Participial Phrases

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Understand the function of participial phrases.
• Identify participial phrases in sentences.
• Use participial phrases in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Participial Phrases (BLM 6)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and the practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.

1. Focus

Explain Participial Phrases

Say: A participial phrase is a group of words made up of a present or past participle and its modifiers or objects. Present participles end in -ing, such as the word ending. Past participles of regular verbs end in -ed, such as ended. Participial phrases act as adjectives that modify the subject of the sentence. These phrases are set off from the rest of the sentence with commas. At the beginning of a sentence, the participial phrase is followed by a comma. In the middle of a sentence, commas go on both sides of the phrase, and at the end of a sentence, the comma is placed in front of the phrase.

Model Using Participial Phrases

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources and read it aloud to students.

Destroyed over 100 years ago, the tree was a symbol of the town’s history.

Old Oak, enclosed by a fence, is protected from vandals.

Modeling Text

Say: Both of these sentences begin with participial phrases that are in the past tense. Destroyed and enclosed both end in -ed. The first phrase, destroyed over 100 years ago, modifies the tree, the subject of the first sentence. Enclosed by a fence modifies Old Oak, the subject of the second sentence. Writers use participial phrases as an alternative to sentences with compound verbs. For example, I could write the second sentence with a compound verb like this: “Old Oak is enclosed by a fence and protected by vandals.” This says the same thing, just using a different sentence structure. Participial phrases help writers use a variety of sentence structures and create informational texts that read smoothly and clearly.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Participial Phrases

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to work with a partner to identify the participial phrases in the sentences. (Students do not need to copy sentences.)

1. Retired for the last twenty years, the couple enjoys sitting under the big oak tree.
2. Shocked by the mayor’s decision to cut down the tree, the president of the Historical Society urged residents to become involved.

Practice Text

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Sentences with Participial Phrases

Invite pairs to share their results. Discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:
• What is the participial phrase?
• How do you know the phrase uses a past participle?
• What word or words does the phrase modify?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that participial phrases act as adjectives and can appear in different places in a sentence. These phrases include a present or past participle and any modifiers or objects of the participle. Remember to use commas to set participial phrases off from the rest of a sentence.

If you would like to give students additional practice using participial phrases, have them complete BLM 6.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their answers and sentences from BLM 6. Provide corrective feedback as necessary.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs are not ready to learn about participial phrases. As partners work together, use the time to focus on the difference between present and regular past tense verbs. Concentrate on two or three common verbs they will use in oral language (e.g., walk/walked, clean/cleaned). Create a two-column chart with the column heads “Present” and “Past” and write the forms of the verbs in the appropriate columns. Read the words with students and use them in sentences as you pantomime actions to build understanding.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity. Provide the following sentence frames:

The participial phrase is ______.
It modifies ______.