English as a Second Language (ESL): Verbals

A **verbal** is a verb form that acts as a noun, adjective, or adverb. The three types of verbals include gerunds, participles, and infinitives.

Gerunds

A **gerund** functions as a noun, usually as the subject or object of the sentence. Gerunds are verb-like in form but end in –*ing*. For example:

- **Playing** piano is Alex's favorite hobby. (*acts as subject*)

- **Reading** directions is important before taking a test. (*acts as subject*)

- Sara enjoys **cleaning** her room. (*acts as object*)

Participles

A **participle** functions as an adjective, adding extra information to the sentence. Present participles end in –*ing* while past participles end in –*ed* or an irregular form. Participles can appear in the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence.

- **Hoping** to win the prize, John submitted as many raffle tickets as possible. (present participle)

- The zookeeper fed the **starving** lions. (present participle)

- **Damaged** by the storm, the deck required some repairs. (past participle)

- Daniel is **known** for his computer skills. (past participle)

Infinitives

An **infinitive** functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb and consists of the word **to** followed by the base form of the verb (for example, *to eat*).

- Ann taught her dog **to sit** on command.

- **To prepare** for the party, Donna put on her favorite dress.

** Avoid making **split infinitives**. No words should be between the word **to** and the base form of the verb. For example, the sentence "*Be sure **to** carefully **mark** each answer*" would be better written as "*Be sure **to mark** each answer carefully.*"