

## 8 Participial Phrases

*Checking over his work*, the student found several mistakes.  
The words in italics are known as a present participial phrase.

In using a participial phrase one must be sure the performer of the action of the verb in participial form is the subject of the attached clause. Do not write sentences like:

Driving along the road, a goat was knocked down.  
Clearly, it is not the goat that was driving. We should write:

Driving along the road, we knocked a goat down.  
(Or, not using a participial phrase:  
As we were driving along the road, we knocked a goat down.)

### EXERCISE 40

Join the following sentences, making the one *in italics* a present participial phrase:

- 1 *He wished to earn money to support his parents.* He left school at sixteen.

- 2 *The student hoped to catch up with his work.* The student who had been absent for six weeks got up every morning at five o'clock.
- 3 *I looked up the meaning of a word in the dictionary.* I found several pages were missing.
- 4 *He was sitting at the back of the hall.* He heard very little of the lecture.
- 5 *She found that biology did not interest her.* She decided to drop the subject.
- 6 *The teacher knew that there would be a free afternoon.* He gave us extra homework.
- 7 *She played tennis every afternoon.* She soon lost weight.
- 8 *I looked out of the window.* I noticed that it was raining.
- 9 *He was digging in his garden.* He found a box of coins.
- 10 *The servant swept under the carpet.* He found a ring.

If we want to show that one action took place before the other we can use another participial construction: 'HAVING' + PAST PARTICIPLE:

He had been a teacher for thirty-five years. He retired.

Having been a teacher for thirty-five years, he retired.

Beware of repeating the subject unnecessarily in such sentences:

The headmaster, having warned the boy on three occasions, decided to expel him.

It would be quite wrong to put *he* before *decided*.

#### EXERCISE 41

Join the following sentences, making the one *in italics* a past participial phrase:

- 1 *I had looked for my watch for two hours.* I gave up all hope of finding it.
- 2 *He had been elected to the committee of the club.* He knew he had to attend all the meetings.
- 3 *Mr. Yahaya had read many books on the subject.* He was able to give us an interesting talk.
- 4 *I had read that book before.* I didn't want to read it again.
- 5 *He had studied Latin.* He found Spanish an easy language to learn.
- 6 The student went to his desk. *He had apologised to the teacher for coming late.*
- 7 *She had been trained as a nurse.* She decided to study to become a doctor.
- 8 *The committee discussed the problem for two hours.* They could not reach agreement.
- 9 *He had been up all night.* He fell asleep during the morning lessons.
- 10 *He had studied English for five years.* He read novels with ease. \*

#### EXERCISE 42