Participial Phrases

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 changing. Past participles of regular verbs end in -ed, such as changed. Participial phrases are set off from the rest of the sentence with commas, and act as adjectives that modify the subject of the sentence.

Model Using Participial Phrases

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

According to the Board of Education, no funds are available to pay for the repairs.
Expressing his concern, the longtime resident wrote a letter to the editor.

Modeling Text

Say: According to the Board of Education is a participial phrase. It starts with the present participle according and modifies the subject of the sentence, no funds. A comma is placed after the participial phrase to separate it from the rest of the sentence. Because this phrase occurs at the beginning of the sentence, it’s followed by one comma. But participial phrases can also fall in the middle of a sentence, after the subject, in which case commas go before and after the phrase, or at the end of the sentence, when a comma goes before the phrase. In the second sentence, Expressing his concern is a participial phrase and is set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma. This phrase modifies the subject, the longtime resident. Writers use participial phrases to vary their sentence structures. A variety of sentence structures makes a text read smoothly.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Participial Phrases

Display the practice text on chart paper or use 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. Old Oak may be over 300 years old, according to town records.
2. Some residents, surviving on little money for a year, want the mall to be built.
3. Working around the clock, the mayor is trying to make the right decision for the town.

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 volunteers to share their results. Discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:

- What is the participial phrase?
- How do you know the phrase uses a present participle?
- What word or words does the phrase modify?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that participial phrases act as adjectives and are set off from the rest of the sentence with commas. They contain a present participle (ending in -ing) or a past participle (ending in -ed). Use participial phrases in your persuasive writing and to vary your sentence structures.

If you would like to give students additional practice using participial phrases, have them complete BLM 3.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their answers to BLM 3. Use students’ answers to provide corrective feedback. Ask students to share what they learned about participial phrases.

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 adjectives. Show students an object such as a pencil and model describing it in simple sentences such as:

The pencil is yellow.
The pencil is thin.

Write your sentences on chart paper. Give students a sentence frame and ask them to describe the pencil or another object:

The [pencil, book, etc.] is ______.

Write students’ sentences on chart paper.

Intermediate and Advanced

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

The participial phrase is ______.
It modifies ______.