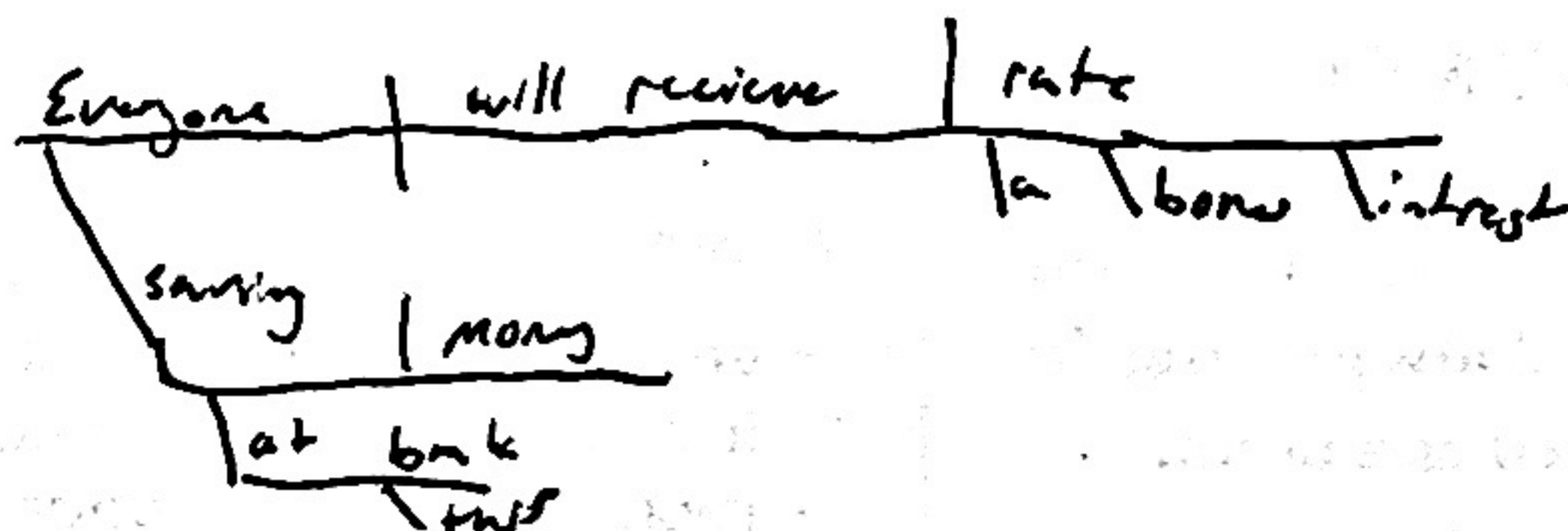
EXERCISE 9.3 *

In the following sentences, underline the participles and participial phrases and then diagram the sentences.

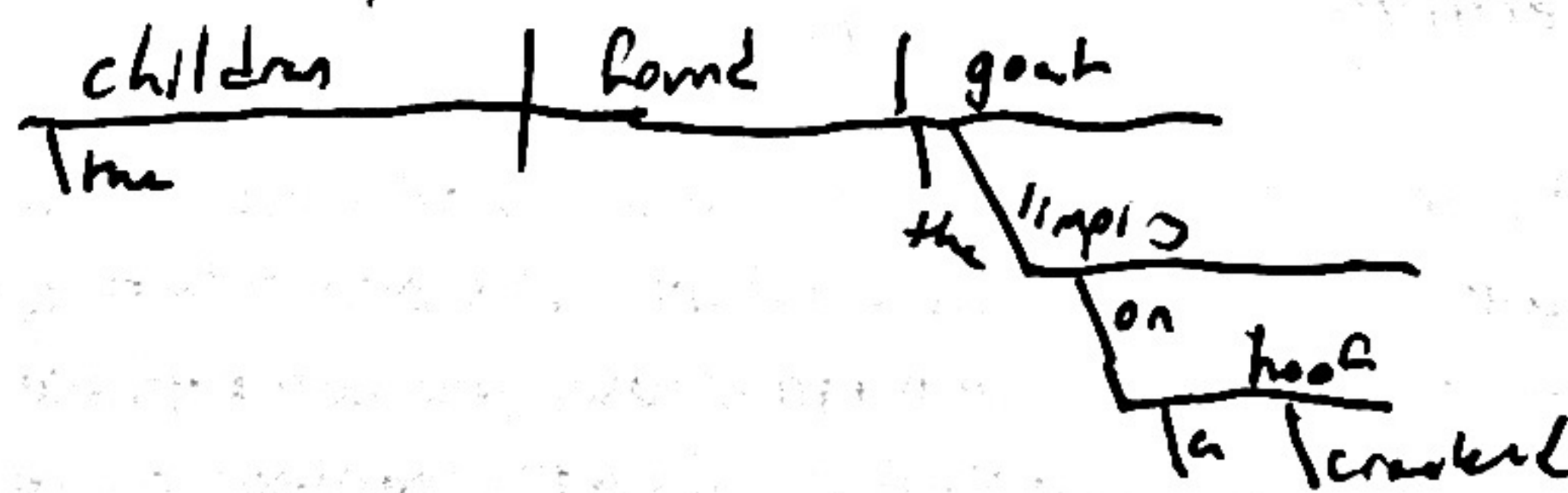
1. Considering her options carefully, Theresa chose the safest course.



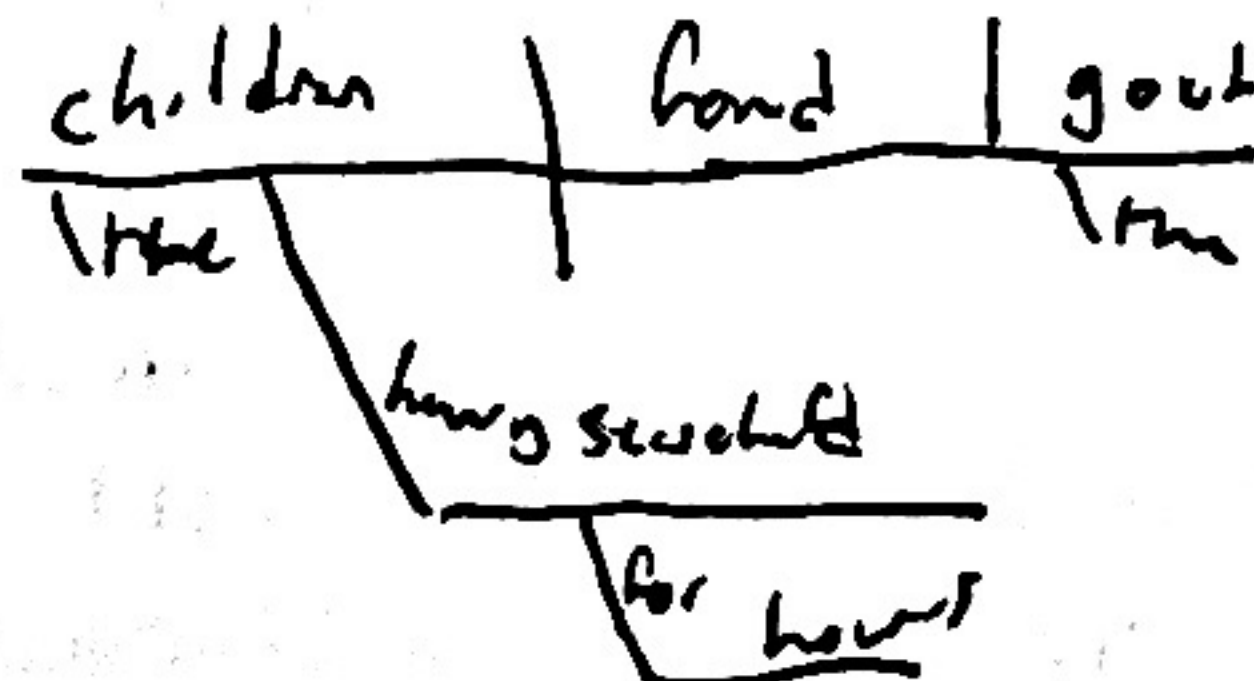
2. Everyone saving money at this bank will receive a bonus interest rate.



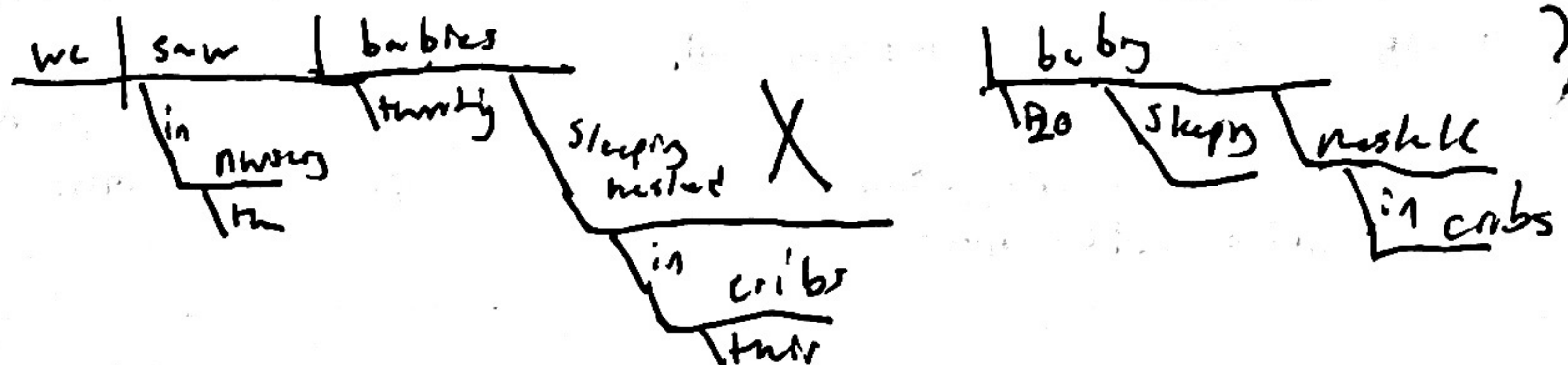
3. The children found the goat limping on a cracked hoof.



4. The children found the goat, having searched for hours.



5. (In the nursery) we saw twenty sleeping babies nestled in their cribs.



see answer key, pp. 463-64

EXERCISE 9.5 *

In the following sentences, identify the italicized words as present participles (PP), verbs (V), or gerunds (G).

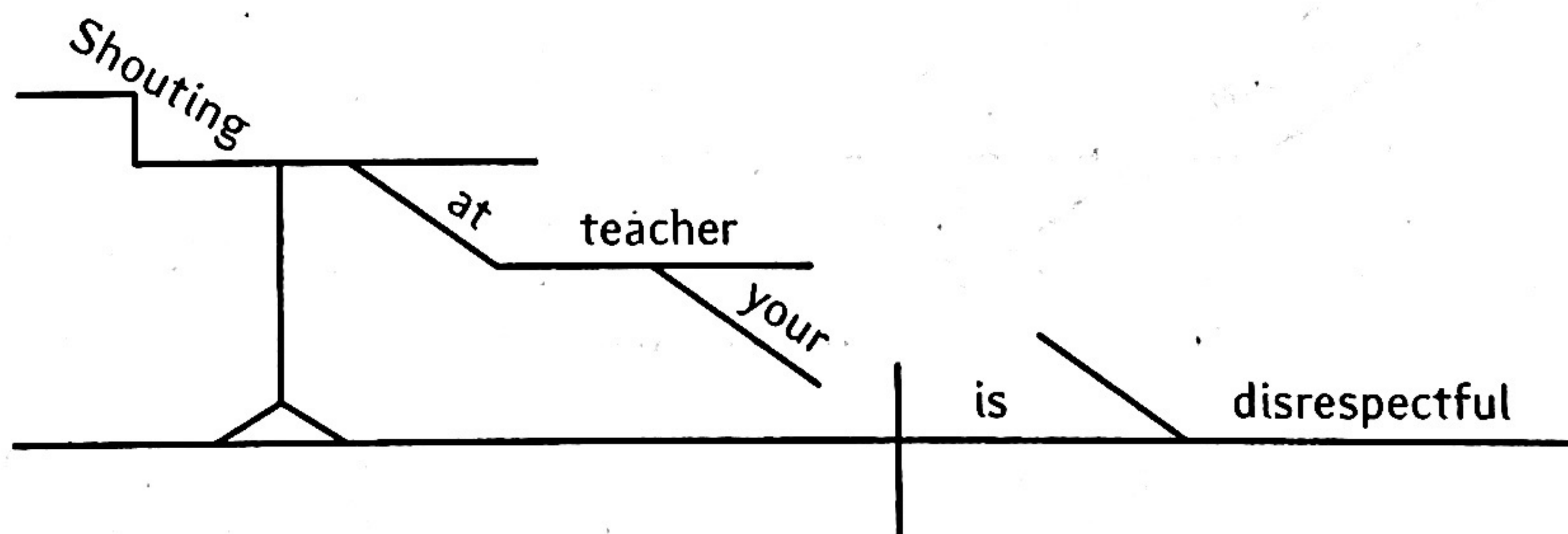
1. V The sun was *blinding* the players on the far side of the field.
2. PP *Shading* her eyes, the coach could barely distinguish her players.
3. G *Winning* this game would not be easy.
4. G The players could not avoid *making* mistakes.
5. V They were *shouting* at each other in frustration.
6. PP *Calling* for a time-out, the coach consulted with the referee.
7. G V They discussed *rescheduling* the game as a fair solution.
8. PP *Leaving* the field, the players agreed that they would meet another day.

see answer key, p. 464

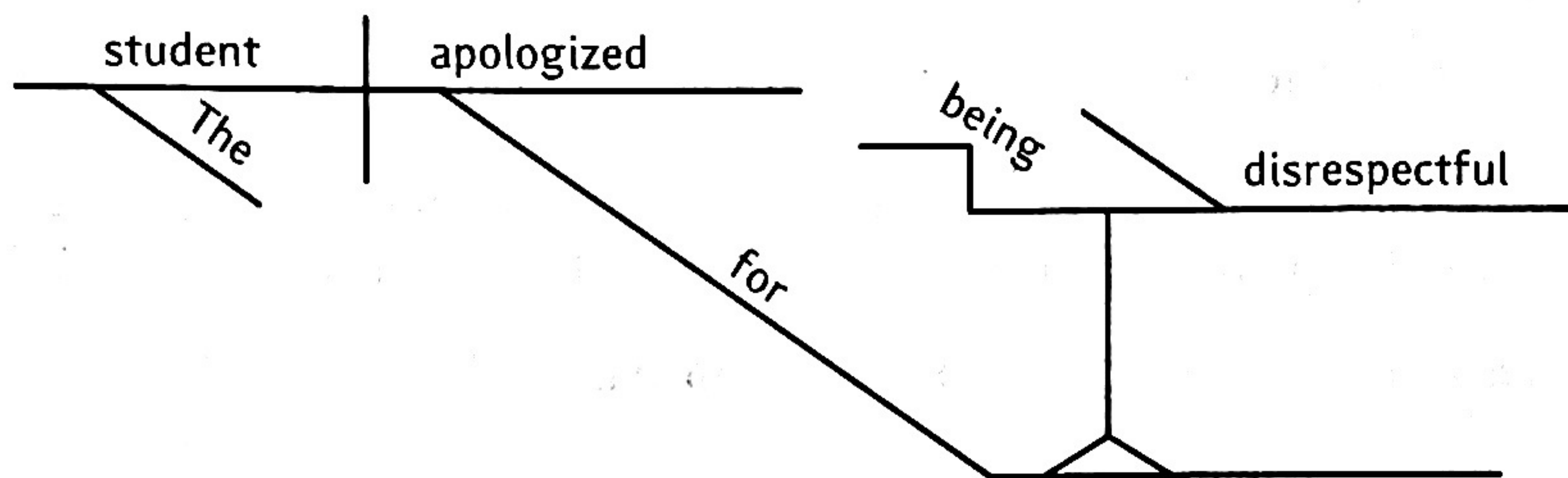
Diagramming Gerunds

Like the noun clause, the gerund is diagrammed on a pedestal—in this case, on a “step” structure on top of the pedestal. As you’ll see in the diagrams below, a gerund will often appear within a gerund phrase. Make sure to diagram all parts of the gerund phrase as part of the “step” structure.

Shouting at your teacher is disrespectful. (*It* is disrespectful.)



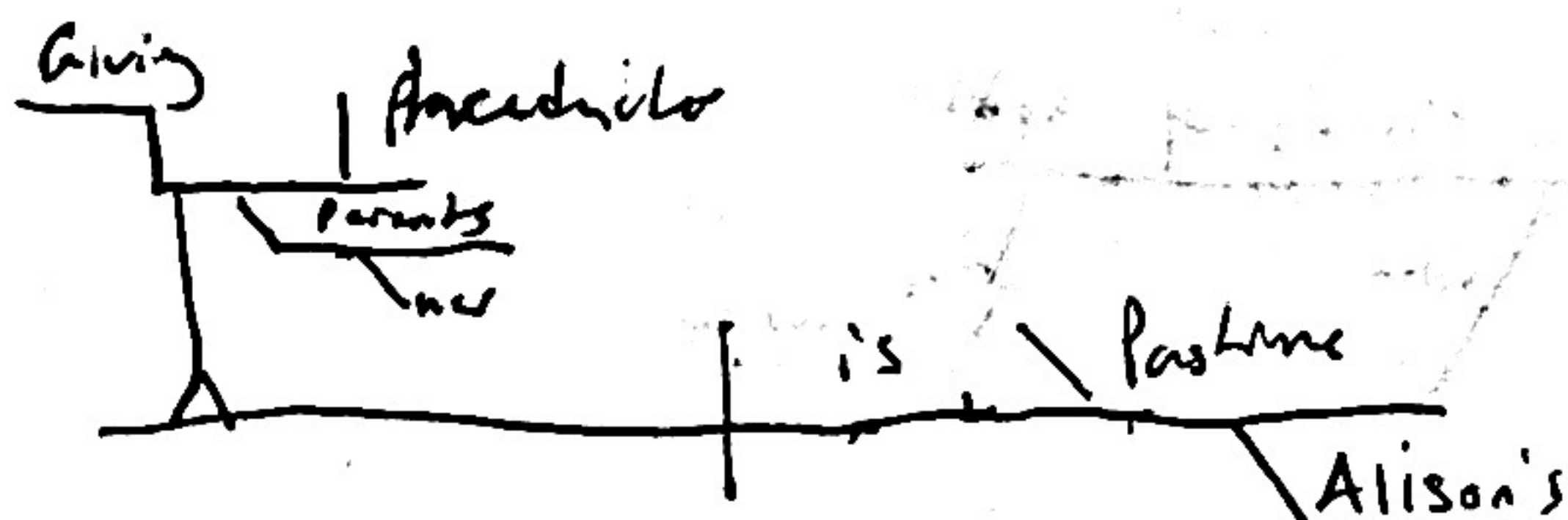
The student apologized for *being disrespectful*.



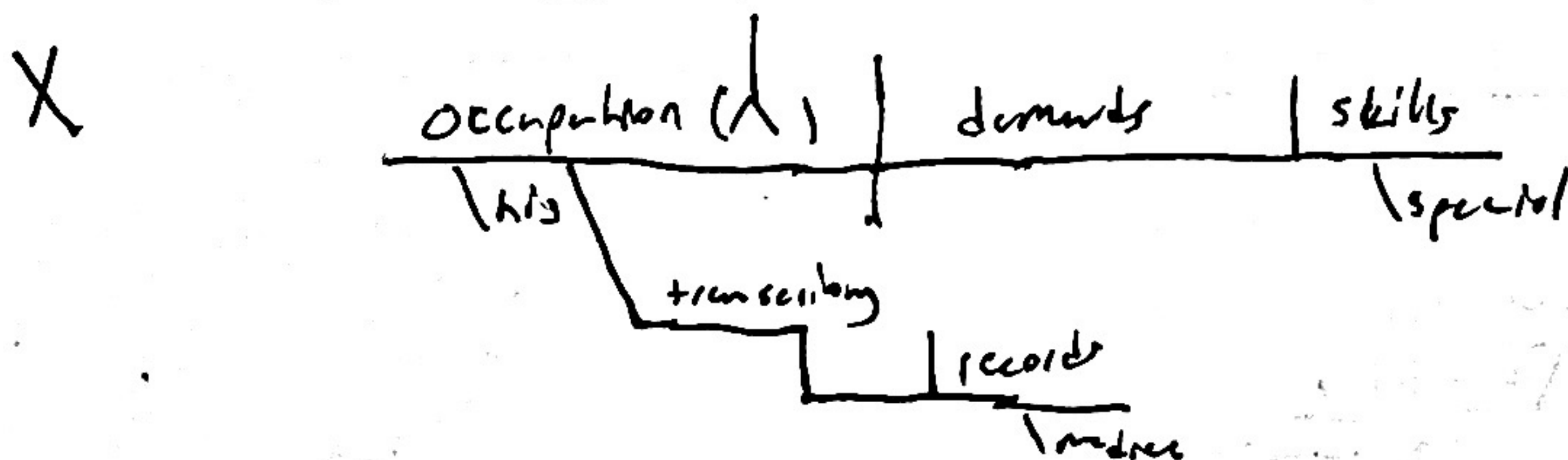
EXERCISE 9.6 *

In the sentences below, underline the gerund phrases and then diagram each sentence.

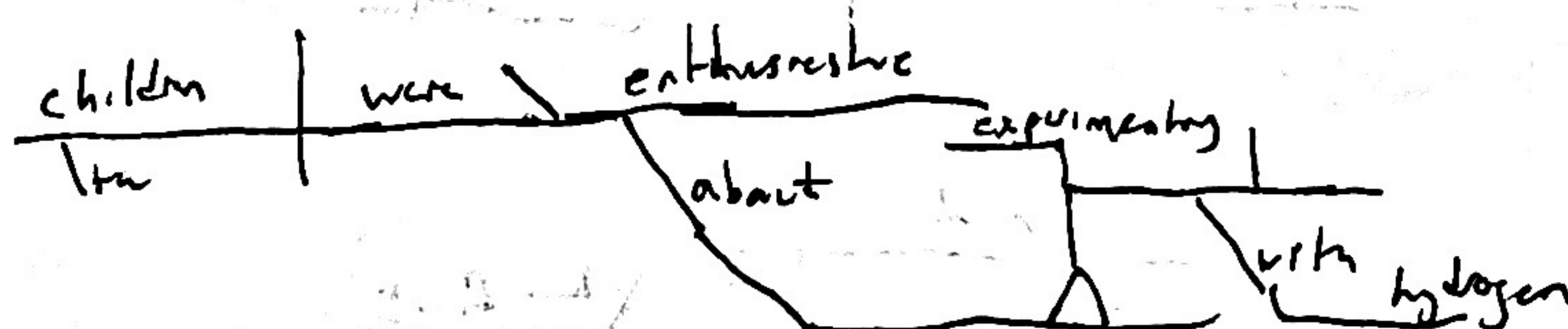
1. Giving her parents headaches is Alison's pastime.



2. His occupation, transcribing medical records, demands special skills. ??



3. The children were enthusiastic about experimenting with hydrogen.

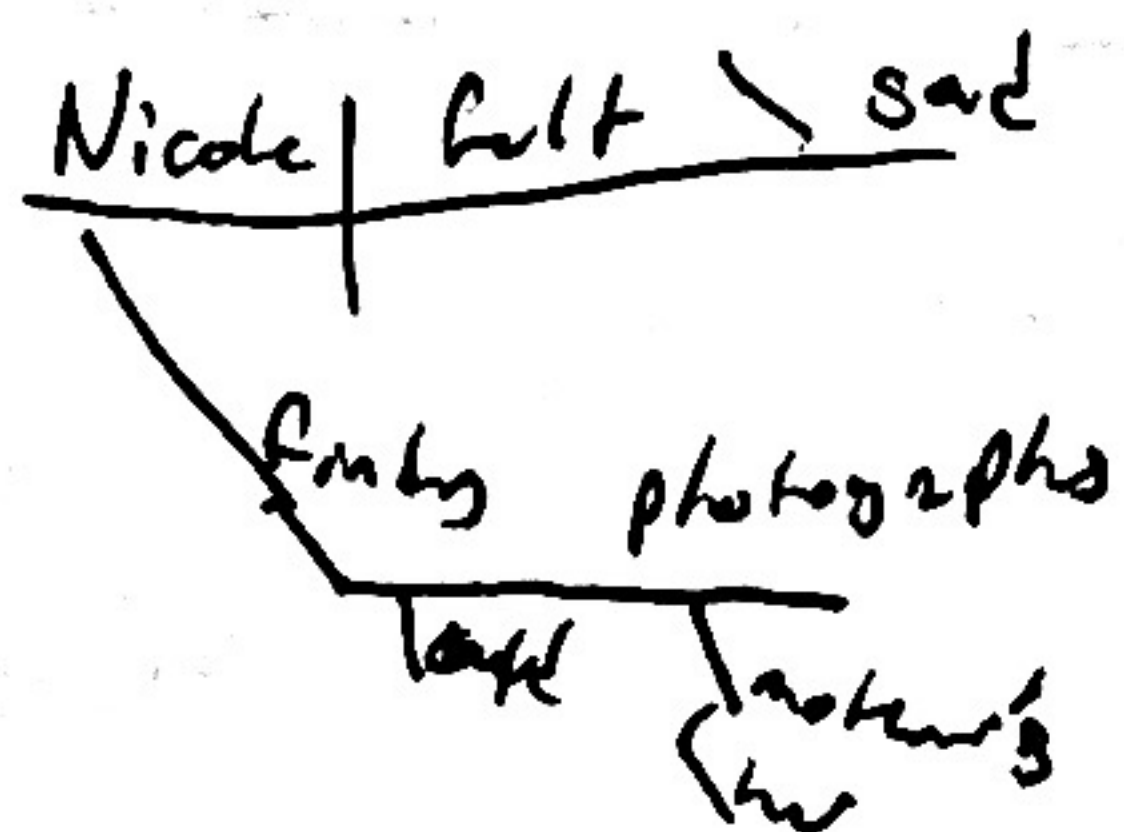


see answer key, p. 465

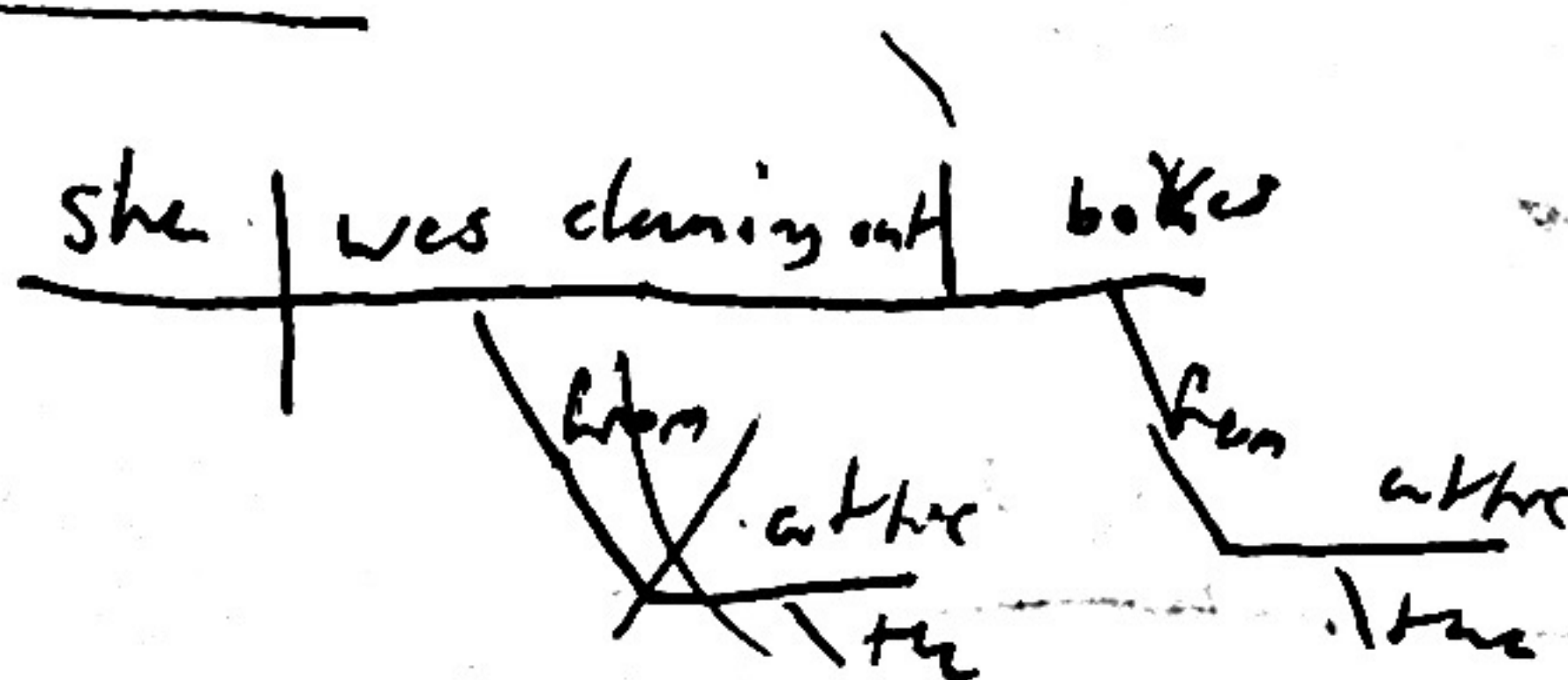
EXERCISE 9.7 ✕

The sentences below contain present participles and gerunds. Diagram each sentence and notice the change in your diagram depending on whether the sentence contains a present participle used as a verb, a present participle used as an adjective, or a gerund. Remember that all three end in -ing, but they serve different functions in the sentence and are diagrammed differently.

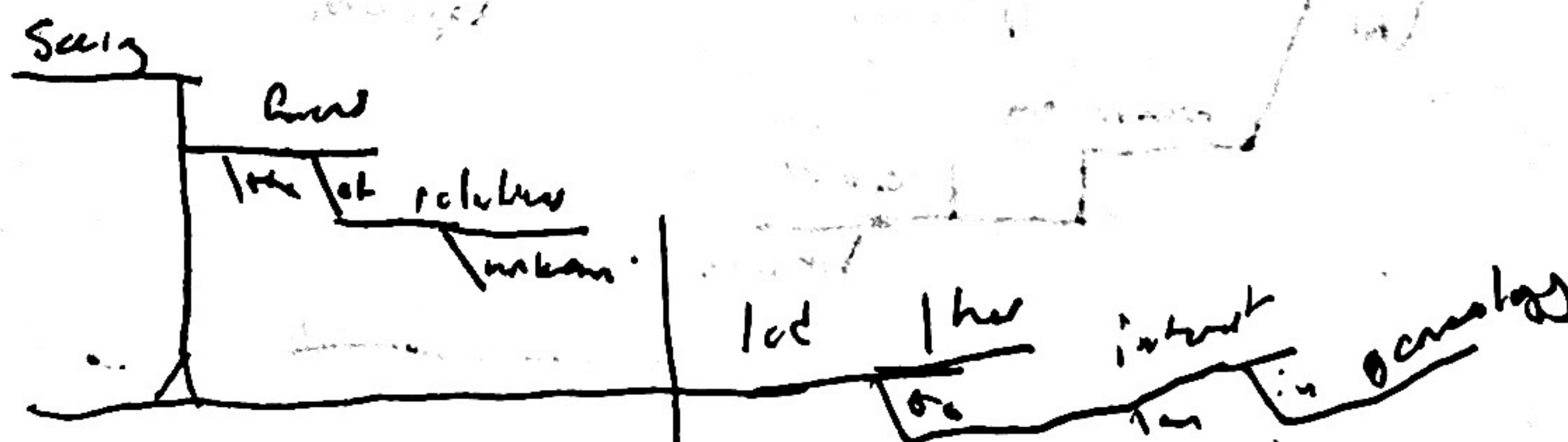
1. Finding her mother's old photographs, Nicole felt sad.



- ✓ ✕ 2. She was cleaning out boxes (from the attic.)



- 6 3. Seeing the faces of unknown relatives led her to an interest in genealogy.



- 6 ✕ 4. By using her research skills, she learned many details about her family.

