

# GRAMMATHON

## PARTICIPLE

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# PARTICIPLE

# WHAT IS PARTICIPLE?

A participle is a verb form that can be used

- (1) as an adjective,
- (2) to create verb tense, or
- (3) to create the passive voice.

There are two types of participles:

- Present participle (ending -ing)
- Past participle (usually ending -ed, -d, -t, -en, or -n).

# FUNCTIONS OF PARTICIPLE

- ✓ Participles have some qualities of verbs and are used in the formation of the continuous, perfect and perfect continuous tenses (*he is typing; he has written a letter*).
- ✓ Participles have some qualities of adjectives and are used as attributes in a sentence (*a smiling girl; surprised faces*).
- ✓ Participles are also used in the function of adverbial modifiers (*he opened the door, smiling; surprised, he didn't know what to say*).
- ✓ A participle construction, that is, a participle together with the words closely connected with it, can function as an attribute (*the girl sitting at the table*) or as an adverbial modifier (*standing by the window, she watched the birds*). Participle constructions are usually called "participial phrases" or "participial clauses".

# Formation of participles

## Present participle

The present participle is formed by adding "ing" to the base form of the verb: flying, playing, running, sleeping, working.

The present participle expresses active meaning: doing, flying, playing, reading, running, sleeping, taking, typing, working, writing.

## Past participle

Regular verbs form the past participle by adding "ed" to the base form of the verb: moved, played, stopped, typed.

Irregular verbs form the past participle mostly by changing the root of the word: broken, flown, read, sold, taken, written.

The past participle expresses passive meaning: done, moved, played, read, sold, stopped, taken, typed, written

# Formation of tenses

The main function of participles is their use in the formation of certain tenses. Only the simple forms of participles (for example, writing, written) are used in the formation of tenses.

## Present participle

Continuous tenses: He is working now. We were sleeping when he called. She will be writing letters at four o'clock.

Perfect continuous tenses: He has been working since early morning. She had been sleeping for two hours when you called. By six o'clock, she will have been writing letters for three hours.

The past participle expresses passive meaning: done, moved, played, read, sold, stopped, taken, typed, written

## Past participle

Perfect tenses: We have already written three stories. She had typed two reports by ten o'clock yesterday. She will have typed the next report by six o'clock.

Tenses in the passive: Three stories have already been written. Five reports were typed last week. Two reports had been typed by ten o'clock yesterday. This report will be typed tomorrow.

# Participles after the verb BE



Participles are used in the formation of certain tenses. Participles are also used in the function of adjectives. Usually, the difference between these functions of participles is clear and does not lead to mistakes in understanding. But in some cases, especially in those cases where a participle stands after the verb BE, it may be a little difficult to understand the difference.

- This situation is humiliating. (*the participle "humiliating" as an adjective*)
- Stop it! You are humiliating him. (*"are humiliating" – the present continuous tense*)
- Two chairs are broken. (*the participle "broken" as an adjective*)
- Two chairs were broken by some customers yesterday. (*"were broken" – the simple past in the passive*)

# Forms of participles



- ✓ Participles have simple and compound forms. Simple forms consist of only one word, i.e., the participle itself: doing, done. The form "doing" is simple active; the form "done" is simple passive.
- ✓ Compound (analytical) forms are formed with the help of the auxiliary verbs "be" and "have": having done; being done; having been done. The form "having done" is perfect active; the form "being done" is passive; the form "having been done" is perfect passive.
- ✓ Simple forms of participles are used in the formation of the tenses. In a sentence, simple forms of participles are also used in the function of attributes and adverbial modifiers. Compound forms of participles are used more rarely.

## Examples of simple and compound forms

- Having read ten pages of the book, he decided to have a break. *(compound)*
- After reading ten pages of the book, he decided to have a break. *(simple)*
- The story being read by him now is called "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz". *(compound)*
- The story that he is reading now is called "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz". *(simple)*
- Having been translated into several languages, this story is well known in many countries. *(compound)*
- Translated into several languages, this story is well known in many countries. *(simple)*

# Participles as attributes



- ✓ Participles in the function of adjectives, that is, in the function of attributes in a sentence, are sometimes called "participial adjectives".
- ✓ Participles can modify the subject, an object, or another noun in a sentence.
- ✓ Participles may stand before or after the noun that they modify. Participle constructions stand after the nouns that they modify.

# Participle before noun

A single participle often stands before the noun that it modifies:

*a flying bird; a moving train; a promising actor; a growing interest; overwhelming majority, running water; boiling water; working people; a broken heart; a rotten apple; spoken language; a tired voice; a written confirmation; boiled water; developed countries; experienced users.*

Barking dogs seldom bite.

I'm always glad to see her smiling face.

She spoke in a trembling voice.

He stood before the locked door.

He is a retired colonel.

## Participle after noun

Not all participles can stand before their nouns. Participles that are closer to verbs than to adjectives are often placed after the nouns that they modify: *the problems remaining; the people attending; the people involved; the questions discussed; the names mentioned; the documents required; those invited; those concerned.*

Compare these sentences containing a single participle, a participle construction, or a relative clause:

- The questions discussed were quite important. – The questions discussed at the meeting were quite important. – The questions that were discussed at the meeting were quite important.
- Some of those invited refused to participate. – Some of those invited to the meeting refused to participate. – Some of the people who were invited to the meeting refused to participate.

# Participle construction after noun

Participle constructions in the function of attributes stand after the nouns that they modify.

- The boy playing with the kitten is my nephew. (*The boy who is playing with the kitten is my nephew.*)
- I talked to several people participating in the project.
- The car parked by the entrance belongs to the director.
- I need a list of the goods sold yesterday.

# Active and passive meanings of participles



In the function of attributes, present participles express active meaning, and past participles express passive meaning.

- I was surprised that he went there.
- It was a boring party.
- Everyone was bored.

There are many pairs of frequently used participles with active and passive meaning: *alarming, alarmed; astonishing, astonished; convincing, convinced; disappointing, disappointed; exciting, excited; exhausting, exhausted; frightening, frightened; humiliating, humiliated; horrifying, horrified; irritating, irritated; shocking, shocked.*

# Intensifiers with past participles



The adverbs "very, much, very much" intensify the meaning. "Very" is used with adjectives (and with adverbs, e.g., very quickly); "much" and "very much" are used with verbs.

For example, you can say "This book is very good" and "I liked it very much", but you can't say "I very liked it".

Past participles, usually in the position after the verb BE, may also be used with intensifiers.

Past participles that have acquired strong adjectival qualities (usually, they are participles expressing feelings) may be used with "very", for example, "very bored, very interested, very surprised, very tired".

Past participles that have strong verbal qualities are used with "much" or "very much", for example,

"much obliged, very much appreciated, very much criticized, much reduced".

- I was very tired yesterday.
- Your help was very much appreciated.
- Her first novel was much criticized.
- Her latest novel is much talked about.

# Participles as adverbial modifiers



- ✓ Participles in the function of adverbial modifiers (of time, reason, manner, accompanying circumstances, etc.) are usually found in participle constructions, though single participles are also quite possible.
- ✓ The negative particle "not" is placed before the participle.
- ✓ Participle constructions in the function of adverbial modifiers are used mostly in writing.
- ✓ Participle constructions in the function of adverbial modifiers usually stand at the beginning of the sentence, but may sometimes stand in the middle or at the end of the sentence.
- ✓ Participle constructions in the function of adverbial modifiers of time and reason (usually at the beginning of the sentence) express the same meaning as adverbial clauses of time and reason.

# Present participle as adverbial modifier: Examples

- Standing by the window, he watched the people on the street.
- Having finished my work, I went home.
- After I finished my work, I went home. (*complex*)
- Having seen him in that building before, I thought that he worked there.
- As I had seen him in that building before, I thought that he worked there. (*complex*)
- Feeling very tired, she went to bed early.
- She went to bed early because she was feeling very tired. (*complex*)

# Past participle as adverbial modifier: Examples

- If lost in a new city, call the police.
- If you are lost in a new city, call the police.*(complex)*
- Surprised by his strange decision, his friends tried to talk him out of it.
- Left in the yard, the books were spoiled by the pouring rain.
- Lost in the woods, the dog managed to find the way home.
- Cook and stir until thickened.
- Cook and stir until the mixture is thickened.*(complex)*

# Dangling participle




The term "dangling participle" (unattached participle) refers to the situation in which, because of incorrect sentence structure, the participle is unrelated to the subject or is connected to the wrong noun.

- Coming out of the house, the rain started.
- Not knowing his telephone, a letter was sent to him.

Dangling participles are considered to be bad style of writing. Besides, they can cause misunderstanding. Sentences with dangling participles should be restructured.

It can be done

- (1) by clearly indicating the subject of the sentence so that the participle is clearly attached to the subject, or
  - (2) by changing the participial construction into a subordinate clause.
- Coming out of the house, I saw that the rain started.
  - When I came out of the house, the rain started.
  - Not knowing his telephone, we sent a letter to him.
  - As we didn't know his telephone, we sent a letter to him.



It is necessary to say that dangling participles are rather common in literary works, especially in those cases where the subject is impersonal "It", and where weak connection between the participle and the subject does not lead to ambiguity for the reader.

- Going home, it occurred to me that I had probably seen him before.

# Prepositions and conjunctions in the form of participles

Some prepositions and conjunctions are in the form of participles.

For example:

*concerning, considering, including, notwithstanding, owing to, judging from, provided that, regarding, supposing.*

They do not require a strict connection with the subject and should not be regarded as dangling participles. The same can be said about participles in such set expressions as "generally speaking, strictly speaking, taking into consideration" and some others.

- Owing to the rain, the game was postponed.
- Considering the price, this table is a good buy.
- Strictly speaking, they are not her relatives.

# Absolute participle construction



The absolute participle construction has its own subject (to which the action expressed by the participle refers) and can stand at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.

Sometimes the preposition "with" introduces an absolute participle clause.

Absolute participle constructions are often used in literary works and scientific writing, but are rare in ordinary speech.

- Our work finished, we said good-bye and left.
- She listened to his story quietly, with her eyes closed and her face impassive.
- The weather being nice and warm, we went for a walk.

## Participles in constructions with complex object



- ✓ In sentences like "I saw him crossing the street. I found him sleeping. I had my car washed.", the constructions "him crossing; him sleeping; car washed" are often called "complex object".
- ✓ The term "complex object" is rarely found in English grammar materials. Instead, participles in such constructions are usually called "object complement; objective complement; objective predicate".

## Constructions after verbs of sense perception

The present participle is used in constructions with complex object after the verbs of sense perception "hear, see, watch, observe, notice, feel" to indicate the action in progress.

- I saw him locking the door. I saw him watching me. I see her smiling.
- I heard them laughing. I hear the telephone ringing.
- She felt him looking at her. She noticed him smiling at something.

The infinitive in such constructions usually expresses a completed action, but if the verb is of continuing nature, the infinitive can express the action in progress.

- I saw her coming out of the house. – I saw her come out of the house.
- I heard the telephone ringing. – I heard the telephone ring.

## Constructions after "see, hear, want, consider"

The past participle is used in constructions with complex object to show that the person or thing indicated by the object undergoes the action indicated by the participle.

- He saw his bags put into the trunk of a large car.
- She saw several participants arrested during the demonstration.
- He wants it done as soon as possible.
- We want him elected.
- I consider this matter closed.

**Note:** In the last three examples above, the participles "done, elected, closed" may be regarded as shortened variants of the passive infinitive forms "to be done; to be elected; to be closed".

## Construction "have something done"

In constructions like "I had it done", the past participle is used after the verb "have" (or after "get" in informal speech) to show that the action is performed for you by someone, usually at your request.

- I had my car washed.
- He had his hair cut yesterday.
- She got her TV repaired.

However, in some cases the action expressed by the participle after the verb "have" in such constructions is performed not at your request, and the action may be unpleasant.

- She had her purse stolen yesterday.
- He had his nose broken in a fight.
- She got her finger jammed in the door.



**“Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”**

**— John R. Wooden**