

Uses of being

The word being is used in several different grammatical structures.

Being + adjective

The structure being + adjective is used to talk about actions and behavior.

Why are you being so silly?

You are being cruel when you hurt others with your words or actions.

Note that when the adjective refers to feelings, the continuous form is not possible.

I was upset when I heard that I had failed the test. (NOT I was being upset when I ... Here we are talking about the speaker's feelings and hence a continuous form is not possible.)

I am delighted to hear that you have won the first prize. (NOT I am being delighted ...)

Being + past participle

Being can be followed by a past participle. This structure is used in the passive forms of present and past continuous tenses.

Compare:

Mother is cooking dinner. (Active)

Dinner is being cooked by mother. (Passive)

They are repairing the roof.

The roof is being repaired.

I am quite sure that somebody is following me. (Active)

I am quite sure that I am being followed. (Passive)

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Being in participle clauses

Instead of a because /as / since clause, we sometimes use an adverbial participle clause with being. This structure is mainly used in a formal or literary style.

Compare:

Being late, he couldn't watch the show. (= Because he is late, he couldn't watch the show.)

Being a friend of the Minister, I am often invited to official parties. (= As I am a friend of the Minister, I am often invited to official parties.)

Being quite slim, I managed to squeeze through the small opening in the wall. (= Since I was quite slim, I managed to squeeze through the small opening in the wall.)