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The Participle

Recognize a *participle* when you see one.

Participles come in two varieties: past and present.
They are two of the five forms or *principal parts* that
every **verb** has. Look at the charts below.

Regular Verbs:

Verb	Simple Present	Simple Past	Past Participle	Present Participle	Infinitive
giggle	giggle(s)	giggled	giggled	giggling	to giggle
help	help(s)	helped	helped	helping	to help
jump	jump(s)	jumped	jumped	jumping	to jump

Irregular Verbs:

Verb	Simple Present	Simple Past	Past Participle	Present Participle	Infinitive
bring	bring(s)	brought	brought	bringing	to bring
ring	ring(s)	rang	rung	ringing	to ring
sing	sing(s)	sang	sung	singing	to sing
swim	swim(s)	swam	swum	swimming	to swim

Notice that each present participle ends in *ing*. This is the case 100 percent of the time.

On the other hand, you can see that past participles do not have a consistent ending. The past participles of all *regular* verbs end in *ed*; the past participles of *irregular* verbs, however, vary considerably. If you look at *bring* and *sing*, for example, you'll see that their past participles —*brought* and *sung*—do not follow the same pattern even though both verbs have *ing* as the last three letters.

Consult a dictionary whenever you are unsure of a verb's past participle form.

Know the functions of participles.

Participles have three functions in sentences. They can be components of multipart verbs, or they can function as **adjectives** or **nouns**.

Participles in Multipart Verbs

A verb can have as many as four parts. When you form multipart verbs, you use a combination of **auxiliary verbs** and participles. Look at the examples below:

> Our pet alligator *ate* Mrs. Olsen's poodle.

> *Ate* = simple past tense [no participle].

> With a broom, Mrs. Olsen *was beating* our alligator over the head in an attempt to retrieve her poodle.

> *Was* = auxiliary verb; *beating* = present participle.

Our pet alligator *has been stalking* neighborhood pets because my brother Billy forgets to feed the poor reptile.

Has = auxiliary verb; *been* = past participle; *stalking* = present participle.

Our pet alligator *should have been eating* Gator Chow, crunchy nuggets that Billy leaves for him in a bowl.

Should, *have* = auxiliary verbs; *been* = past participle; *eating* = present participle.

Participles as Adjectives

Past and present participles often function as **adjectives** that describe **nouns**. Here are some examples:

The *crying* baby drew a long breath and sucked in a spider *crouching* in the corner of the crib.

Which baby? The *crying* baby. Which spider? The one that was *crouching* in the corner.

The *mangled* pair of sunglasses, *bruised* face, *broken* arm, and *bleeding* knees meant Genette had taken another spill on her mountain bike.

Which pair of sunglasses? The *mangled* pair. Which face? The *bruised* one. Which arm? The

broken one. Which knees? The *bleeding* ones.

Participles as Nouns

Present participles can function as **nouns** —the **subjects**, **direct objects**, **indirect objects**, **objects of prepositions**, and **subject complements** in sentences. Whenever a present participle functions as a noun, you call it a **gerund**.

Take a look at these examples:

Sneezing exhausts Steve, who requires eight tissues and twenty-seven Gesundheits before he is done.

Sneezing = the subject of the verb *exhausts*.

Valerie hates *cooking* because scraping burnt gook out of pans always undermines her enjoyment of the food.

Cooking = the direct object of the verb *hates*.

We gave *bungee jumping* a chance.

Bungee jumping = indirect object of the verb *gave*.

Joelle bit her tongue instead of *criticizing* her prom date's powder blue tuxedo.

Criticizing = object of the preposition *instead of*.

Omar's least favorite sport is *water-skiing* because a bad spill once caused him to lose his swim trunks.

Water-skiing = the subject complement of the verb *is*.

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