

# **IMPROVING SENTENCE PATTERNS**

## **PARTICIPIAL AND INFINITIVE PHRASES**

# CHAPTER 1, SECTION 1

## Participial and Infinitive Phrases

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Clauses vs. Phrases
- ▶ Verbal Phrases
  - Present Participial Phrases
  - Past Participial Phrases
  - Infinitive Phrases

The purpose of this chapter is to—

- Introduce students to **strategies** for improving their writing.
- Explain how to use these strategies **correctly**.
- Discuss common errors to avoid when using these strategies.\*

# START BY COMPARING TWO SENTENCES

## SENTENCE 1

Eniko sold her  
netsuke collection.

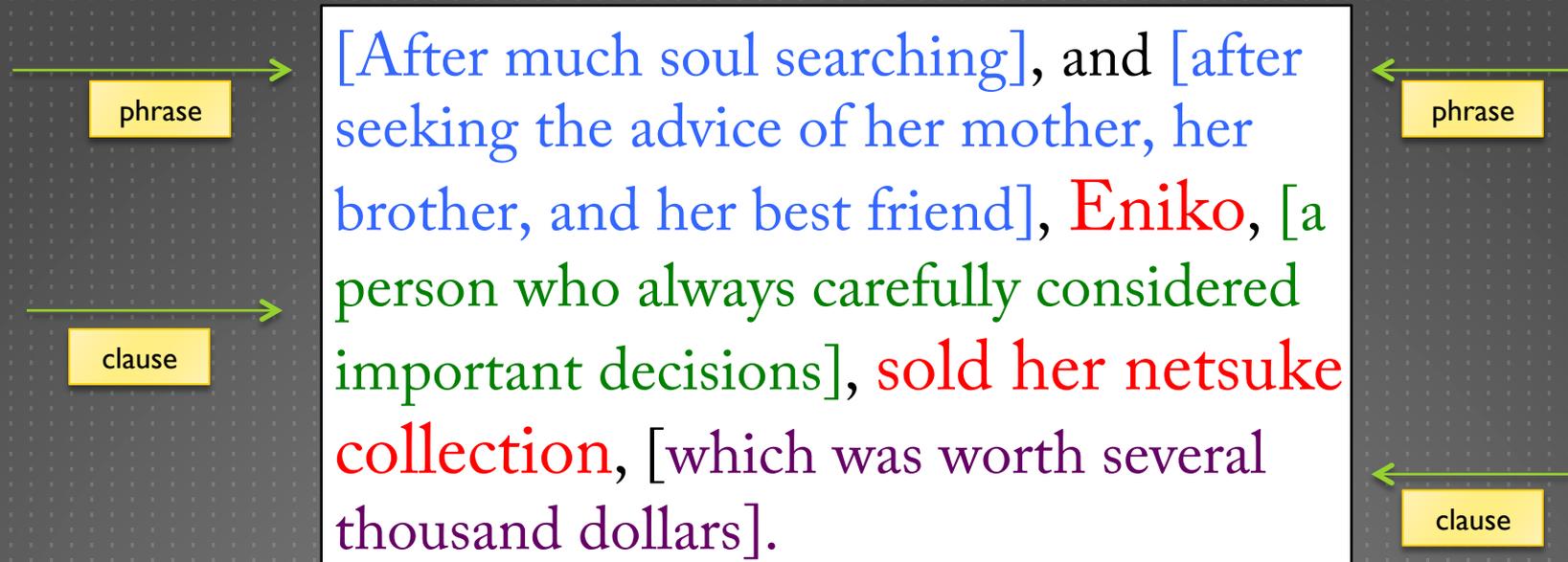
## SENTENCE 2

After much soul searching, and after seeking the advice of her mother, her brother, and her best friend, Eniko, a person who always carefully considered important decisions, sold her netsuke collection, which was worth several thousand dollars.

Essentially, both sentences say the same thing.

After much soul searching, and after seeking the advice of her mother, her brother, and her best friend, **Eniko**, a person who always carefully considered important decisions, **sold her netsuke collection**, which was worth several thousand dollars.

# THE DIFFERENCE IS THE ADDITION OF MODIFYING CLAUSES AND PHRASES



# CLAUSES VS. PHRASES

**CLAUSE:** a word group that contains a subject and a verb.

**PHRASE:** a word group that does not contain a subject and a verb.

# CLAUSE AS MODIFIER

Adverb clause answering the question "when."

**As he drove to work,** Harry saw a black cat run in front of his car.

# PHRASE AS MODIFIER

Participial phrase modifying "Harry"

**Driving to work,** Harry saw a black cat run in front of him.

# SIMILAR MEANINGS DIFFERENT GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE

Subordinate Clause as Modifier

(S)

(V)

**As he drove to work,**  
Harry saw a black  
cat run in front of  
his car.

Participial Phrase as Modifier

(no subject)

**Driving to work,**  
Harry saw a black cat  
run in front of him.

# VERBAL PHRASES

PRESENT PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

PAST PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

INFINITIVE PHRASE

# PRESENT PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

## FEATURES

Form of the verb that ends in **-ing**.

Without a helping verb, it **cannot be the main verb of a sentence**.

Can be a **single word modifier**.

Can be an entire **phrase modifier**.

## EXAMPLES

**Running, singing, dancing, laughing, explaining, etc.**

[“singing” is **not** the main verb]      [main verb]

**Singing** in the rain **is** fun.

The **running** man stumbled.

**Rounding the corner**, the man fell.

# PAST PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

## FEATURES

Form of the verb that you use with helping verbs (have, has, had) along with the past form of a verb (**-ed, -en**)

Can be a **single word modifier**.

Can be an entire **phrase modifier**.

## EXAMPLES

**Have eaten, has defeated, had bought**

  
**The defeated** army retreated.

  
**Pursued by the enemy,** the army retreated.

# INFINITIVE PHRASE

## FEATURES

To + Present Tense Form  
of a Verb

Can be used as a **noun**.

Can be used as an **adjective**.

Can be used as an **adverb**.

## EXAMPLES

To think, to be, to reason

[subject]

[verb]

To create great art is a challenge.

[infinitive phrase modifies the noun "book"]

I have written a book to help students.

[infinitive phrase modifies the adjective "easy"]

The book is easy to read.

Note: this is a bit challenging!



# TO SUM UP

- ▶ The **present participle** is a verbal that ends in –ing and is used as an adjective (note: this is different from –ing words that are used as nouns)
- ▶ The **past participle** is the form of the verb used with the helping verbs have, has, and had, along with the past tense form of a verb.
- ▶ An **infinitive** is formed by adding “to” to the present tense of a verb
- ▶ The infinitive (to + verb), the present participle (verb + ing) and the past participle (have/has/had + past tense of verb) are **not the main verbs in a sentence**—that’s why they’re called **VERBALS**.
- ▶ **Correctly punctuating** these verbal phrases is important! Follow the rules and guidelines presented in this section of our text.

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