

Lesson 14. Participle Clauses

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Learning Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define what a participle clause is.
- Identify participle clauses in sentences.
- Determine the correct forms of participle clauses to use in sentences.
- Combine sentences using participle clauses.
- Make own sentences using participle clauses.

Lesson 14. Participle Clauses

Participle clauses are *non-finite* clauses. They use a present participle or a past participle to shorten a main clause. Participle clauses are common in written English because they allow us to include information without making long or complicated sentences.

Examples:



- ➔ Having washed her hair, Susan reached for the hair-dryer and scissors.
- ➔ Holding the hair-dryer in her left hand, Susan cut her hair with the scissors in her right hand.
- ➔ Blown to the right by the hair-dryer, her hair could easily be cut.
- ➔ Having been cut, her hair looked strange.
- ➔ Have you ever seen anyone cutting their hair this way?

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✓ There is no subject in a participle clause. The subject of the main clause is also the subject of the participle clause.

➔ Having washed her hair, Susan reached for the hair-dryer and scissors.

✓ The main verb is changed into a participle. We have to pay attention to whether the action in the participle clause takes place at the same time as the action in the main clause or before it, and whether we are using the active or the passive voice.

➔ Holding the hair-dryer in her left hand, Susan cut her hair.
(simultaneous action, active - present participle)

✓ In a negative participle clause we put not before the participle.

➔ Not having any money, Susan decided to cut her hair herself.

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		participle form	example
active	simultaneous action	present participle (ing-form)	<u>Holding</u> the hair-dryer in her left hand, she cut her hair.
	sequential action	perfect participle (<i>having</i> + 3rd verb form)	<u>Having washed</u> her hair, she cut it.
passive	simultaneous and sequential actions	past participle (3rd verb form)	<u>Blown</u> by the hair-dryer, her hair could easily be cut.

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✓ The conjunctions *as*, *because*, and *since*, as well as the relative pronouns *who* and *which*, are not used in the participle clause.

➔ As the hair was blown to the right by the hair-dryer, it could easily be cut.

Blown to the right by the hair-dryer, the hair could easily be cut.

➔ Her hair, which has been cut, looks strange now.

Her hair, having been cut, looks strange now.

✓ But, the conjunctions *before* and *when* are used in the participle clause.

➔ Before she cut her hair, she washed it.

Before cutting her hair, she washed it.

✓ The conjunctions *after* and *while* can either be used or not.

➔ After she had washed her hair, she cut it.

(After) having washed her hair, she cut it.

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Participle clauses enable us to say information in a **more economical way**. They are formed using **present participles** (going, reading, seeing, walking, etc.), past participles (gone, read, seen, walked, etc.) or **perfect participles** (having gone, having read, having seen, having walked, etc.).

We can use participle clauses when the participle and the verb in the main clause have the same subject.

➔ *Waiting for Ellie, I made some tea. (While I was waiting for Ellie, I made some tea.)*

Participle clauses **do not have a specific tense**. The tense is indicated by the verb in the main clause.

Participle clauses are mainly used in written texts, particularly in a literary, academic or journalistic style.

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Identify the participle clauses in each sentence.

1. Having seen the film before, I didn't want to go to the cinema.
2. Shocked by the explosion, the people ran for shelter.
3. The man driving the car was not injured.
4. If you think you have received an e-mail containing a virus, you should delete it immediately.
5. We broke the computer belonging to my father.
6. Talking to her friend she forgot everything around her.
7. The man driving the car was not injured.
8. Not having enough money they spent their holidays at home last year.
9. Being a good boy he helped his mother in the kitchen.
10. We found a doctor working at a hospital in Madrid.
11. Having been nominated three times for an Oscar, he is one of today's most acclaimed film directors.
12. The house built last year was sold yesterday.
13. Look at that man swimming in the river.
14. Realizing that there was no other way out, I asked for help.

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Present Participle

Here are some common ways we use present participle clauses. Note that present participles have a similar meaning to active verbs.

- ➔ To give the result of an action
*The bomb exploded, **destroying the building.***
- ➔ To give the reason for an action
***Knowing she loved reading,** Richard bought her a book.*
- ➔ To talk about an action that happened at the same time as another action
***Standing in the queue,** I realized I didn't have any money.*
- ➔ To add information about the subject of the main clause
***Starting in the new year,** the new policy bans cars in the city center.*

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Complete the sentences below with the correct present participle clauses.

1. (search) [] for her gloves, she dug through the entire wardrobe.
2. (whistle) [] a song, she danced through the house with the mop.
3. (sit) [] in the shade, we ate cake and drank coffee.
4. The child sat at the desk (paint) [] a picture.
5. (run) [] to the bus stop, she lost her shoe.
6. (park) [] the car, we searched for the ticket machine.
7. (drink) [] one litre of water, she really needed to go to the toilet.
8. (leave) [] the party too early, we couldn't see the fireworks anymore []
9. (finish) [] her phone call, she went back to work.
10. (lose) [] ten kilogrammes, Anne finally fit into her favorite dress again.

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Past Participle

Here are some common ways that we use past participle clauses. Note that past participles normally have a passive meaning.

- ➔ With a similar meaning to an if condition
Used in this way, participles can make your writing more concise. (If you use participles in this way, ...)
- ➔ To give the reason for an action
Worried by the news, she called the hospital.
- ➔ To add information about the subject of the main clause
Filled with pride, he walked towards the stage.

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Complete the sentences below with the correct present participle clauses.

1. (blind) [] by the sun, the driver didn't see the stop sign.
2. (prepare) [] by the chef himself, the dinner will be a real treat.
3. (sing) [] by him, every song sounds just wonderful.
4. (misuse) [] as a refuse dump, the place became more and more shabby.
5. Though (bear) [] in England, she spent most of her childhood in the United States.
6. The musicians stood up, (surround) [] by thunderous applause.
7. The Golden Gate Bridge, (paint) [] a bright red-orange color, attracts millions of tourist yearly.
8. Any bridge (damage) [] in the earthquake will be repaired and reopened soon.

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Perfect participle

Perfect participle clauses show that the action they describe was finished before the action in the main clause. Perfect participles can be structured to make an active or passive meaning.

- ➔ To make it clear that an action happens before another one
Having brushed my teeth, I realized I hadn't used my toothbrush.
(After I had finished brushing my teeth, I realized I hadn't used my toothbrush.)
- ➔ To talk about two actions which are not consecutive, or when the first action happens over a period of time
Having read the book before, he knew how the film would end.
I knew how to move around the city, having lived there all my life.

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Participle clauses after conjunctions and prepositions

It is also common for participle clauses, especially with -ing, to follow conjunctions and prepositions such as ***before, after, instead of, on, since, when, while and in spite of***.

- ➔ ***Before cooking, you should wash your hands.***
- ➔ ***Instead of complaining about it, they should try doing something positive.***
- ➔ ***On arriving at the hotel, he went to get changed.***
- ➔ ***While packing her things, she thought about the last two years.***
- ➔ ***In spite of having read the instructions twice, I still couldn't understand how to use it.***

Application



Write a sentence with participle clauses using the conjunctions enlisted above.

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Choose the correct form to complete the sentences.

1. ___ by the changing information, they thought the plane was cancelled.
a. confusing b. confused d. having confused
2. ___ at a low temperature, these jeans will keep their original color for a long time.
a. washing b. washed d. having washed
3. ___ the paper, he saw the news about his hometown.
a. reading b. read d. having read
4. ___ by a local architect and artist, the house combines traditional materials with original design.
a. building b. built d. having built
5. ___ in India for two years, Kaleem could speak some Hindi.
a. living b. lived d. having lived
6. ___ in prisons throughout her twenties, she wrote her first play about life behind bars.
a. after working b. worked d. having been worked
7. ___ through the woods, they found a bird with a broken wing.
a. walking b. walked d. having walked
8. ___ for the final interview, the candidates were asked to prepare a short presentation.
a. selecting b. selected d. having been selected

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Combine the clauses using participle constructions.

1. The battle was fought at this place. The battle was very significant.
2. He was waiting in the hall. He overheard a conversation.
3. As I have an assignment to finish, I cannot come with you.
4. The teacher was impressed by Daniel's work. She gave him the highest score.
5. Because he didn't study hard enough for his exam, Ryan couldn't pass it.
6. After he had been told to do the dishes, John entered the kitchen with a frown.
7. We came to a river where we crossed a stone bridge. It was built centuries ago.
8. We didn't want to waste time, so we walked up the steep valley which led to the foothills.
9. We left at 6 am and we headed north.
10. Once we'd reached the top of those, we saw the much higher peaks ahead.
11. There were dark clouds over the peaks. As we realized that would mean more snow, we discussed it.
12. After we'd decided to carry on, we continued our trek uphill.
13. When I look back at that moment, I sometimes wonder whether that was the right decision if one bears in mind what followed.

The End