Practice I: Unscrambling
Sometimes the positions of participial phrases within a sentence are interchangeable: the same phrase could occur in any position—sentence opener, subject-verb split, or sentence closer. Sometimes, however, only two of the three positions (or only one of the three) are acceptable; the other positions would result in unacceptable grammar, distorted meaning, or lack of emphasis. The following practice requires you to make the right decision about the positioning of participial phrases.

Directions: Unscramble each list of sentence parts to produce the most effective arrangement. Punctuate correctly.

1a. was waiting on the landing outside
   b. Bernard
   c. wearing a black turtleneck sweater, dirty flannels, and slippers
      ~Brian Moore, The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne

2a. lost his grip
   b. dropping helplessly straight down toward the far end of the trailer
   c. and fell free
   d. Malcolm
      ~ Michael Crichton, The Lost World

3a. coming down the pole
   b. with no control over my movements
   c. had a sense
   d. I
   e. of being whirled violently through the air
      ~Richard E. Byrd, Alone

4a. black
   b. a little house
   c. perched on high piles
   d. in the distance
   e. appeared
      ~Joseph Conrad, “The Lagoon”

5a. screaming and begging to be allowed to go with her mother
   b. when we had made our way downstairs
   c. saw the woman with the lovely complexion
   d. Miss Pilzer
   e. we
      ~Gerda Weissmann Klein, All But My Life

Each of the scrambled sentences that follow contains more than one participial phrase. Unscramble each to produce the most effective arrangement. Punctuate correctly.

6a. with the cautious, half-furtive effort of the sightless
   b. and thumping his way before him
   c. he was a blind beggar
   d. carrying the traditional battered cane
      ~MacKinlay Kantor, “A Man Who Had No Eyes”

7a. all had the look of invalids crawling into the hospital on their last legs
   b. the passengers
   c. blinking their eyes
   d. emerging from the mildewed dimness of the customs sheds
      ~Katherine Ann Porter, Ship of Fools
8a. and yet knowing no way to avoid it
b. that winter my mother and brother came
c. buying furniture on the installment plan
d. and we set up housekeeping
e. being cheated

~Richard Wright, Black Boy

Practice II: Imitating
1. Unscramble both lists of sentence parts to make two sentences that imitate the first model.
2. Then, imitate the same model by writing your own sentence.
3. Finally, write imitations of the other models, making all of your sentence parts like those in the model and incorporating your own vocabulary words (underline them).

Model: As he ran away into the darkness, they repented of their weakness and ran after him, swearing and throwing sticks and great balls of soft mud at the figure that screamed and ran faster and faster into the darkness.

~Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio

9a. as her arm whirled fast over the egg whites
b. and stared at it
c. and expressing confusion and frustration over the third direction in the recipe
d. her face shifted toward the cookbook
e. grimacing
f. that listed and explained more and ever more of the procedure

10a. stretching
b. that beckoned but hid farther and farther from his reach
c. after Jo-Jo climbed higher and higher onto the counter
d. but missing jars and boxes in the rear with bright colors
e. he pulled on the doors
f. and looked for the candy

Other Models

Weaving in and out among the rocks, they carried the bamboo baskets on erect heads, unmindful of the salt water that leaked on their half-dried hair.

~Kim Yong Ik, “The Sea Girl”

The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly in her mother’s dress.

~F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

When the car stopped, he strode rapidly around to where Lenny was sitting, hands pressed against the front of his thermal undershirt, trying to catch his breath and wondering if this was the final cardiac arrest.

~Stephen King, Needful Things
Practice III: Combining

1. Study the model, and then combine the sentences that follow into one sentence that imitates the model.
   Change the first sentence to resemble the first sentence part of the model, the second sentence to resemble
   the second sentence part of the model, etc.

2. Finally, write your own sentence that imitates the model and incorporates your own vocabulary words
   (underline them).

Model: The horse found the entrance to the trail where it left the flat and started up, stumbling and slipping on
the rocks.

Sentences to be Combined

a. The cycle hit something.
b. It hit a stretch.
c. The stretch was ice.
d. It happened as it rounded the bend.
e. It addition, it slid sideways.
f. Then it was tottering.
g. In addition, then it was veering.
h. It was veering toward the shoulder.

Combination Example

The cycle hit a stretch of ice as it rounded the bend and slid sideways, tottering and veering toward the shoulder.

Imitation Example

The teacher studied a certain pedagogy as she studied and completed her MA degree, lamenting and crying about
all the time she had spent on ineffective teaching prior to learning effective strategies.

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11. Model: The sound of monotonous ax blows rang through the forest, and the insects, nodding upon their
perches, crooned like old women.

   a. A pile of debris was doing something.
b. It cluttered up the driveway.
c. In addition, the tenants were gazing at the disgrace.
d. They watched with heavy hearts.

12. Model: He stood there, his coat wet, holding his wet hat, and said nothing.

   a. The dog did something.
b. He sat up.
c. His mouth was clenching the rolled newspaper.
d. He was wagging his tail.
e. In addition, he begged a reward.

~Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage

~Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms
AP Lang—Participial Phrases

13. **Model**: The little shack, the rattling, rotting barn were gray-bitten with sea salt, beaten by the damp wind until they had taken on the color of the granite hills.  
   ~John Steinbeck, “Flight”

   a. Something had been done to the upholstered pieces.
   b. Something had been done to the expensive, polished tables.
   c. They had been moved into the huge dining room.
   d. They were covered with endless painter’s cloths.
   e. This was done so that they would be protected.
   f. The protection was from the splatterings of paint.

14. **Model**: The strength that had been as a miracle in her body left, and she half-reeled across the floor, clutching at the back of the chair in which she had spent so many long days staring out over the tin roofs into the main street of Winesburg.  
   ~Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio

   a. The meeting had been like something.
   b. It had been like a marathon among meetings.
   c. The meeting continued.
   d. In addition, the leader deliberated about his strategy.
   e. He was stalling after the last remarks from the representative.
   f. The representative was the one with whom he had planned something.
   g. What they had planned were so many emergency ploys focusing upon every conceivable tactic.
   h. The tactic was for the suppression of the opposition.

Practice IV: Expanding(Optional)

At the slash mark, add a participial phrase. In Part I, the first few words are provided and the number of words omitted from the original is noted in brackets after the slash mark. Approximate that number. In Part 2, add whatever seems appropriate.

15. With the core of the reel showing, his heart feeling stopped with excitement, leaning / [10], Nick thumbed the reel hard with his left hand.  
   ~Ernest Hemingway, “Big Two-Hearted River”

16. Mrs. Carpenter was putting sun-tan oil on Sybil’s shoulders, spreading / [10].  
   ~J.D. Salinger, Nine Stories

17. Soon the men began to gather, surveying / [3], speaking [7].  
   ~Glendon Swarthout, Bless the Beasts and Children

18. The Carpathia ship’s passengers pitched in gallantly to help the survivors of the Titanic, providing / [2], lending [1], sewing / [13].  
   ~Walter Lord, A Night to Remember

Putting the Participial Phrase to Work—Required for next vocabulary check (in 2 weeks).

Write an imitation of ONE of the four model sentences that follow, and incorporate your own vocabulary words (underline them).

**Models**

1. Inside the walls, a woman was using an air hose to chase bugs off the pavement, herding them along with little blasts of air.  
   ~Barbara Kingsolver, The Bean Trees

2. Taking the stairs two at a time, he didn’t even notice me following behind.  
   ~Olive Anne Burns, Cold Sassy Tree

3. I spent the entire day in a sulk, staring out the window, waiting for the rain to stop, (two participles).  
   ~Rosa Guy, The Friends

4. Dismayed by what had happened, he buried his face in his hands and cried.  
   ~Mildred D. Taylor, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
1. Bernard, wearing a black turtleneck sweater, dirty flannels, and slippers, was waiting on the landing outside.
2. Malcolm lost his grip and fell free, dropping helplessly down toward the far end of the trailer.
3. Coming down the pole, I had a sense of being whirled violently through the air, with no control over my movements.
4. A little house, perched on high piles, appeared black in the distance.
5. When we had made our way downstairs, we saw the woman with the lovely complexion, Miss Pilzer, screaming and begging to be allowed to go with her mother.
6. He was a blind beggar, carrying the traditional battered cane and thumping his way before him with the cautious, half-furtive effort of the sightless.
7. The passengers, emerging from the mildewed dimness of the customs sheds, blinking their eyes against the blinding sunlight, all had the look of invalids crawling into the hospital on their last legs.
8. That winter my mother and brother came, and we set up housekeeping, buying furniture on the installment plan, being cheated, and yet knowing no way to avoid it.
9. As her arm whirled fast over the egg whites, her face shifted toward the cookbook and stared at it, grimacing and expressing confusion and frustration over the third direction in the recipe that listed and explained more and ever more of the procedure.
10. After Jo-Jo climbed higher onto the counter, he pulled on the doors and looked for the candy, stretching but missing jars and boxes in the rear with bright colors that beckoned but hid farther and farther from his reach.
11. A pile of new debris cluttered up the driveway, and the tenants, gazing at the disgrace, watched with heavy hearts.
12. The dog sat up, his mouth clenching the rolled newspaper, wagging his tail, and begged a reward.
13. The upholstered pieces, the expensive, polished tables had been moved into the huge dining room, covered with endless painter’s cloths so that they would be protected from the splatterings of paint.
14. The meeting that had been like a marathon among meetings continued, and the leader deliberated about his strategy, stalling after the last remarks from the representative with whom he had planned so many emergency ploys focusing upon every conceivable tactic for the suppression of the opposition.
15. With the core of the reel showing, his heart feeling stopped with excitement, leaning back against the current that mounted icily up his thighs, Nick thumbed the reel hard with his left hand.
16. Mrs. Carpenter was putting sun-tan oil on Sybil’s shoulders, spreading it down over the delicate, wing-like blades of her back.
17. Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes.
18. The Carpathia ship’s passengers pitched in gallantly to help the survivors of the Titanic, providing extra toothbrushes, lending clothes, sewing smocks for the children out of steamer blankets brought along in the lifeboats.
19. The children crawled over the shelves and into the potato and onion bins, twanging all the time in their sharp voices like cigar-box guitars.
20. He, sensing a new and strange and quite terrified note in all this the moment he read it, at once looked over his shoulder at her and, seeing her face so white and drawn, signaled that he would meet her.
21. In the late afternoon, the truck came back, bumping and rattling through the dust, and there was a layer of dust in the bed, and the hood was covered with dust, and the headlights were obscured with a red flour.
22. He stood there, balancing on one leg and holding tightly to the edges of the window sill with his hands, staring at the sign and at the whitewashed lettering of the words.