Participles

Verbs which end in \(-ing\) are sometimes referred to as the present participle*.

Verbs which end in \(-ed\) are sometimes referred to as the past participle*.

(*These are terrible names for them, since they are often used for past, present, and future situations.)

Participles are used as verb forms, adjectives, or adverbs and at the beginning of reduced clauses.

Note that when used as a noun, -ing verbs are called gerunds.

How are they used?

1. Verb forms
   Used with auxiliary verbs be, and have for:
   a. Progressive tenses
   b. Perfect tenses
   c. Passive voice
   a. He was sleeping when I arrived.
   b. I have already eaten lunch.
   c. The ring was given to me by my mother.

2. Adjectives
   Used to describe nouns
   (For more information about adjective use, see reverse of handout)
   I love the sound of falling rain.
   She died of a broken heart.
   Grammar is so boring!
   The warehouse will look abandoned.

3. Adverbs
   Used to describe verbs.
   The girl ran screaming out of the room.
   The clothes lay crumpled on the floor.

4. Clauses
   Used with phrases to create reduced clauses
   Who is the woman standing in the corner?
   Having taken the exam once, she knew what to expect.
   Rejected by society, the man became a recluse.

Read the sentences below. Find the participles and identify how they are used.

A. The students were attending a number of boring seminars that day.
B. Putting down my paper, I walked out of the lab with my head held high.
C. I asked the confused student if she knew where she was going.
D. The girl was devastated and sat crying in her chair for a long time.
E. The children were terribly frightened by the raging thunder.
### Participles

**Participles : Adjective Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When <strong>present participles</strong> are used as adjectives or adverbs, they tend to be active and similar in meaning to an <strong>active verb</strong>:</th>
<th>Rolling waves</th>
<th>= waves that are rolling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>south-facing</strong> window</td>
<td>= a window that was facing south</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She walked in <strong>laughing</strong></td>
<td>= she was laughing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most <strong>past participles</strong> will be similar in meaning to a <strong>passive verb</strong>:</th>
<th>A broken heart</th>
<th>= a heart that has been broken</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The hermit lived alone and <strong>forgotten</strong>.</td>
<td>= he was forgotten by people</td>
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<tr>
<th>Some <strong>past participles</strong> can be active, but generally that action is already complete. These adjectives tend to describe something that has already happened to the noun it is describing.</th>
<th>A <strong>fallen</strong> leaf</th>
<th>= a leaf that has fallen</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased</strong> activity</td>
<td>= activity that has increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>retired</strong> teacher</td>
<td>= a teacher that has retired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faded</strong> colours</td>
<td>= colours that have faded over time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swollen</strong> ankles</td>
<td>= ankles that have swollen</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Some very common adjectives have a present participle form and a past participle form. The <strong>present participle</strong> shows that the noun being described causes a feeling. The <strong>past participle</strong> shows the feeling of the noun.</th>
<th>That was the most <strong>boring</strong> class ever!</th>
<th>The students were <strong>bored</strong> in that class.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was an <strong>exciting</strong> day for us.</td>
<td>We felt <strong>excited</strong> on that day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He received a <strong>surprising</strong> phone call.</td>
<td>The phone call made <strong>him</strong> feel <strong>surprised</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your directions were very <strong>confusing</strong>.</td>
<td>Someone was <strong>confused</strong> when they read your directions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Underline all the **participle adjectives** in these sentences. Find the mistakes and correct them.

a. The lecture was very interested this afternoon.
b. I don’t like to watch bored movies.

c. When I cleaned out my bag, I found a half-eating sandwich, a broken pair of scissors and an unwashed sweatshirt.
d. I had a dream about a talking dog that lived in an abandoning house.
e. Why were you so confusing when the teacher explained the assignment so clearly?