

Student Name _____

Student ID _____

EWRT Instructor _____

Date Completed _____



USING VERBAL PHRASES IN YOUR SENTENCES

What can they help you do?

- ✓ Create more sophisticated sentences of varying lengths and avoid choppiness
- ✓ Remove unnecessary repetition
- ✓ Figure out what's a sentence vs. a fragment (incomplete sentence) or run on (2 or more sentences punctuated as if it is only one sentence)
- ✓ Convey the complex ideas that are in your head

What do you think of the following 2 sentences?

1. Tina saw her friend's new recipe on Tik Tok. Tina made the pasta dish with feta, tomatoes, and penne the next day.

Short? Chippy? Repetitive? Unsophisticated? **YES, YES, YES, YES!!!!!!**

You can avoid short, chippy, repetitive sentences by using verbal phrases. They will help you say **MORE** with your sentences and avoid fragments and run ons.

2. **Seeing her friend's new recipe on Tik Tok**, Tina made the pasta dish with feta, tomatoes, and penne the next day.

Doesn't this sound better? Well, let's make sure it's not a run on.

Is "seeing her friend's new recipe on Tik Tok" a sentence or fragment?

(A sentence needs a subject and verb and it needs to be a complete thought.)

"Seeing her friend's new recipe on Tik Tok" is an **-ing VERBAL PHRASE**.

It can't stand alone; it needs the independent clause next to it.

Verbals or verbal phrases **look like a verb**, but they **don't act like a verb**, it's a verbal! You can do a time test to prove that will change the tense of the VERB in the sentence but NOT the verbal phrase by adding a tomorrow in front of the sentence.

Tomorrow, seeing her friend's new recipe on Tik Tok, Tina **will make** the pasta dish with feta tomatoes, and penne the next day.

Only **the main verb—made—**turned to **will make** and "seeing her friend's recipe on Tik Tok" stayed the same because it's a verbal phrase!

Verbal phrases come in TWO other forms for a total of THREE different forms, which come below.

Gripped by the reels showing dogs wearing their owners Croc shoes as hats, Hien missed her 10am Zoom meeting.

To impress a girl he just met at a party, Tony posted 12 videos of himself skydiving on Instagram.

The verbal phrases are underlined above. Again, they are not sentences, as they aren't complete thoughts that can stand alone. **They are modifiers providing more information in your sentences.** Again, they come in three forms:

- 1) - ing
- 2) -to + verb
- 3) -ed

With verbals, you can also create the impression of **simultaneity**—that is, the impression that several things are happening at once:

Mai stayed informed on her large family through Facebook, learning the score of her niece's volleyball game, watching a video of her brother's band, and seeing her cousins' trip to Disneyland. (-ing form)

Who is **learning** the score of her niece's v-ball game? _____

Who is **watching** a video? _____

Who was **seeing** her cousins' trip? _____

We will now focus on the -ing verbal phrase.

NOTE: The DOER (or performer) of the action in the verbal phrase must also be the subject of the sentence or nearest clause.

EXERCISE #1: UNDERLINE THE VERBAL PHRASES

Read these sentences and underline the verbal phrases.

- A) Knowing he can waste many hours going down the rabbit hole that is YouTube, Kyle makes sure he searches for one topic at a time and for a maximum of ten minutes.
- B) Kristine uses Instagram and Tik Tok the most, but charges her phone in the kitchen at night, disconnecting from social media and her phone in general.
- C) Marti, proving he is popular, amassed 576 friends on *Facebook* in two months.

Verbal phrases can even help you introduce direct quotes; underline the verbal in the following sentence.

Claire Cain Miller in "Everyone Says Social Media Is Bad for Teens... Proving It Is Another Thing" writes about the lack of research on the effects of social media and how we define social media, claiming, "While many scientists share the concern, there is little research to prove that social media is harmful — or to indicate which sites, apps or features are problematic; there isn't even a shared definition of what social media is, which leaves parents, policymakers and other adults in teenagers' lives without clear guidance on what to be worried about" (1).

Notice how this writer has:

- a) the author of the article,
- b) the title of article
- c) what the article is about
- d) the verbal "claiming" combined with the direct quote

EXERCISE #2: CREATING -ING VERBALS

DIRECTIONS: Combine each group of sentences by creating an **-ing** verbal. (These might be the easiest verbals to create.) There is more than one way to combine some of these. Create **less choppy** sentences that often **get rid of the verb to be** (which can be boring) and **repeating information**.

Write out the complete combined sentence to really get a feel for these. Usually the second sentence needs to be made into the –ing verbal.

-ing verbals are useful in expressing:

- %1 simultaneous action
- %1 cause and effect (the verbal phrase is the part that expresses the cause)
- %1 time if you insert a time word such as **before** or **after** in front of an **-ing** verbal.

Example:

I would often be stopped by strangers and asked about my ethnic background.
I was living in Washington DC the year after I graduated from college.

Solution:

Living in Washington DC the year after I graduated from college, I would often be stopped by strangers and asked about my ethnic background.

1. The *Color of Water* by James Mc Bride manages to (mostly) escape the cliché of the tragic Mulatto.

This book captures many readers' hearts.

2. Many of us ask the presumptuous question, "what are you?" so we begin to understand a person.

Many of us are trying to get at the deeper, murkier issues of identity and belonging.

3. Multi-racial people encounter the challenge of people trying to categorize them.
Multi-racial people struggle to fulfill cultural expectations.

4. Multi-racial people are proof of an increasingly global society.
Multi-racial people act as solder between various communities.

5. The most recent US census counts over twenty million multiracial inhabitants.
The census reminds us to ask sticky questions and refuse easy answers.

ANSWER KEY:

1. The *Color of Water* by James Mc Bride manages to (mostly) escape the cliché of the tragic Mulatto, capturing many readers' hearts.
2. Trying to get at the deeper, murkier issues of identity and belonging, many of us ask the presumptuous question, "what are you?" so we begin to understand a person.
3. Multi-racial people encounter the challenge of people trying to categorize them and struggling to fulfill cultural expectations.
4. Multi-racial people, acting as solder between various communities, are proof of an increasingly global society.
5. The most recent US census counts over twenty million multiracial inhabitants, reminding us to ask sticky questions and refuse easy answers.