

ING Starters

ING Starters are phrases that start with a word that ends in ING. According to Mr. Fuddy Duddy, the ING word is a verb called a PARTICIPLE.



For example, in this sentence,



Swallowing a bug, Suzy choked and fell off the swing.

Suzy is doing 2 things at the same time. She is swallowing and choking.

There are 2 crucial details with an ING starter:

1. The thing doing the ing-ING must follow the **comma** – just like with an Ed/ADJ starter.
2. The subject of the sentence must be able to do BOTH the participle (ING starter) AND the main verb at the SAME time.



For example,

Sleeping in a hammock, Gilligan woke up with a back ache.

This is NOT a good ING starter because Gilligan cannot be sleeping and wake up at the same time.

Struggling in the rain, the chicken's feathers drooped to the ground.

Oooops! This sentence is called a Misplaced Modifier (MM).

Who/What is struggling in the rain? The chicken's? Chicken's what?

What comes after the comma? The (chicken's) feathers.

Were the feathers struggling in the rain or were the chickens? It needs to be revised.



Struggling in the rain, the chickens could barely walk because their wet feathers weighed them down so much.

Now who/what is struggling in the rain? The chickens.

Do the words *the chickens* directly follow the comma? Yes.

Can the chickens struggle in the rain and barely walk at the same time? Yes.

Driving down the highway, Betty saw a truck full of monkeys.

Who's driving? Betty.

Does Betty come directly after the comma? Yes.

Can Betty drive and see at the same time? Yes.



Muttering softly to himself, Alvin mapped his strategy.

Who's muttering? Alvin.

Does Alvin come directly after the comma? Yes.

Can Alvin mutter and map at the same time? Yes.



Sleeping in class, Ms. B. shook Bobby's chair to wake him up.

Who's sleeping, Ms. B. or Bobby?

Does Bobby follow the comma? No.

Ooops! This is another MM – Misplaced Modifier.

Revise. But, do not make it passive.

Sleeping in class, Bobby was woken up by Ms. B. is not a good alternative. Sometimes a writer just has to start over. What else can Bobby do while he is sleeping in class? Snore? Drool? Fall out of his chair? How about all three?

Sleeping in class, Bobby snored, drooled, and fell out of his chair.

Pounding his fists on the table, Timmy protested liver and lima beans for dinner.

Who's pounding? Timmy.

Does Timmy directly follow the comma? Yes.

Can Timmy pound and protest at the same time? Yes.

Voting for president, Joe rejoiced that his candidate had won.

Who's voting? Probably Joe.

Does Joe come directly after the comma? Yes.

Can Joe vote and rejoice about the winner at the same time? No.

Revise.



Popping corn is easy with our new Stir Crazy popper.

Who's popping? Supposedly whoever owns the new popper.

Does the subject of the sentence directly follow the comma? No comma!

No need for a comma anywhere.

Is the subject doing 2 things at the same time? No.

The subject is Popping corn – it's an activity.

This construction is called a GERUND. It looks like an ING starter, but it is not a participle.

The ing-word is the noun and subject of the sentence. **WE DO NOT HIGHLIGHT ING-GERUNDS.**

Gerunds are only boring old **subject starters used with a passive like is/was as the verb.**

Handouts that go along with this handout:

GGUG

Stylistic Techniques Page (TP)

Alternatives to Banned Verbs (ABV)