What the heck is a participle?

Well ...

A participle is a verb form that is used as an adjective.

- A present participle contains the ending -ing (swimming, boating).
- A past participle usually ends in -ed or -d (trained, baked).

A participial phrase contains a participle and related words (swimming to the island, trained as a lifeguard).

Use a participial phrase to add action to the beginning of a sentence. Note how participial phrases strengthen these sentences.

Benny fell and broke his ankle this morning. He was running to school.

With a participle:

Running to school this morning, Benny fell and broke his ankle.

Hank took classes to become a lifeguard. He now works at Tidewater Beach.

With a participle:

Trained as a lifeguard, Hank now works at Tidewater Beach.