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# The Absolute Phrase

Recognize an *absolute phrase* when you see one.

An absolute phrase combines a noun and a participle with any accompanying modifiers or objects. The pattern looks like this:

**NOUN + PARTICIPLE + OPTIONAL**

**MODIFIER(S) AND/OR OBJECT(S)**

Here are some examples:

Legs quivering

*Legs* = noun; *quivering* = participle.

Her arms folded across her chest

*Arms* = noun; *folded* = participle;  
*her, across her chest* = modifiers.

Our fingers scraping the leftover frosting off the plates

***Fingers*** = noun; ***scraping*** =  
participle; ***frosting*** = direct object;  
***our, the, leftover, off the plates*** =  
modifiers.

Rather than modifying a specific word, an  
absolute phrase will describe the whole  
clause:

***Legs quivering***, our old dog  
Gizmo dreamed of chasing  
squirrels.

***Her arms folded across her  
chest***, Professor Hill warned the  
class about the penalties of  
plagiarism.

We devoured Aunt Lenora's  
carrot cake, ***our fingers  
scraping the leftover frosting  
off the plates***.



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