

# RANLY ON GRAMMAR

Grammar & Punctuation For  
Writers and Editors

by Professor Don Ranly, Ph.D.

## I. The verbals

A. The participle — verbal adjective — properties of a verb and of an adjective

1. A verb (no person, number, mood, voice [passive?])
  - a. Tenses (not really, but ... )
    - (I) Present — add “ing” — *walking*
    - (II) Past — add “ed” to regular verb — *walked*
  - b. Can take an object —  
*Example: The child eating the apple is my granddaughter.*

2. An adjective

*Examples: The cheating student received an “F.”*  
*The cheated student sued the university.*

B. The gerund — verbal noun — properties of a verb and of a noun

1. A verb — (no person, number, voice, mood, tense) — can take an object of a verb or object of a preposition

*Example: Loving her was easy.*

2. A noun — Can stand by itself; can be subject of a sentence or object.

*Examples: Sleeping was his favorite thing.*  
*He liked sleeping.*

C. The infinitive — verbal noun, adjective or adverb

1. Formation — “to” write — split infinitives
2. Noun — *To write well is difficult.*
3. Adjective — *This is my way to fight cancer.*
4. Adverb — *She is ready to quit.*
5. Properties of a verb (no person, number or mood)
  - a. Tenses
    - I. Present — “to go”
    - II. Present perfect — “to have gone”

## Session 4:

# Verbals, Danglers & Other Stuff

Other sessions in this series:

1. *Clauses, Sentences, Punctuation*
2. *Parts of Speech — Nouns and Pronouns*
3. *The Verb*

b. Voices

- I. Active — to love
- II. Passive — to be loved

c. Can take an object

*Example: To love him was not easy.*

## II. The danglers

A. Participial phrases

When you begin a sentence with a participial phrase, be sure the understood subject of the participle is the same as the subject of the clause.

1. Correct — *Working in the yard, he became quite sunburned.*
2. Incorrect — *Working in the yard, the sun burned her quite badly.*

(The same is true of a sentence that begins with a past participle.)

Session 4 continues on back ...

## Exercise 7

Above each word, indicate the part of speech

If I were he, I would try to forget it. The problem is that he dislikes her intensely. He is not disturbed by most people, but he is not able to dismiss what she had done.

The incident is said to have happened yesterday. She was coming out of the building when she saw him. On the spot she demanded that his best friend be fired. Imagine! In just one month, he will have worked here for 50 years.

Now list the verbs or verb phrases in the column on the right, and list their person, number, tense, voice and mood. Also, list verbals that are not part of a verb phrase.

Note the following example:

She was trying to move. Before living here, she had lived in Rome.

<u>Verb or verb phrase</u>	<u>Person</u>	<u>Num.</u>	<u>Tense</u>	<u>Voice</u>	<u>Mood</u>
was trying	3rd	sing.	past	active	indic.
to move (infinitive)			pres.	active	
had lived	3rd	sing.	past	active	indic.
			perf.		

Verb or  
verb phrase    Person    Number    Tense    Voice    Mood

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## Exercise 8

Above each word, indicate the part of speech.

Editors of magazines and certainly book editors have to deal with writers constantly. Writers do not like to see their copy changed without a good reason. Editors who can explain their editing have a great advantage. This is especially true in grammatical matters. If I were an editor, I would not tell a writer that she is ungrammatical without knowing precisely why. If you learn this now, you will have learned an invaluable lesson.

Now list the verbs or verb phrases in a column, and list their person, number, tense, voice and mood. Also list verbals that are not part of a verb phrase.

Verb or  
verb phrase    Person    Number    Tense    Voice    Mood

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### Session 4 from front ...

#### B. Gerund phrases

When you begin a sentence with a gerund phrase, be sure the understood subject of the gerund is the same as the subject of the clause.

1. Correct — *After walking in the warm sun, we enjoyed a cool swim.*
2. Incorrect — *After walking in the warm sun, the cool shower felt great.*

#### C. Infinitive phrases

When you begin a sentence with an infinitive phrase, be sure the understood subject of the infinitive is the same as the subject of the clause.

1. Correct — *To be healthy, you must watch what you eat.*
2. Incorrect — *To be healthy, a diet is a must.*

#### III. Subject — verb agreement

- A. Plural subjects require plural verbs.
- B. Compound subjects require plural verbs.
- C. Words joined to a subject by "accompanied by," "together with," "along with," "as well as" do not change number.
- D. Two or more subjects joined by "or" or "nor" require a single verb.  
*Example: Neither Tom nor Mary was there.*
- E. Sentences beginning with the expletive "here" or "there" get their number from the number of what follows the verb.  
*Examples: Here are three books.*  
*There is no one in the room.*
- F. The collective noun can be singular or plural.
- G. Words such as — each, neither, either, someone, somebody, anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, no one, one, are singular.

#### IV. Kinds of clauses

- A. Noun clauses — subject or object of a verb  
*Examples: What I did is no business of yours.*  
*He doesn't like what I did.*
- B. Adjective clauses — modify nouns  
*Examples: The man who came to dinner is my uncle.*  
*This is the book that I love.*
- C. Adverb clauses — modify verbs  
*Example: When my time comes, I'll know it.*

#### V. Parallel Structure — Place parallel thoughts into

parallel forms or constructions.

- A. Most common errors — unnecessary interchange of:
    1. an infinitive and a gerund
    2. a noun with a gerund or infinitive
    3. a noun with a dependent clause
    4. an adjective with a verb
    5. an adjective with an independent clause
    6. a gerund or an infinitive with an independent clause
  - B. Principles for parallelism
    1. Coordinating conjunctions must join similar constructions.
    2. Correlative conjunctions must join similar constructions.
    3. Parts of a series must have similar constructions.
- #### VI. Consistent Structure
- A. Consistent voice of the verb
  - B. Consistent subject
  - C. Consistent person
  - D. Consistent number
  - E. Consistent tense