

Using Participial Phrases

Action! That's the specialty of participles. When you read a sentence such as *The man was running*, your mind goes through a series of steps. First, you probably form a vague picture of a man. Then, you picture running. Last of all, you connect the words *man* and *running* and imagine a man running.

However, if you had read the expression *running man*, you would have seen a film in your mind, not a photograph. That film would have been rolling from the first word. Participles like *running* can turn a slide show into a movie.

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

cut flowers, painted walls, voting booth, broken promises

A **participial phrase** consists of a participle and any complements or modifiers it may have. The entire participial phrase acts as an adjective.

You can create a participial phrase by taking the verb and its complements and modifiers out of one sentence and adding them to another sentence. Sometimes, you can even make this kind of revision without changing a word.

Original:	People protested loudly. They were <i>tired of the overcrowding</i> .
Combined:	People, <i>tired of the overcrowding</i> , protested loudly.
Combined:	<i>Tired of the overcrowding</i> , people protested loudly.

At other times, you'll need to make small changes.

Original:	Parents called the principal. <i>They had heard</i> about the proposal.
Combined:	<i>Having heard</i> about the proposal, parents called the principal.

Because participles are verb forms, participial phrases can add life and action to your writing. When you use a participial phrase to combine sentences, you make your writing more exciting and more powerful.

DIRECTIONS *Combine each set of sentences by inserting a participial phrase. The part to be inserted is underlined in the first five items. Set off participial phrases with commas.*

EXAMPLE	I <u>thought of my eighth-grade sister</u> . I decided to join the committee.
	<i>Thinking of my eighth-grade sister, I decided to join the committee.</i>

1. The overcrowding at our school has created many problems. This was caused by people moving to the suburbs.

2. Frantic students trip over each other. They bump shoulders in the hallways. They try to get to class before the bell rings.

3. Some students avoid the busy hallways. They do not want to be late to class.

4. These dedicated students carry all their books. They are loaded down with heavy backpacks. They hope to avoid a stop at their lockers.

5. Many teachers frequently complain about the crowded halls. The teachers spend their free periods in their classrooms.

6. The principal decided to meet with the student council. He was frustrated by the situation.

7. The meeting was held in the school auditorium. It was called to propose possible solutions.

8. The student council suggested a longer time between classes. They exchanged ideas. They questioned other students.

9. Frustrated students proposed moving the lockers out of the crowded hallways. They insisted on more action.

10. Teachers suggested staggering class times. They wanted a quick solution to the problem.

Answer Keys: (Answers will vary. These are sample answers.)

1. The overcrowding at our school, caused by people moving to the suburbs, has created many problems.
2. Bumping shoulders in the hallways and trying to get to class before the bell rings, frantic students trip over each other.
3. Some students, not wanting to be late to class, avoid the busy hallways.
4. Loaded down with heavy backpacks and hoping to avoid a stop at their lockers, these dedicated students carry all their books.
5. Complaining about the crowded halls, many teachers spend their free periods in their classrooms.
6. Frustrated by the worsening situation, the principal decided to meet with the student council.
7. Called to propose possible solutions, the meeting was held in the school auditorium.
8. The student council exchanging ideas and questioning other students, suggested a longer time between classes.
9. Insisting on more action, frustrated students proposed moving the lockers out of the crowded hallways.
10. Wanting a quick solution to the problem, teachers suggested staggering class times.