

Choices: Investigating Phrases

Here's your chance to step out of the grammar book and into the real world. You may not realize it, but examples of phrases appear in your life every day. The following activities challenge you to find a connection between phrases and the world around you. Do the activity below that suits your personality best, and then share your discoveries with your class. Have fun!

VISUAL

Spring Training

Write the word *sports* in large open letters. (An open letter is one that is merely outlined so that the inside is empty.) In the empty space inside each letter, write gerunds naming sports, such as *fishing* and *running*. Don't forget to label your graphic *Sports Gerunds*.

BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Betwixt and Between

Using a variety of prepositions can help readers visualize a writer's words as well as add precision to writing. Do your classmates a favor: Make an alphabetized list of all the prepositions you can find. Make copies of your list, and give one to each of your friends.

MUSIC

The Impossible Dream

A few years back, a musical called *Man of La Mancha* made the song "The Impossible Dream" famous. Find a copy of this song's lyrics, and write them down. Underline each infinitive and infinitive phrase. Then, tell whether each infinitive phrase is used as a noun, adjective, or adverb. Play the song for your class, explaining how infinitive phrases drive the song.

GROUP PROJECT

Are Two Heads Better Than One?

With your teacher's help, divide your class into groups of four. Starting with yourself as number one, number off the members of your group. In the middle of a sheet of paper, write a noun. Hand the paper to person two, who will add a vivid verb to your noun. Person three goes next, adding a descriptive phrase. Finally, person four gets to add another phrase. Be creative. When your sentence is complete, read it aloud. Is the sentence funny? boring? interesting? confusing?

MOVIES

At the Theater

Prepositional phrases can show up in all kinds of unexpected places—even at the movie theater. Have you ever noticed that many movie titles contain prepositional phrases? In fact, many movie titles *are* prepositional phrases. In a group or by yourself, brainstorm to come up with at least ten of these movie titles—five that contain prepositional phrases and five that are prepositional phrases. (*Hint*: An Internet movie database or book that contains movie reviews can help you get ideas.)

WORD ORDER

Arranging the Pieces

Find out how different a sentence can sound when you add, delete, or move phrases within it. First, write a sentence that contains a subject, a verb, and at least two phrases. Then, get your scissors and cut out each phrase. Next, see how many ways you can combine the separate pieces of your sentence. (Don't forget that punctuation often changes when you rearrange a sentence.) When you move a certain phrase from, say, the middle of the sentence to the beginning, does the new sentence sound more powerful? more confusing? more interesting? Explain. The next time you write a letter or a story, remember what a difference phrases can make.

ART

A Challenging Illustration

Illustrate a scene that allows your classmates to see these terms—a participle, a gerund, or both—in action. Draw a running cheetah, or create a jumping Olympian. Paint a picture of a favorite hobby, such as fishing. Place a caption under your artwork, and be sure to identify the caption's participle or gerund.

Phrases

5a. A **phrase** is a group of related words that is used as a single part of speech and that does not contain both a verb and its subject.

EXAMPLES Colors can influence the way we feel **about a place or thing**. [prepositional phrase]
 A room **painted white** often seems larger than it is. [participial phrase]
Painting something orange draws people's attention to it. [gerund phrase]
 Studies show that more women than men seem **to prefer red**. [infinitive phrase]
 Green, **the color of many things in nature**, relaxes people. [appositive phrase]

A group of words that has both a verb and its subject is called a *clause*.

EXAMPLES The class has been conducting a survey. [*Class* is the subject of the verb *has been conducting*.]
 after I completed my research [*I* is the subject of the verb *completed*.]

EXERCISE Determine whether the underlined word group in each of the following sentences is a phrase or not. If the word group is a phrase, write *phrase*. If the word group is not a phrase, write *not a phrase*.

Example _____ *phrase* 1. The cup slipped from her hands and shattered on the floor.

_____ 1. Please place the keys on the table.

_____ 2. They decided to watch a movie.

_____ 3. The glasses are on the shelf.

_____ 4. Enrique became excited when he heard the news.

_____ 5. Jimmy, fearing a low score, studied diligently for his exam.

_____ 6. In 1934, my grandfather came to the United States.

_____ 7. The clothes in the corner should be donated to charity.

_____ 8. Casper, a master of the violin, is learning to play the guitar.

_____ 9. To repair a car, you need to have tools and experience.

_____ 10. Before she left home, Helena ate breakfast and read a magazine.

The Prepositional Phrase

5b. A **prepositional phrase** includes a preposition, a noun or pronoun called *the object of the preposition*, and any modifiers of that object.

EXAMPLES up the Amazon River on a memorable trip
by themselves along with my family and me

EXERCISE A Underline the prepositional phrase(s) in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. For several years farmers in England found strange patterns throughout their grain fields.

- The first reports about the cause of these mysterious patterns appeared in 1978.
- In the middle of a field, the grain would be flattened in huge circles.
- Some people believed the circles in the fields were made by extraterrestrials.
- Many others throughout the country attributed the designs to rare weather conditions.
- Instead of circles, more elaborate designs appeared in 1990.
- Investigators said that no one had actually seen any of the patterns being formed.
- In 1991, the mystery may have been solved.
- The strange patterns could have been made by two pranksters as a practical joke.
- Since these two hoaxers' confessions, the number of occurrences of these strange patterns has declined significantly.
- Several books about the mysterious phenomenon were written during the 1980s and 1990s.

EXERCISE B Complete each of the following sentences by writing in the blank an appropriate prepositional phrase.

Example 1. The birthday gift from his parents surprised Mateo.

- _____ Mateo's parents bought him a pony.
- The pony had black patches _____.
- So Mateo said _____, "Let's call the pony Salt and Pepper."
- Mateo's father helped his son into the saddle, and Mateo rode _____.
- Then they led the pony _____ and gave it some fresh hay and water.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE pages 97–98

The Adjective Phrase

5c. A prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or a pronoun is called an **adjective phrase**.

An **adjective phrase** tells *what kind* or *which one*.

EXAMPLES My favorite writer **for young readers** is Beverly Cleary. [The adjective phrase modifies the noun *writer*, telling *what kind*.]

I have read most **of Beverly Cleary's books**. [The adjective phrase modifies the pronoun *most*, telling *which one*.]

An adjective phrase usually follows the word it modifies. That word may be the object of another prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLE Jane read a book **about the fall of Rome**. [The adjective phrase *of Rome* modifies *fall*, which is the object of the preposition *about*. The adjective phrase *about the fall* modifies *book*.]

More than one adjective phrase may modify the same word.

EXAMPLE The bowl **of fruit salad in the refrigerator** is for the party. [The adjective phrases *of fruit salad* and *in the refrigerator* modify the noun *bowl*.]

EXERCISE In each of the following sentences, underline the adjective phrase or phrases. Then, circle the word that each adjective phrase modifies.

Example 1. The town beyond those mountains to the east is no longer inhabited.

1. My favorite writer of science fiction is Ray Bradbury.
2. The recipe needs four cups of fruit.
3. A student from Mr. Levy's class won first prize.
4. The loud crash of the cymbal was deafening.
5. The directions for the assignment confused Gilbert.
6. The glass of water on the table is mine.
7. The play of the sunlight on the water was a beautiful sight.
8. Somebody with feet of large proportions has scuffed the gym floor.
9. Susie mowed the area around the trunk of the tree.
10. The house on the corner of Main and Elm has been abandoned.

The Adverb Phrase

5d. A prepositional phrase that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb is called an **adverb phrase**.

An **adverb phrase** tells *how, when, where, why, or to what extent (how long, how many, how much, or how far)*.

EXAMPLES We completed the science project **before the deadline**. [The adverb phrase modifies the verb *completed*, telling *when*.]

We were happy **with the results**. [The adverb phrase modifies the adjective *happy*, telling *how*.]

We had worked diligently **for a week**. [The adverb phrase modifies the adverb *diligently*, telling *to what extent*.]

An adverb phrase may come before or after the word it modifies. In each of the following examples, the adverb phrase modifies the verb *learned*.

EXAMPLES **From our research** we learned many facts about the solar system.

We learned **from our research** many facts about the solar system.

More than one adverb phrase may modify the same word.

EXAMPLE **On Friday** we presented our work **to our teacher**. [Both adverb phrases modify the verb *presented*.]

EXERCISE In each of the following sentences, underline the adverb phrase or phrases. Then, circle the word or words that each adverb phrase modifies.

Example 1. During the summer, Carlie went to Italy and Spain.

1. Terra walked across the street.
2. Throughout next month, the band will perform at the fair.
3. Before Sunday, please clean your room.
4. Mr. Monroe has lived on Mason Street for twenty-two years.
5. Jason was pleased with his grades.
6. For several hours, a cool wind blew from the east.
7. Mrs. Green teaches history through books, magazines, and videos.
8. The boys dipped their feet into the cool, soothing water.
9. Please complete your project by Friday.
10. A quiet stillness reigned at the school throughout spring break.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE pages 97–99

Adjective and Adverb Phrases A

5c. A prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or a pronoun is called an **adjective phrase**.

An **adjective phrase** tells *what kind* or *which one*.

EXAMPLE What do you think influences the changes **in hairstyles**? [The adjective phrase modifies the noun *changes*, telling *what kind*.]

5d. A prepositional phrase that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb is called an **adverb phrase**.

An **adverb phrase** tells *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, or *to what extent*.

EXAMPLE Why do you think some hairstyles remain popular **for only a short time**? [The adverb phrase modifies the adjective *popular*, telling *to what extent*.]

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, circle the word or words that the underlined prepositional phrase modifies. Then, identify the phrase by writing above it *ADJ* for *adjective phrase* or *ADV* for *adverb phrase*.

Example 1. ^{ADV} Throughout the night, water from the ceiling annoyingly dripped into the bucket.

1. Sonya is good at soccer.
2. Raphael enjoys reading articles about early space exploration.
3. Throughout the spring, Archimedes spent much time fishing.
4. The young cheetah quietly crouched behind the tall, yellow grass.
5. Herbert watched an informative video on the air battles of World War II.

EXERCISE B In each of the following sentences, underline each prepositional phrase. Then, identify the phrase by writing above it *ADJ* for *adjective phrase* or *ADV* for *adverb phrase*.

Example 1. The store ^{ADJ} on the corner was damaged ^{ADV} during a severe hailstorm.

6. The day before Memorial Day, Henry visited his grandfather for two hours.
7. With great skill, the doctor removed several tiny shards of glass.
8. Elizabeth's essay about Victorian customs in England earned her an A.
9. During the celebration of Mom's birthday, Uncle Jimmy told hilarious jokes for a whole hour.
10. Helga's cousin from New Orleans waited in the living room.
11. The cost of the new bridge went beyond the previous estimate.
12. The skateboard was too expensive for Li.
13. Before an evening of relaxation, Erin likes jogging for an hour.
14. That boy with a broken leg had been injured during a soccer game.
15. On the beach of the tiny island, the castaways constructed a hut of leaves and grass.

Adjective and Adverb Phrases B

5c. A prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or a pronoun is called an **adjective phrase**.

An **adjective phrase** tells *what kind* or *which one*.

EXAMPLE A glider is an aircraft **with no engine**. [The adjective phrase modifies the noun *aircraft*, telling *what kind*.]

5d. A prepositional phrase that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb is called an **adverb phrase**.

An **adverb phrase** tells *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, or *to what extent*.

EXAMPLE The chef seasoned the casserole **with garlic, pepper, and thyme**. [The adverb phrase modifies the verb *seasoned*, telling *how*.]

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, circle the word or words that the underlined prepositional phrase modifies. Then, identify the underlined phrase by writing above it *ADJ* for *adjective phrase* or *ADV* for *adverb phrase*.

Example 1. Elaine was unhappy with the ^{ADV}predictable movie plot.

- The house beyond that hill belongs to Mrs. Wilton.
- The woman in the business suit is giving out free tickets.
- Carl plays piano well for a beginner.
- The most exciting game of the season occurred last night.
- Before noon, please complete your projects.

EXERCISE B Underline each prepositional phrase in the following sentences. Then, identify each phrase by writing above it *ADJ* for *adjective phrase* or *ADV* for *adverb phrase*.

Example 1. With a mighty toss, Philip launched the paper airplane into the sky.

- The scientists watched with satisfaction as the probe flew into space.
- On October 21, the mayor of the city spoke at the convention center.
- The tower behind the temple was constructed over a ten-year period .
- At malls, people with clipboards sometimes give shoppers surveys.
- Frank rode his bike over the rough trails and hills of Pete’s Peak.
- On Friday, Lisa watched a show about the Maya.
- A Spanish galleon from the sixteenth century was discovered off the coast.
- Over the weekend, Adele enjoyed the crisp air of the Rocky Mountains.
- Mr. James is good at basketball.
- For his birthday, José wants a red convertible with a black top.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE **page 101**

The Participle

5e. A **participle** is a verb form that can be used as an adjective.

(1) Present participles end in **-ing**.

EXAMPLES Our soccer team had a **winning** season. [*Winning* modifies *season*.]
Shivering with cold, we decided to go indoors. [*Shivering* modifies *we*.]
 I found three kittens **sleeping** in the flower bed. [*Sleeping* modifies *kittens*.]

(2) Most past participles end in **-d** or **-ed**. Some are irregularly formed.

EXAMPLES We visited a Spanish mission **established** in the 1600s. [*Established* modifies *mission*.]
 The **swollen** river overflowed its banks. [*Swollen* modifies *river*.]

Do not confuse a participle used as an adjective with a participle used as part of a verb phrase.

ADJECTIVE We found Ms. Jacobs **working** in her garden.

VERB PHRASE Ms. Jacobs **was working** in her garden.

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, circle the noun or pronoun that the underlined participle modifies. Then, above the participle, write *present* for *present participle* or *past* for *past participle*.

Example 1. The ^{*past*} broken (glass) is on the floor.

1. Clara likes to eat canned peaches.
2. Clapping wildly, the fans welcomed the band.
3. Theresa watered the blossoming flowers.
4. The child's forgotten toys lined the bottom of the toy chest.
5. Decorated with care, the float was popular at the parade.

EXERCISE B Underline the participle in each of the following sentences. Then, above the participle, write *present* for *present participle* or *past* for *past participle*.

Example 1. The painting, ^{*past*} purchased at a garage sale, was worth one million dollars.

6. The book, chosen for its unusual characters, was a class favorite.
7. Feeling confident, Larry volunteered to list all of the state capitals.
8. Dale watched the kitten playing with his shoe.
9. The students planning the field trip decided to take a trip to Washington, D.C.
10. Janet discovered a treasure map on the piece of yellowed paper.

The Participial Phrase

- 5f.** A **participial phrase** consists of a participle and any modifiers or complements the participle has. The entire phrase is used as an adjective.

EXAMPLES **Reaching for a bagel**, she knocked over her glass of milk. [The participial phrase modifies the pronoun *she*.]

Aunt Molly sent me a baseball glove **autographed by Sammy Sosa**. [The participial phrase modifies the noun *glove*.]

A participial phrase should be placed as close as possible to the word it modifies. Otherwise, the phrase may appear to modify another word, and the sentence may not make sense.

MISPLACED Many holiday decorations adorned the gift shop made of papier mâché.

CORRECTED Many holiday decorations **made of papier mâché** adorned the gift shop.

EXERCISE A Underline the participial phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, circle the noun or pronoun that the participial phrase modifies.

Example 1. Appreciated for his contribution, Alfred was awarded a trip to Paris.

- The mascot, known to the students as Sparky, entertained the crowd.
- Walter, running with speed and purpose, passed the other joggers.
- Seeing the bump in the road, Nell swerved to avoid it.
- Dressed in style, Blake left his house and headed for the school dance.
- The mayor has a building named in her honor.

EXERCISE B Use each of the following participial phrases in a sentence. Be sure to place each phrase as close as possible to the noun or pronoun it modifies.

Example 1. looking down at his shoes

Looking down at his shoes, Bart noticed that they were untied.

6. feeling tired

7. dressed in shorts and a T-shirt

8. hiding under the bed

9. damaged by the rain

10. signed by President Abraham Lincoln

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE **pages 101–102**

Participles and Participial Phrases A

5e. A **participle** is a verb form that can be used as an adjective.

(1) Present participles end in **–ing**.

EXAMPLE The **threatening** weather caused us to delay our trip. [*Threatening* modifies *weather*.]

(2) Most past participles end in **–d** or **–ed**. Some are irregularly formed.

EXAMPLE The **worried** meteorologist issued a weather alert. [*Worried* modifies *meteorologist*.]

5f. A **participial phrase** consists of a participle and any modifiers or complements the participle has. The entire phrase is used as an adjective.

EXAMPLE We heeded the warning **given by the reporter**. [The participial phrase modifies the noun *warning*.]

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, draw one line under the participle used as an adjective and two lines under the word it modifies.

Example 1. A storm named Hurricane Albert had formed.

- The roaring wind came first.
- A concerned look was on my father's face.
- The emergency instructions prepared by my mother came in handy.
- In a few hours, our house had taped windows.
- Candles brought by my mother were ready on the table.
- My parents had also bought a large supply of bottled water.
- The pouring rain beat against the windows.
- The flickering lights prompted us to light the candles.
- Huddled around the radio, we listened for weather updates.
- Finally, the storm passed, leaving behind considerable damage.

EXERCISE B In each of the following sentences, draw one line under the participial phrase and two lines under the word or words it modifies.

Example 1. I saw a picture of a woolly mammoth lifting its hairy trunk.

- Born during the Ice Age, woolly mammoths needed a great deal of hair.
- The land, covered with ice, was a difficult place to survive.
- Even a big beast protected by hair had trouble.
- Searching for food, the woolly mammoths roamed the land.
- Looking at pictures of these animals, I wonder how they survived at all.

Participles and Participial Phrases B

5e. A **participle** is a verb form that can be used as an adjective.

(1) Present participles end in **–ing**.

EXAMPLE The mascot of the **opposing** team is a cougar. [*Opposing* modifies *team*.]

(2) Most past participles end in **–d** or **–ed**. Some are irregularly formed.

EXAMPLE At the cookout, they served **grilled** salmon. [*Grilled* modifies *salmon*.]

5f. A **participial phrase** consists of a participle and any modifiers or complements the participle has. The entire phrase is used as an adjective.

EXAMPLE The Akashi-Kaiko Bridge, **located in Kobe-Naruto, Japan**, is the world's largest suspension bridge. [The participial phrase modifies the noun *Akashi-Kaiko Bridge*.]

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, underline the participle. Then, circle the word or words that the participle modifies.

Example 1. Pepe admired the darkening (sky).

- The battered ship was anchored off the coast of Florida.
- The hikers took plenty of bottled beverages on their journey.
- José bought ten used magazines.
- The beaten team did not advance to the playoffs.
- The running child almost slipped and fell.

EXERCISE B In each of the following sentences, underline the participial phrase. Then, circle the word or words that the participial phrase modifies.

Example 1. Preparing for the winter storm, (Jimmy) took his plants inside.

- The tools used by professional mechanics are usually very expensive.
- Covered with snow for weeks, the ground was now hard.
- The basement, filled with old boxes, was damp and musty.
- Simple jewelry left behind by ancient Egyptians can be very valuable today.
- Wanting to make a good impression, Harry wore his favorite shirt to the game.
- The dogs, barking noisily throughout the night, kept the neighbors awake.
- Jeff wanted to buy an antique desk used by a famous writer.
- Feeling exhausted after a day of hard work, Ellen decided to go to sleep early.
- The boys playing in the park found an arrowhead and the fragments of a necklace.
- Torn and tattered, the clothes looked as if they had been worn for a long time.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE page 105

The Gerund

5g. A **gerund** is a verb form ending in *-ing* that is used as a noun.

- EXAMPLES** **Skiing** is my favorite sport. [subject of the verb *is*]
 My hobby is **fishing**. [predicate nominative identifying the subject *hobby*]
 Sam enjoys rock **climbing**. [direct object of the verb *enjoy*]
 We should give **snorkeling** a try. [indirect object of the verb *should give*]
 Saul has shown great interest in **skating**. [object of the preposition *in*]

Do not confuse a gerund with a present participle used as part of a verb phrase or as an adjective.

- EXAMPLES** The rabbit was sitting by the edge of the running stream. [*Sitting* is part of the verb phrase *was sitting*. *Running* is a participle modifying *stream*.]

EXERCISE A Underline the gerund in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. The key to playing guitar is finger dexterity.

- Becoming a doctor takes years of serious study.
- Kino's specialty is cooking mushrooms and onions.
- The subtle squeaking of the door hinges told Mira that her sister was home.
- Carla decided on writing about famous women in history.
- Mr. Riley enjoys the crackling of a campfire on a winter's evening.

EXERCISE B Underline the gerund in each of the following sentences. Then, above each gerund, write *S* for subject, *PN* for predicate nominative, *DO* for direct object, *IO* for indirect object, or *OP* for object of a preposition. If a sentence does not contain a gerund, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. Laurie loves ^{DO}running early in the morning.

- Traveling to new and interesting places is fun.
- The smiling child amused his parents.
- Give playing golf another chance.
- The powerful writing made the novel exciting to read.
- Carla was talking in a low whisper to her best friend.
- Cecil's favorite hobby is building scale models of World War II airplanes.
- The key to fishing is patience.
- Fielding a pop fly on a sunny day can be a tricky play.
- Pam is studying for her French exam.
- Marie's favorite event is swimming.

The Gerund Phrase

5h. A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund and any modifiers or complements the gerund has. The entire phrase is used as a noun.

EXAMPLES **Holding a class election** taught us much about politics. [subject of the verb *taught*]
 When did the candidates begin **campaigning for the class offices**? [direct object of the verb *did begin*]
 Carrie's passion is **rock climbing**. [predicate nominative identifying the subject *passion*]
 Javier gave **fishing for bass** another chance. [indirect object of the verb *gave*]
 Election officials made an error in **counting the votes**. [object of the preposition *in*]

EXERCISE A Underline the gerund phrase in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. Jim's tiny handwriting is sometimes difficult to read.

1. The vibrating of the tire caused the car to shake.
2. The noise you heard is the soft chirping of a baby bird.
3. Sally is an expert at identifying Grecian artifacts.
4. Playing the piano well is a difficult skill to learn.
5. Jason's method of fly-fishing for trout is unique but effective.

EXERCISE B Underline the gerund phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, above each gerund phrase, write *S* for *subject*, *PN* for *predicate nominative*, *DO* for *direct object*, *IO* for *indirect object*, or *OP* for *object of a preposition*. If a sentence does not contain a gerund phrase, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. The slow rocking of the boat made Daniel seasick.

6. Javier wants to write an essay about the art of playing video games.
7. The swerving car avoided the fallen tree lying in the road.
8. Julie's favorite pastime is running along the trails near the park.
9. Having defined goals will help you plan your future.
10. Katy's favorite weekend activity is sleeping late on Saturday mornings.
11. The class used up half an hour by asking the guest speaker questions about comets.
12. The chef gave cooking the stew the attention it deserved.
13. Try flying the kite one more time before the wind dies down.
14. Terra dreams of flying a helicopter for a television news station.
15. Our baseball team is playing out of town this week.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE **pages 105–106**

Gerunds and Gerund Phrases A

5g. A **gerund** is a verb form ending in *–ing* that is used as a noun.

EXAMPLES **Spelunking** is a wonderful adventure. [subject of the verb *is*]
 We could hear the distant **rumbling** of thunder. [direct object of the verb *could hear*]
 We should give **rafting** another try. [indirect object of the verb *should give*]

5h. A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund and any modifiers or complements the gerund has. The entire phrase is used as a noun.

EXAMPLES One of the president's duties is **serving as commander in chief**. [predicate nominative identifying one of the president's duties]
 The settlers cleared part of the land by **burning down the forest**. [object of the preposition *by*]

EXERCISE A Underline the gerund in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. The sharp clanging of the bell alerted the students.

- Jackie saved money for the trip by grooming horses at a local stable.
- Training a pet to obey simple commands can be difficult.
- Jerry's phobia is speaking to large crowds.
- Sarah believes in saving money for the future.
- The annoying rooster enjoys crowing outside my window.

EXERCISE B Underline the gerund phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, above each gerund phrase, write *S* for *subject*, *PN* for *predicate nominative*, *DO* for *direct object*, *IO* for *indirect object*, or *OP* for *object of a preposition*. If a sentence does not contain a gerund phrase, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. ^S
Traveling to distant places is easier today than it was two hundred years ago.

- Flying in an airplane sounds dangerous, but it is actually quite safe.
- A far more dangerous activity is driving a car.
- Some drivers endanger others as well as themselves by recklessly disobeying traffic laws.
- David's family is taking a train to New York this summer.
- For our next vacation we may give riding on a train a try.
- Watching the countryside roll by from the window of a train would be fun.
- My sister votes for driving to Seattle, Washington, in an RV.
- Preston heard the crashing of the surf.
- Traveling across the country takes a lot of time.
- Wherever we go on our vacation, my aunt is coming with us.

Gerunds and Gerund Phrases B

5g. A **gerund** is a verb form ending in *-ing* that is used as a noun.

EXAMPLES **Playing** chess well requires concentration. [subject of the verb *requires*]
My sister Tyra has started **collecting** rocks. [direct object of the verb *has started*]

5h. A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund and any modifiers or complements the gerund has. The entire phrase is used as a noun.

EXAMPLES Before Martin became a journalist, he had given **becoming an English teacher** serious thought. [indirect object of the verb *had given*]
When did Tori Murden fulfill her dream of **rowing solo across the Atlantic Ocean**?
[object of the preposition *of*]

EXERCISE A Underline the gerund in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. The rumbling of Joe's stomach told us it was time to eat.

- Larry was intent on watching every movie in our video collection in one weekend.
- My sister is responsible for cleaning the garage.
- Deanna's powerful speaking caused the audience to erupt in applause.
- The difficult aspect of the workout program is getting up at four in the morning.
- The cacophonous clanking of the car's engine could be heard from blocks away.

EXERCISE B Underline the gerund phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, above each gerund, write *S* for *subject*, *PN* for *predicate nominative*, *DO* for *direct object*, *IO* for *indirect object*, or *OP* for *object of a preposition*. If a sentence does not contain a gerund phrase, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. The ^Sbarking of the menacing dog caused the cat to flee from the yard.

- Theresa began her report on Medieval Europe with an interesting question.
- When he was five, the musical prodigy started playing the piano.
- Plato gave fishing for rainbow trout another chance.
- Jack's parents supported his dream of winning a gold medal.
- The charging rhinoceros on the video frightened the kindergartners.
- Among other sports, Li enjoys snorkeling in the ocean.
- The teacher noted that Paul has a love of reading poems and writing them.
- His strongest event in the track meet was running hurdles.
- At sunrise the girls began raking the golden leaves.
- One popular hobby is collecting baseball cards.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE pages 101, 105

Participle or Gerund?

Both present participles and gerunds end in *-ing*. To avoid confusing these two verb forms, remember that a present participle functions as an adjective or as part of a verb phrase and that a gerund functions as a noun.

- EXAMPLES** Brian is in his room, **writing** in his journal. [present participle modifying the noun *Brian*.]
 Brian is **writing** in his journal. [part of the verb phrase *is writing*.]
 Brian enjoys **writing** in his journal. [gerund used as the direct object of the verb *enjoys*.]

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, identify the underlined word as a *participle* or *gerund*. If the underlined word is part of the verb phrase, write *verb* on the line provided.

Example participle 1. The dancing duo amazed the audience with their flawless routine.

- _____ 1. Planning ahead, David carried an umbrella to school.
 _____ 2. The zoning committee would not allow a strip mall to be built next to the park.
 _____ 3. The tireless beavers were building a dam across the stream.
 _____ 4. Brian likes racing remote-controlled cars.
 _____ 5. The restless boy was fidgiting throughout the entire movie.

EXERCISE B Use each of the following words as a gerund or a participle. The gerund or participle may be a single word or part of a phrase.

Example 1. writing (gerund) Ben enjoys writing to his pen pal in Italy.

6. jumping (participle) _____

 7. swimming (gerund) _____

 8. feeling (participle) _____

 9. seeing (participle) _____

 10. tasting (gerund) _____

The Infinitive

5i. An **infinitive** is a verb form that can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Most infinitives begin with *to*.

NOUN I have always wanted **to visit** the Egyptian pyramids. [direct object of the verb *have wanted*]

ADJECTIVE I may soon have the opportunity **to visit** the Egyptian pyramids. [modifying the noun *opportunity*]

ADVERB I may travel to Egypt next summer **to visit** the pyramids. [modifying the verb phrase *may travel*]

Do not confuse an infinitive with a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*. A prepositional phrase always has an object that is a noun or a pronoun. An infinitive is a verb form.

INFINITIVE to travel

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE to Japan

EXERCISE Underline the infinitive in each of the following sentences. If the sentence does not have an infinitive, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. To visit the pyramids in Egypt would be exciting.

1. Laurie said that the best place to go on Friday is the roller rink.
2. Elaine wants to be a writer after she graduates.
3. The idea to remember is that an infinitive is a verb form.
4. The clerk gave the sack of groceries to him.
5. The neatly chopped tomatoes were ready to go into the salad.
6. Emile read the article to find information about Korea.
7. To learn facts, some people use mnemonics, or memory devices.
8. Eddie came to school late on Wednesday.
9. She wanted her guest to be comfortable.
10. A person needs coordination to dance well.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE page 109

The Infinitive Phrase

5j. An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive and any modifiers or complements the infinitive has. The entire phrase may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

NOUN To climb Mount Everest is one of Ann's goals. [subject of the verb *is*]

ADJECTIVE Any time is a great time to be in New Orleans. [modifying the noun *time*]

ADVERB We displayed posters to remind everyone of the Earth Day festivities. [modifying the verb *displayed*]

EXERCISE Underline the infinitive phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, above the infinitive phrase, write *N* for *noun*, *ADJ* for *adjective*, or *ADV* for *adverb*. If a sentence does not have a infinitive phrase, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. Sarah took the time to decorate her notebooks. ^{ADJ}

1. To fix a flat bicycle tire you may need a tire patch and some glue.
2. Alex was ready to begin his new class on Monday.
3. The campers went to a campsite near the mountains.
4. The ability to play a musical instrument comes from talent and practice.
5. Henry's little brother always wants to play hide-and-seek.
6. The team went to the stadium to practice the new plays.
7. The purpose of a persuasive speech is to convince others.
8. The salesperson measured Roy's arm to determine his sleeve size.
9. Please hand your science project to the person behind you.
10. Yori wants to eat Italian food for lunch.
11. To study a foreign language is a worthwhile pursuit.
12. We were told to put the food away.
13. Please tell them to be quiet.
14. Saturday is a good day to mow the lawn.
15. Are you prepared to answer the question?
16. Martina sent the results to her father.
17. The president asked her advisers to propose a solution.
18. My chief goal in college is to earn my degree.
19. To remember a conversation from three years ago is quite a trick.
20. Don't forget to return the basketball to the equipment room.

Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases A

5i. An **infinitive** is a verb form that can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Most infinitives begin with *to*.

NOUN Would you like **to dance**? [direct object of the verb *would like*]

ADJECTIVE A relatively simple dance **to perform** is the waltz. [modifying the noun *dance*]

ADVERB Are all of the dancers ready **to rehearse**? [modifying the adjective *ready*]

5j. An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive and any modifiers or complements the infinitive has. The entire phrase may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

NOUN **To become a singer** requires talent and desire. [subject of the verb *requires*]

ADJECTIVE Do you have the desire **to become a singer**? [modifying the noun *desire*]

ADVERB You seem eager **to become a singer**. [modifying the adjective *eager*]

EXERCISE A Underline the infinitive phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, identify the use of the phrase by writing above it *N* for *noun*, *ADJ* for *adjective*, or *ADV* for *adverb*.

Example 1. Do you like to make things out of paper? ^{*N*}

1. An easy thing to form out of paper is an envelope.
2. To make a paper airplane takes little time.
3. Some children were eager to fold paper into shapes of animal figures.
4. One child's goal was to create a paper jacket.
5. Others were content to design paper baskets.

EXERCISE B Use each of the following infinitives in a sentence. The part of speech is indicated in parentheses.

Example 1. to build (noun) Katy said she wanted to build a treehouse in the back yard.

6. to feel (noun) _____

7. to become (adverb) _____

8. to believe (adverb) _____

9. to fill (adjective) _____

10. to decide (noun) _____

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE **pages 108–109**

Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases B

5i. An **infinitive** is a verb form that can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Most infinitives begin with *to*.

NOUN At an early age the child learned **to sign**. [direct object of the verb *learned*]

ADJECTIVE Raisins and other dried fruit would be good snacks **to serve**. [modifying the noun *snacks*]

ADVERB This jigsaw puzzle will be difficult **to work**. [modifying the adjective *difficult*]

5j. An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive and any modifiers or complements the infinitive has. The entire phrase may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

NOUN Two of my classmates are trying **to build a computer**. [direct object of the verb *are trying*]

ADJECTIVE Who was the first woman **to command a space shuttle**? [modifying the noun *woman*]

ADVERB We gathered outside **to observe the meteor shower**. [modifying the verb *gathered*]

EXERCISE Underline the infinitive or infinitive phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, write above the infinitive or infinitive phrase *N* for *noun*, *ADJ* for *adjective*, or *ADV* for *adverb*.

Example 1. Jacob was the first student ^{*ADJ*} to volunteer for the cleanup crew.

- Francis wrapped the sandwich in cellophane to keep the sandwich fresh.
- The assignment was not difficult to complete.
- At four o'clock, Charles began to paint the garage a dazzling shade of pink.
- Lee and his buddies got together to design a video game.
- Fruits and vegetables are good, nutritious foods to eat.
- The teacher asked the class not to talk.
- Terry used the World Wide Web to find information about lemurs.
- We tried to capture the runaway dog, but it was too fast and wily for us.
- To climb that colossal rock will take skill and concentration.
- They used nails and ropes to fasten the boards to the tree.

Verbals and Verbal Phrases

A *verbal* is a word that is formed from a verb but is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. There are three kinds of verbals: the *participle*, the *gerund*, and the *infinitive*. A verbal that has modifiers or complements is called a *verbal phrase*. Below are some examples of verbal phrases.

- PARTICIPIAL PHRASE** The language **spoken by the greatest number of people** is Mandarin. [The past participle *spoken* begins a phrase that modifies the noun *language*.]
- GERUND PHRASE** For some people, **learning a foreign language** can be a challenge. [The gerund *learning* begins a phrase used as the subject of the verb *can be*.]
- INFINITIVE PHRASE** I am learning **to speak Japanese**. [The infinitive *to speak* begins a phrase used as the direct object of the verb *am learning*.]

EXERCISE A Underline the verbal or verbal phrase in each of the following sentences. Above each verbal or verbal phrase, write *gerund*, *gerund phrase*, *participle*, *participial phrase*, *infinitive*, or *infinitive phrase*.

Example 1. Kevin researched different methods of measuring time. *gerund phrase*

- The plan accepted by the mayor involved a tax cut.
- Paula expected the paper airplane to fly.
- Feeling dizzy, Helena stopped and took a break.
- The weight of the sack made it difficult to carry.
- My uncle from Michigan enjoys canoeing.
- The squeaking wheel alerted the mechanic to a potential problem.
- Getting up early in the morning is sometimes a challenge.
- We bought a new wrench to fix the leaky faucet.
- The forgotten treasure lay at the bottom of the sea for three hundred years.
- Fascinated, Pepe stood and admired the mural for several hours.

EXERCISE B Decide how the underlined word groups are used in each of the following sentences. Options for each sentence are given in parentheses. Circle the correct option.

Example 1. Coughing and sneezing, Doug stayed home from band practice. (adjective or noun)

- The easiest part of the project is cutting out the pattern. (*direct object* or *predicate nominative*)
- The tools used by some ancient cultures are impressive. (*adverb* or *adjective*)
- Running five miles per week is Joanna's goal. (*subject* or *direct object*)
- They went to the park to have a picnic. (*adverb* or *adjective*)
- The coach's philosophy is to practice every day. (*predicate nominative* or *direct object*)

Appositives

5k. An **appositive** is a noun or a pronoun placed beside another noun or pronoun to identify or describe it.

EXAMPLES The Drama Club will be performing a play about the mythological hero **Perseus**. [The appositive identifies the noun *hero*.]

Only two eighth-graders, **Saul and I**, auditioned for the lead role. [The compound appositive identifies the noun *eighth-graders*.]

EXERCISE A Underline the appositive in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. Charles Dickens is known for his novel Great Expectations.

1. The scientist Marie Curie was born in 1867.
2. Her husband, Pierre Curie, was also a scientist.
3. The novelist Jack London wrote *Call of the Wild*.
4. Nathan studied the explorer Vasco da Gama.
5. Karen's brother, Darren, plays the flute.

EXERCISE B Underline the appositive in each of the following sentences. Then, circle the noun or pronoun that the appositive identifies or describes.

Example 1. The character Tom appears in Chapter One.

6. His cousin Ellen has a magnificent geode collection.
7. The famous baseball player Hank Aaron hit 755 home runs.
8. The book *Sunder* is John's favorite novel.
9. Harry told his sister Lana that he would take her to the carnival.
10. My mom, Regina, volunteers at the city library.

Appositive Phrases

51. An **appositive phrase** consists of an appositive and its modifiers.

EXAMPLES The restaurant's specialty is paella, **a Spanish dish of rice and various meats and spices**. [The appositive phrase identifies the noun *paella*.]

Paella, **one of the restaurant's specialties**, is a Spanish dish of rice and various meats and spices. [The appositive phrase identifies the noun *paella*.]

EXERCISE A Underline the appositive phrase in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. Pedro, a tall and slender man, rescued the kitten from the tree.

1. Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese explorer, was the first European to reach India by sea.
2. Last week, Freddie witnessed an odd event, a pig and a cat taking a nap together.
3. The professor, a woman of keen insight, explained her interpretation of the story.
4. Charles Dickens, author of *A Christmas Carol*, had to work in a shoe polish factory as a boy.
5. The band played "Panther Pride," the school's fight song, during the graduation ceremony.

EXERCISE B Underline the appositive phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, circle the noun or pronoun that the appositive phrase identifies or describes.

Example 1. The meteor shower, an unpredicted event, caught the scientists by surprise.

6. Hank Aaron, the right fielder from Alabama, broke Babe Ruth's record for home runs.
7. Make sure that you bring the most important item, your permission slip.
8. Paul, his cousin from St. Louis, could juggle six tennis balls at once.
9. The Mexican food, a delicious change of pace, spiced things up in the cafeteria.
10. Leslie's cat, an amazingly smart animal, learned to sit up and roll over on command.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE pages 112–113

Appositives and Appositive Phrases A

5k. An **appositive** is a noun or a pronoun placed beside another noun or pronoun to identify or describe it.

EXAMPLE The patriot **Andrew Jackson** became president in 1829. [The appositive identifies the noun *patriot*.]

5l. An **appositive phrase** consists of an appositive and its modifiers.

EXAMPLE Jackson wanted a new American Indian policy, **one with a guarantee of separate lands for native peoples**. [The appositive phrase identifies the noun *policy*.]

EXERCISE Underline the appositives and appositive phrases in the following sentences. Then, circle the noun or pronoun that the appositive identifies or describes.

Example 1. James Monroe, an earlier president, had hoped to establish a similar policy.

- The Battle of Bad Axe River, a struggle between a band of American Indians and the United States government, occurred in 1832.
- Black Hawk, a member of the Sauk nation, led the American Indian forces.
- Many Mesquakies, allies of the Sauks, followed Black Hawk into battle.
- This battle, the last skirmish of Black Hawk's War, resulted in the removal of the Sauks and Mesquakies from their homelands.
- Other Indian leaders, Chief Joseph, Crazy Horse, and Sitting Bull, fought in battles to protect their homelands and cultures.
- The Nez Perce leader, Chief Joseph, and his followers fought heroically.
- Chief Joseph and his forces, a band of fewer than five hundred warriors, defended themselves against a force of five thousand U.S. government troops.
- After a 1,300-mile trek to Canada, a long and difficult journey, the U.S. troops attacked.
- After a five-month siege, the Nez Perce were relocated to Indian Territory, a region that is now part of Oklahoma.
- Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, two leaders of the Sioux, also fought bravely in their battles against U.S. government forces.

Appositives and Appositive Phrases B

5k. An **appositive** is a noun or a pronoun placed beside another noun or pronoun to identify or describe it.

EXAMPLE Yellowstone National Park extends into three states, **Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho**.
[The appositives identify the noun *states*.]

5l. An **appositive phrase** consists of an appositive and its modifiers.

EXAMPLE The Channel Tunnel, **the underwater tunnel connecting England and France**, was completed in 1994. [The appositive phrase identifies the noun *Channel Tunnel*.]

EXERCISE Underline the appositives and appositive phrases in the following sentences. Then, circle the noun or pronoun that the appositive identifies or describes.

Example 1. Shelby, the winner of the spelling bee, was mentioned in the newspaper.

1. The pillow was made of an extremely soft material, goose feathers.
2. Gena's favorite comic strip, *Peanuts*, is a constant source of amusement to her.
3. We listened to beautiful piano sonatas by Beethoven, the famous composer.
4. Kevin gave his sister, Valerie, his old catcher's mitt as a gift.
5. The skateboarder, an expert at negotiating the half pipe, dazzled the crowd.
6. A single clue, a torn-up slipper, alerted Kim to the fact that her dog had been in the closet.
7. The impressive flag, a symbol of national pride, fluttered softly in the wind.
8. Berkeley has watched the movie *Babe* twelve times.
9. For the afternoon hike, Gino packed an orange, one of his favorite fruits.
10. Ricky chose to study the artist Picasso for his art project.
11. Uncle Mike, my father's younger brother, is an art director in Hollywood.
12. In New York we saw the musical *Cats*.
13. My grandmother went to high school with the famous film director Stanley Kubrick.
14. *West Side Story*, a retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*, was first a Broadway play.
15. My favorite book is *Lord of the Rings*, an epic fantasy in three volumes.
16. Ms. Hong, my math teacher, is retiring this year.
17. *A Prairie Home Companion*, Helen's favorite radio show, plays every Saturday night.
18. Jason, the last person you would expect, volunteered to cook.
19. Lara's hometown, Big Rapids, is in Michigan.
20. Roger has lived in three countries, England, Switzerland, and the United States.

Review A: Verbal Phrases

EXERCISE A Underline the verbal phrase in each of the following sentences. Above each verbal or verbal phrase, write *gerund*, *gerund phrase*, *participle*, *participial phrase*, *infinitive*, or *infinitive phrase*.

Example 1. ^{*participial phrase*} Feeling proud, Enrique walked down the hall with a confident swagger.

- Heloise wants to be an airline pilot.
- The meowing cat slunk out of the room.
- Jonathan went to the store to buy the latest magazine.
- Standing on its hind legs, the cute Chihuahua walked around the room.
- One of Jane's favorite pastimes is flying kites.
- Beth said that the most convenient time to study is at three o'clock.
- Ruth listened to the pleasant strumming of the Spanish guitar.
- Charles, seeing the clouds in the sky, proclaimed that it would soon rain.
- You can save some time by removing the shells first.
- The artifacts buried beneath layers of dirt and rock were important finds.

EXERCISE B Write a sentence using the specified verbal as indicated in each of the following items. If needed, you may add words to the verbal.

Example 1. owning (gerund as a subject) Owning a pet is a great responsibility.

- sailing (gerund phrase as a direct object) _____

- to become (infinitive phrase as a predicate nominative) _____

- agreeing (participial phrase) _____

- sailing (gerund phrase as subject) _____

- seeing (participial phrase) _____

Review B: Phrases

EXERCISE A Underline the prepositional phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, above each phrase, write *adjective phrase* or *adverb phrase*. Some sentences contain more than one prepositional phrase.

Example 1. In ^{ADV} what year did the settlement of ^{ADJ} North America by ^{ADJ} Europeans begin?

- In the East the Europeans built houses, roads, and cities.
- Areas of wilderness lay to the west.
- The land of the open prairie beckoned to them.
- Cattle could be raised throughout these wide-open ranges.
- There they could roam freely over large areas.
- On these ranges most of the beef eaten in cities would be raised.
- The hides of the cattle were branded to show ownership.
- A single cow was valuable to a rancher.
- Cattle that strayed were caught with a lasso.
- The pioneer spirit of most of the early settlers remained high in spite of the hardship.

EXERCISE B Underline the phrases in each of the following sentences. Then, above each phrase, write *participial phrase*, *gerund phrase*, *infinitive phrase*, *appositive phrase*, or *prepositional phrase*. Hint: Ignore any prepositional phrases within appositive phrases.

Example 1. ^{prepositional phrases} For thousands of years, ^{infinitive phrase} farmers have used plows to till the soil.

- Before the invention of the tractor, farmers used oxen or other animals to pull the plows.
- One farmworker, the plowman, would walk behind the plow to guide it.
- Another worker would stand in front of the oxen to guide them.
- Raising a crop was a strenuous job.
- One part of the job was plowing the soil, a difficult task.
- Fertilizer, an important ingredient for a productive crop, was added to the soil.
- A farmer would walk across the field, spreading the fertilizer.
- To nourish the ground, the farmer would work the fertilizer into the ground.
- Sowing the seeds was the next step.
- Unfortunately, some of the seeds would be eaten by birds.

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE **pages 95–113**

Review C: Phrases

EXERCISE A In each of the following sentences, identify the underlined phrase by writing above it *prepositional phrase, participial phrase, gerund phrase, infinitive phrase, or appositive phrase*. Hint: Ignore any prepositional phrases within a verbal phrase.

Example 1. In an effort ^{*infinitive phrase*} to protect seeds, farmers would often place scarecrows in the fields.

- Scarecrows seemed to scare away at least some of the birds.
- The weather, of course, plays a significant role in the growing of a crop.
- A crop ripening in the sun can look beautiful.
- Have you ever stood in a sunlit field to watch the wheat or some other crop sway in the wind?
- Corn, a plant that has several thousands of varieties, is an important crop.
- A stalk of corn can grow up to twenty feet tall.
- A field of corn glimmering in the sun is a beautiful sight.
- Many varieties of corn from the United States are grown in the Corn Belt.
- Eating corn on the cob is a common activity at some picnics.
- The planting and harvesting of crops such as corn is a demanding job.

EXERCISE B Underline the phrases in each of the following sentences. Then, above each phrase, write *participial phrase, gerund phrase, infinitive phrase, appositive phrase, or prepositional phrase*. Hint: Ignore any prepositional phrases within verbal or appositive phrases.

Example 1. ^{*participial phrase*} Glistening in the summer sun, the yogurt ^{*participial phrase*} topped with fruit looked delicious.

- The building towering ten stories tall is a treasured landmark.
- Watching the driveway intently, Janet waited for David.
- Kelly, wanting a treat, walked to the grocery store to buy a fresh watermelon.
- The tree, a tall pine with a thick trunk, was over a century old.
- This lesson's objective is to learn about phrases in action.
- Helena, one of the girls from our school, received a blue ribbon.
- The class heard the soft whimpering of a puppy.
- The girl standing on the stage is Celia.
- Sally's favorite hobby is learning about her family's history.
- Swooping down from the sky, the bird buzzed over Tim's head.

Literary Model: Using Prepositional Phrases

Just before dusk in the late afternoon of June 16, 1832, I found myself walking along the crowded docks of Liverpool, England, following a man by the name of Grummage. Though a business associate of my father, Mr. Grummage was, like my father, a gentleman. It was he my father delegated to make the final arrangements for my passage to America. (p. 7)

—from *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi

EXERCISE A On the lines below, write each preposition from the above passage. Next, write its object. Finally, write whether the prepositional phrase formed with that preposition and object is an *adverb* phrase or an *adjective* phrase. There are eleven prepositional phrases to identify, and the first one has been done for you.

before/dusk—adverb

EXERCISE B What is your reaction as a reader to so many prepositional phrases being used in three sentences of a novel? Do you think each phrase is necessary? Give examples from the passage to support your response.

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Writing Application: Using Infinitive Phrases

In writing and speaking, we often use infinitive phrases to speak of the future and our role in it. Consider these famous examples: In some marriage ceremonies, the couple is asked, “Do you promise *to love and to cherish this person*, today and always?” The President of the United States pledges “*to uphold and defend the Constitution*” when he or she is inaugurated. Witnesses on the stand swear “*to tell the truth and nothing but the truth.*” Many people resolve each January “*to read good books*” or “*to contact old friends.*” In fact, many vows—statements about what someone plans to do in the future—use infinitive phrases.

WRITING ACTIVITY

Marriage and inaugural vows mark major, life-changing events. However, many less momentous occasions call for vows, too, including joining school groups. For a group in which you participate or in which you would like to participate, write a short vow for members to repeat. The vow should remind members of what the group stands for and hopes to accomplish. It should use infinitives and infinitive phrases to help members focus on their role in making the group’s future successful.

PREWRITING If you have never paid much attention to vows, you may wish to look at a few before beginning your prewriting. Organizations such as the Thespians and the National Junior Honor Society would provide models to imitate. Then, consider the group whose vow you are composing. What sets the group apart from other groups? What are its goals for participants, the school, and the community? Why do students join the group? Answering these questions will provide material for shaping a fitting vow.

WRITING The bulk of the work in this exercise is the prewriting. Once you complete the prewriting, arrange the infinitives and infinitive phrases of the vow in the order that strikes you as most effective. Many vows work from the least difficult goal to the most difficult one, or from least to most important. Most vows save the most sweeping and critical goal for last. For example, the mission statement for a popular science fiction program ends with “to boldly go where no one has gone before.” The beginning is also important: Will students say “I promise” or “I pledge” or some other variation?

REVISING Vows are serious promises that we make about the future, so a serious tone and formal diction, or word choice, fit this writing occasion. Read the vow to other students in the group and to teachers who sponsor it. Would they add or change anything? Consider their suggestions.

PUBLISHING Pledge right now to check your vow for errors in spelling and punctuation. Then, make copies of the vow so that each student has one to read. With the group’s sponsor’s permission, post a nicely printed copy of the vow in the room where the group meets.

EXTENDING YOUR WRITING

If you enjoyed this exercise, you could develop it into a longer writing project. Taking a vow is one way to set goals for the future, and setting goals is the first step toward achieving them. For a speech class, write a speech in which you explain to your audience how goals can direct our actions and how to set realistic, achievable goals.