

Participles as adjectives

Participles can often be used as adjectives before nouns, or after be and other copular verbs.

A fallen leaf

A lost dog

An interesting book

Screaming children

Not all participles can be used as adjectives before nouns – for example, we say a lost dog but not a found dog. It is not possible to give clear rules about this – students will learn the most usual combinations as they learn the rest of their English.

We often use participles after nouns in order to define or identify the nouns.

The people questioned gave their own versions of the story. (= The people who were questioned gave their own versions of the story.) (NOT The questioned people gave their own versions of the story.)

We often use those with a participle to mean 'the ones who are / were'.

Those questioned gave very different opinions. (= The ones who were questioned gave different opinions.)

Those selected should report for duty on Monday.

The exact meaning of a few participles depends upon their position in the sentence.

Compare:

A concerned person = a worried person

The person concerned = the people who is / are affected or involved

An adopted child = a child who is brought up by people who are not his / her biological parents

The course of action adopted = the course of action is / was chosen.