

# An overview of participles

This lesson provides a detailed overview of participles. Participles are non-finite verbs used as adjectives. Participles usually end in -ing or -ed. Since participles are formed from verbs, they express action or a state of being.

When used as adjectives, participles modify nouns or pronouns. They also help in the formation of continuous and perfect tense forms.

There are two types of participles: present participles and past participles. Present participles always end in -ing. Past participles most often end in -ed. Other possible endings are: -en (e.g. written, broken), -d (e.g. sold, paid), -t (e.g. dealt, met, sent), -n (e.g. seen, spun) or -ne (e.g. gone, done)

It is no fun nursing a broken heart.

I like to listen to the noise of falling rain.

Deserted by his family, he killed himself.

Stricken with grief, she threw herself on the body.

Crying, she walked out of the room.

Smiling, she hugged the child.

## Participial phrase

A participial phrase is a group of words consisting of a participle. The participial phrase may have its own object. This is usually a noun or pronoun.

Taking his coat, James walked away.

Here the noun phrase 'his coat' acts as the object of the participle taking.

The participial phrase 'taking his coat' acts as an adjective modifying the noun James.

The man saw the girl lighting a lamp.

Here the participial phrase 'lighting a lamp' modifies the noun girl.

Children interested in reading acquire knowledge faster.

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Here the participial phrase 'interested in reading' functions as an adjective modifying the noun children.

## Position

In order to avoid confusion, a participial phrase must be placed as close to the noun as possible.

Sitting on a branch, the monkey gibbered.

Here the participial phrase 'sitting on a branch' modifies the noun gibbered.

Another example is given below.

Walking down the street, I saw a strange sight.

Here the participial phrase 'walking down the street' modifies the pronoun I.