



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY

College of Undergraduate Studies

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VERBALS

(Gerunds, Participles, Infinitives)

Gerunds

A gerund is a verbal that ends in *-ing* and functions as a noun. It can take on the role of a subject, direct object, subject complement, and object of preposition.

Gerund as subject:

- *Traveling* might satisfy your desire for new experiences.

Gerund as direct object:

- They do not appreciate my *singing*.

Gerund as subject complement:

- My cat's favorite activity is *sleeping*.

Gerund as object of preposition:

- The police arrested him for *speeding*.

Participles

A participle is a verbal that is used as an adjective and most often ends in *-ing* or *-ed*. There are two types of participles: present participles and past participles. Present participles end in *-ing*. Past participles end in *-ed*, *-en*, *-d*, *-t*, or *-n*, as in the words *asked*, *eaten*, *saved*, *dealt*, and *seen*.

- The *crying* baby had a wet diaper.
- *Shaken*, he walked away from the *wrecked* car.
- The *burning* log fell off the fire.
- *Smiling*, she hugged the *panting* dog.

Infinitives

An infinitive is a verbal consisting of the word *to* plus a verb (in its simplest "stem" form) and functioning as a noun, adjective, or adverb. The infinitive may function as a subject, direct object, subject complement, adjective, or adverb in a sentence. Although an infinitive is easy to locate because of the *to* + verb form, deciding what function it has in a sentence can sometimes be confusing.

- *To wait* seemed foolish when decisive action was required. (subject)
- Everyone wanted *to go*. (direct object)
- His ambition is *to fly*. (subject complement)
- He lacked the strength *to resist*. (adjective)
- We must study *to learn*. (adverb)

Be sure not to confuse an infinitive--a verbal consisting of *to* plus a verb--with a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*, which consists of *to* plus a noun or pronoun and any modifiers.

Infinitives: to fly, to draw, to become, to enter, to stand, to catch, to belong

Prepositional Phrases: to him, to the committee, to my house, to the mountains, to us, to this address