**THE PARTICIPLE**

**Recognize a participle when you find one.**

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

Consider the charts below.

**Regular Verbs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFINITIVE</th>
<th>SIMPLE PRESENT</th>
<th>SIMPLE PAST</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
<th>PRESENT PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to giggle</td>
<td>giggle(s)</td>
<td>giggled</td>
<td>giggled</td>
<td>giggling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help</td>
<td>help(s)</td>
<td>helped</td>
<td>helped</td>
<td>helping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to jump</td>
<td>jump(s)</td>
<td>jumped</td>
<td>jumped</td>
<td>jumping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Irregular Verbs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFINITIVE</th>
<th>SIMPLE PRESENT</th>
<th>SIMPLE PAST</th>
<th>PAST PARTICIPLE</th>
<th>PRESENT PARTICIPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to bring</td>
<td>bring(s)</td>
<td>brought</td>
<td>brought</td>
<td>bringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to ring</td>
<td>ring(s)</td>
<td>rang</td>
<td>rung</td>
<td>ringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to sing</td>
<td>sing(s)</td>
<td>sang</td>
<td>sung</td>
<td>singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to swim</td>
<td>swim(s)</td>
<td>swam</td>
<td>swum</td>
<td>swimming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Past participles, on the other hand, do not have a consistent ending. The past participles of all *regular* verbs end in *ed*, but the past participles of *irregular* verbs
vary considerably. *Bring* and *sing*, for example, have *brought* and *sung*—with wildly different endings—as past participles.

Consult a dictionary whenever you question the past participle form of an irregular verb.

**Know the functions of participles.**

Participles have three functions in sentences. They can be components of verb phrases, or they can function as adjectives or nouns.

**Participles in Verb Phrases**

A verb can have as many as four parts. When you form a multipart verb—a verb phrase—you use a combination of auxiliary verbs and participles.

Read these examples:

- **Our pet alligator ate Mrs. Olsen's poodle.**
  
  *Ate* = simple past tense (no participle).

- **When we arrived, Mrs. Olsen was beating our alligator over the head with a broom.**
  
  *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 examples:

The *crying* baby drew a deep 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*.

Consider these examples:

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

*Sneezing* = subject of the *action verb* *exhausts*.

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

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

We gave *bungee jumping* a chance.

*Bungee jumping* = indirect object of the action 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 = subject complement of the linking verb is.