

Non-Finite Verbs & “Verbiness”

Finite verb = action verb

- has a subject

Non-finite verb = verbs acting as adjective, adverb or noun

- does not have a subject
- also called “verbals”

Participle = present continuous (-ing) or simple past (-ed) tense of a verb

- *can be a finite or non-finite verb*

Non-finite verb forms:

- **present participle** = *-ing*
 - = an adjective (“present participle adjective”)
 - or a noun (“gerund”)
- **past participle** = *-ed*
 - = an adjective (“past participle adjective”)
- **infinitive** = “to” form of a verb
 - “infinitive” is from Latin for “indefinite” or “unrestricted” because the verb form is not tied to a specific case (person or number)
 - can be an adjective, adverb or noun

- *I **spent** money on a new phone.*
- *My old one was **spent**.*
- ***Spending** money on a new phone is annoying.*
***spend** > **spent** = irregular participle*

Participles

verb:	Finite form	Non-finite forms:		
	participle (finite verb form)	present participle adjective	gerund (noun form)	past participle adjective
boil	<i>The water is boiling The water boiled</i>	<i>The boiling water is very hot</i>	<i>Boiling makes water very hot</i>	<i>Boiled water is very hot</i>
cook	<i>Dad is cooking dinner Dad cooked dinner</i>	<i>Dinner cooking makes me happy</i>	<i>Cooking is fun</i>	<i>Cooked food is better for you than raw food</i>
finish	<i>I am finishing my hw I finished my hw</i>		<i>Finishing is the hardest</i>	<i>I have my homework finished</i>
smile	<i>The boy is smiling The boy smiled</i>	<i>The smiling boy is happy</i>	<i>Smiling makes others happy</i>	
swim	<i>The dog is swimming fast The dog swam fast</i>	<i>The swimming dog is getting there fast</i>	<i>The dog got there fast by swimming</i>	

Infinitives

The infinitive expresses a state or result of action – not the action itself:

infinitive adjective	infinitive adverb	infinitive noun
<i>soup to boil completes dinner</i>	<i>it is good to boil water</i>	<i>to boil water makes it hot</i>
<i>The best way to cook is baking</i>	<i>I am hoping to cool tomorrow</i>	<i>I learned how to cook fish</i>
<i>I have homework to finish *</i>	<i>She works to advance her career</i>	<i>We want to go home</i>
<i>* note how the adjective and adverb forms of "to finish" are essentially interchangeable</i>		

To test whether the participle or infinitive is an adjective/adverb or noun, remove it from the sentence, and see...

Testing for participle adjective	Testing for participle noun (gerund)	Testing for infinitive modifier or noun
if the sentence <u>is grammatically correct</u> and/or still makes sense, the participle is <u>an adjective</u> , as adjectives <u>are not</u> essential sentence elements	if the sentence <u>is not grammatically correct</u> and/or still makes sense, it is a noun, as nouns <u>are</u> essential sentence elements	if the sentence <u>is not grammatically correct</u> and/or still makes sense, it is a <u>noun</u> , as nouns <u>are</u> essential sentence elements; however, if it is still grammatically correct, then the infinitive is a <u>modifier</u> (adjective or adverb)
Boiled water is hot. remove the participle "boiled": --> Boiled Water is hot. = a valid sentence <-- therefore "boiled" is an <u>adjective</u>	Boiling water takes 5 minutes. remove the participle "boiling": --> Boiling Water takes 5 minutes. = incoherent sentence <-- therefore "boiling" is a <u>noun</u>	To boil water makes it hot. remove the infinitive "to boil": --> To boil Water makes it hot. = incoherent sentence <-- therefore "to boil" is a <u>noun</u> or: I have homework to finish --> I have homework to finish = valid sentence <-- therefore "to finish" is an adjective

“Verbiness”

Participle adjectives, gerunds and infinitives retain their “verbiness”, or their indication of an action.

Just like **finite verbs**, **non-finite verbs** can have adverbs, objects, and prepositional phrases.

** they do not have subjects!! (if so, they’d become a finite-verb)

Let’s review those grammatical forms:

Adverb = usually describes a verb as to *how*, *how much* *where*, *when*, etc.

She runs fast

“fast” describes how she runs

Object = recipient of the action of a verb

direct object = what was acted on by the verb

I gave a book

= “book” is what I “gave”

indirect object = the recipient what was acted on by the verb

I gave her a book

= I gave a book “to her”

Prepositional phrase = a modifying phrase to describe another noun or verb

The keys are on the table by the door.

“on the table” and “by the door” are prepositional phrases

Non-finite verbs can be modified by all of these sentence parts.

Let’s see how:

Verbiness of Participle Adjectives:

- participle adjective indicating an action:

*I prefer my food **cooked***

***Running**, I was still late.*

- participle adjective with an adverb:

*I prefer my food cooked **thoroughly***

- “thoroughly” modifies the “cooked” not the verb “prefer”

- participle adjective with an object:

*Running **home**, I was still late*

- “home” is the object of “running”, which describes “I was still late”

- participle adjective with prepositional phrase*:

*Running **to my house**, I was still late*

- “to my house” = prepositional phrase

Verbiness of Gerunds:

- gerund indicating an action:

***Cooking** takes practice*

- “cooking” = subject (noun) but still indicates the action of “cook”

- gerund with an object:

*Cooking **food** takes practice*

- food = the object of “cooking”
- practice = the object of “takes”

- gerund with an adverb:

*Cooking food **well** takes practice*

Verbiness of Infinitives:

- infinitive as object:

*I learned **to build***

- “to build” = direct object infinitive noun of “learned”

- infinitive with adverb:

*I learned **how to build***

- “how” modifies the infinitive “to build” and not the verb “learned”

- infinitive w/ object:

*I learned **how to build a computer***

- “computer” = the object of infinitive noun “to build”

QuickQuiz:

Exams __ not fun.

- a. is
- b. are

Taking exams __ not fun

- a. is
- b. are