

THE ABSOLUTE PHRASE

Recognize an absolute phrase when you find one.

An absolute phrase combines a **noun** and a **participle**. **Modifiers** and/or **objects** may be present to complete the thought.

The phrase follows this pattern:

NOUN + **PARTICIPLE** + **OPTIONAL MODIFIER(S) AND/OR OBJECT(S)**

Read these examples:

Legs quivering

Legs = noun; *quivering* = participle.

Her arms folded across her chest

Arms = noun; *folded* = participle; *her, across her chest* = modifiers.

Their fingers scraping the leftover frosting off the plates

Fingers = noun; *scraping* = participle; *frosting* = direct object; *their, the, leftover, off the plates* = modifiers.

An absolute phrase modifies the whole **clause**:

Legs quivering, our old dog Gizmo dreamed of chasing squirrels.

Legs quivering describes not only Gizmo but also his manner of sleep.

Her arms folded across her chest, Professor Hill warned the class about the penalties of plagiarism.

Her arms folded across her chest helps us picture both Professor Hill and the severity of her warning.

The family devoured Aunt Lenora's carrot cake, *their fingers scraping the leftover frosting from the plates*.

Their fingers scraping the leftover frosting from the plates lets us imagine this one family and the degree of their hunger.

