Absolute Phrases Worksheet

An absolute phrase consists of a noun or a pronoun that is modified by a participle or a participial phrase. Although an absolute phrase may appear to be a phrase, it lacks a verb, so it is indeed a phrase. It stands “absolutely” by itself, having no direct grammatical relation to the complete subject or the complete predicate of a sentence. Use a comma before or after an absolute.

EXAMPLES:

- Its leaves burned off by the fire, the dead tree fell.

In some absolute phrases the participle “being” is understood rather than stated:

- We hurried to the game, our anticipation (being) high.

DIRECTIONS: Underline each absolute phrase. Do NOT underline any participial phrase that is directly grammatically related to the rest of a sentence.

1. Her suspicions confirmed, the police officer made the arrest.

2. Backing out of the driveway, I hit the mailbox.

3. They will take the daytime train, the landscape inviting.

4. My doubts relieved, I gained confidence as the game progressed.

5. Peering through a microscope, the scientist identified several microbes.

6. His dogs panting with exertion, Hagos took a break from his run.

7. Its shutters hanging limply in the wind, the house looked abandoned and forlorn.

8. The car rusted and worthless, I left it at the junkyard.

10. Everything planned in advance, the party went like clockwork.

11. We scrambled from the car, racing to the amusement park gates.

12. Moving quickly, the lion cut off the fleeing zebra.

13. My garden is dying, pesticides having been applied by mistake.

14. As the parole board met to decide the fates of several people, the prisoner was hoping for parole.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS...

1. *Her* suspicions *(being) confirmed*, the police officer made the arrest.

2. Backing out of the driveway, I hit the mailbox.
   
   [“backing out of the driveway” is not an absolute phrase-- it is only a participial phrase because it does not contain a noun or pronoun being modified by the participial phrase]

3. They will take the daytime train, the *landscape* *(being) inviting*.

4. *My doubts* *(being) relieved*, I gained confidence as the game progressed.

5. Peering through a microscope, the scientist identified several microbes.
   
   [“peering through a microscope” is only a participial phrase because it does not contain a noun or pronoun being modified by the participial phrase]

6. His *dogs panting with exertion*, Hagos took a break from his run.
7. Its shutters hanging limply in the wind, the house looked abandoned and forlorn.

8. The car (being) rusted and worthless, I left it at the junkyard.


   [“wearing a red plaid outfit” is only a participial phrase because it does not contain a noun or pronoun being modified by the participial phrase]

10. Everything (being) planned in advance, the party went like clockwork.

11. We scrambled from the car, racing to the amusement park gates.

   [“racing to the amusement park gates” is a participial phrase because it does not contain a noun or pronoun being modified by the participial phrase]

12. Moving quickly, the lion cut off the fleeing zebra.

   [“moving quickly” is only a participial phrase because it does not contain a noun or pronoun being modified by the participial phrase]

13. My garden is dying, pesticides having been applied by mistake.

14. As the parole board met to decide the fates of several people, the prisoner was hoping for parole.

   [“as the parole board...several people] is a subordinate clause-- “as” is the subordinating conjunction]