

Exercise Answers

Identify the verb phrases in the following sentences. State whether they are main verb phrases, present participle phrases, past participle phrases or gerunds.

1. Encouraged by her coach's praise, Melody repeated her routine on the balance beam.

encouraged by her coach's praise: past participle phrase, modifies *Melody*

repeated her routine on the balance beam: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form.

2. Barbara has persuaded the ticket agent to let her on the plane scheduled to depart immediately.

has persuaded the ticket agent to let her on the plane (main verb phrase, past tense verb form)

Note: *the ticket agent* is a noun phrase, the direct object of *persuaded*, and it is followed by a string of modifiers. In the sentences below, I will point out direct objects and treat them as parts of the verb phrase. However, if you don't include them in the verb phrase at this stage, it's OK.

3. Though bitten by mosquitoes, the hikers smiled as they neared the peak.

bitten by mosquitoes: Past participle phrase modifying *the hikers*.

smiled as they neared the peak: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form. *As they neared the peak* is an adverb clause which modifies *smiled*, but we haven't studied clauses yet, so you don't need to worry about this too much at this stage.

neared the peak: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form. *The peak* is the direct object of *neared*.

4. Described as almost a saint by his mother, Ernesto tried to live up to her expectations.

described as almost a saint by his mother: Past participle phrase modifying *Ernesto*.

tried to live up to her expectations: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form.

To live up to her expectations is an infinitive phrase modifying *live up*; technically it is a verb phrase, but I did not ask you to identify infinitive phrases for this exercise.

5. The jade Buddha reclining in the hall was one of three gifts sent by Sri Lankan monks.

reclining in the hall: Present participle phrase modifying *the jade Buddha*.

was: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form.

sent by Sri Lankan monks: Past participle phrase modifying *gifts*.

6. Daydreaming about wooden boats was occupying more of Antonio's time.

Daydreaming about wooden boats: Gerund phrase—it looks like a past participle phrase, but it is functioning as a noun phrase, the subject of the sentence.

was occupying more of Antonio's time: Main verb phrase, the auxiliary + the main verb = present progressive. *More of Antonio's time* is the direct object of *was occupying*.

7. Buried in a mud slide, their Jaguar presented a pathetic sight.

buried in a mud slide: Past participle phrase, modifying *their Jaguar*.

presented a pathetic sight: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form. *A pathetic sight* is the direct object of *presented*.

8. Jane found the family cabin occupied by strangers.

found: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form. *The family cabin* is the direct object of *found*.

occupied by strangers: Past participle phrase modifying *the family cabin*.

9. Allegedly haunted by ghosts, the Victorian mansion was on the market for years.

allegedly haunted by ghosts: Past participle phrase modifying *the Victorian mansion*.

was on the market for years: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form.

10. Divers searching for pearls discovered the underwater ruins mistakenly believed by some to be part of Atlantis.

searching for pearls: Present participle phrase modifying *divers*.

discovered the underwater ruins mistakenly believed by some to be part of Atlantis: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form. Everything after *discovered* is its direct object of *discovered*.

mistakenly believed by some to be part of Atlantis: Past participle phrase modifying ruins. Everything after *believed* is part of a prepositional phrase modifying *believed*. *To be part of Atlantis* is an infinitive phrase modifying *believed*, but I did not ask you to identify infinitive phrases for this exercise.

11. Leaving for his night job, Harry saw a UFO in the sky.

leaving for his night job: Present participle phrase modifying *Harry*.

saw a UFO in the sky: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form. *A UFO in the sky* is the direct object of *saw*.

12. The piano technician finally began tuning the piano designated for the student.

finally began tuning the piano designated for the student: Main verb phrase, past tense form.

tuning the piano designated for the student: Either a present participle phrase modifying *began* or a gerund phrase as the direct object of *began*—this one's ambiguous.

designated for the student: Past participle phrase modifying *the piano*.

13. Sharon spends many weekends searching for the perfect beach.

spends many weekends searching for the perfect beach: Main verb phrase, present tense form. *Many weekends* and its modifiers are the direct object of *spends*.

searching for the perfect beach: Present participle phrase, probably modifying *spends*.

14. Everyone attending the ethnic festival commented on the intense drumming.

attending the ethnic festival: Present participle phrase.

commented on the intense drumming: Main verb phrase, past tense verb form.

drumming: Gerund. The intense drumming is the object of the preposition *on*. Objects of prepositions must be noun phrases.

15. The vegetable soup cooking on the stove is for dinner.

cooking on the stove: Present participle phrase modifying *the vegetable soup*.

is for dinner: Main verb phrase, present tense form.

Identify the noun, adjective, and adverb phrases in the following sentences. State whether or not each noun phrase forms part of prepositional phrase. State whether or not each adjective phrase forms part of a noun phrase and whether or not each adverb phrase forms part of a verb phrase.

Note: In the sentences below, I indicate only noun, adjective, adverb phrases at the lowest level, their *form*. If they belong to larger prepositional or participle phrases with adjectival or adverbial *function*, I have not indicated the larger structures in the answers below.

1. Encouraged by her coach's praise, Melody repeated her routine on the balance beam.

Noun Phrases: her coach's praise (prepositional phrase: *by her coach's praise*), Melody, her routine, the balance beam (prepositional phrase: *on the balance beam*)

Adjective Phrases: balance (noun phrase *the balance beam*)

2. Barbara has persuaded the ticket agent to let her on the plane scheduled to depart immediately.

Noun Phrases: Barbara, the ticket agent, her, the plane

Adjective Phrases: ticket (noun phrase: *the ticket agent*)

Adverb phrases: immediately (verb phrase: *to depart immediately*)

3. Though bitten by mosquitoes, the hikers smiled as they neared the peak.

Noun Phrases: mosquitoes (prepositional phrase: *by mosquitoes*), the hikers, they, the peak

4. Described as almost a saint by his mother, Ernesto tried to live up to her expectations.

Noun Phrases: a saint (prepositional phrase: *as almost a saint*), his mother (prepositional phrase: *by his mother*), Ernesto, her expectations (prepositional phrase: *to her expectations*)

Adverb phrases: almost (verb phrase: *described as almost a saint*—this one's tricky!)

5. The jade Buddha reclining in the hall was one of three gifts sent by Sri Lankan monks.

Noun Phrases: the jade Buddha, the hall (prepositional phrase: *in the hall*), one, three gifts (prepositional phrase: *of three gifts*), Sri Lankan monks (prepositional phrase: *by Sri Lankan monks*)

Adjective Phrases: jade (noun phrase: *the jade Buddha*), Sri Lankan (noun phrase: *Sri Lankan monks*)

Note: You may have thought *three* was an adjective. It's technically not, although it also modifies nouns.

Identify the prepositional phrases in the following sentences. State whether they are functioning as adjective phrases or adverb phrases.

1. Encouraged by her coach's praise, Melody repeated her routine on the balance beam.

by her coach's praise: Adverb Phrase, modifies *encouraged*

on the balance beam: Adjective Phrase, probably modifies *routine*. However, I'd accept Adverb Phrase modifying *repeated*—this one's ambiguous.

2. Barbara has persuaded the ticket agent to let her on the plane scheduled to depart immediately.

on the plane: Adverb Phrase, modifies *let*

3. Though bitten by mosquitoes, the hikers smiled as they neared the peak.

by mosquitoes: Adverb Phrase, modifies *bitten*

Note: *as* is sometimes a preposition (see question 4 below); however, here it is a subordinate conjunction introducing a clause. A good way to tell the difference at this stage is to look for the object of the preposition and, if it has a finite verb following which seems to accompany it, then you probably have a separate clause.

4. Described as almost a saint by his mother, Ernesto tried to live up to her expectations.

as almost a saint: Adverb Phrase, modifies *described*

by his mother: Adverb Phrase, modifies *described*

to her expectations: Adverb Phrase, modifies *to live up* (phrasal verb)

5. The jade Buddha reclining in the hall was one of three gifts sent by Sri Lankan monks.

in the hall: Adverb Phrase, modifies *reclining*

of three gifts sent by Sri Lankan monks: Ajective Phrase, modifies *one*

by Sri Lankan monks: Adverb Phrase, modifies *sent*