

# Participle clauses

## Introduction



**Realising** he was late for work, he decided to run.

## Definition

Participle clauses are a type of adverbial clause which allow us to say something with fewer words.

## Construction

	Affirmative	Negative
Present participle - the subject in each clause is the same.	<b>Watching</b> TV, Jack fell asleep. [Jack was watching TV]  Watching TV, Jack's wife came home. <b>×</b>	<b>Not knowing</b> what to do, he asked for help.
Past participle - the meaning is passive.	<b>Watched</b> so closely, the presenter felt nervous. [The audience was watching him.]	<b>Not known</b> for his punctuality, he arrived late as usual.

<b>Perfect participle - one action is before another.</b>	<b>Having watched</b> a film, Jack went to bed. [active]	<b>Not having known</b> him for long, she hesitated to ask him for help.
	<b>Having been watched</b> all day, the presenter felt more used to it. [passive]	<b>Not having been known</b> for his generosity, his colleagues were surprised when he invited them to dinner.

### Note that:

With present and perfect participle clauses, the sentences can be inverted:

**Seeing** the train arrive, she started to hurry.  
She started to hurry, **seeing** the train arrive.

**Not having seen** the cable, she tripped over it.  
She tripped over the cable, **not having seen** it.

The participle clause sometimes has a subject:

This company has a lot of longstanding employees, some **having worked** here for more than 40 years.  
The weather **being** good, they decided to have lunch outdoors.  
The report **written**, he turned to his next task.

**Note that** this structure is formal, and rare in conversation.

## Uses

Use	Examples
To explain why	<b>Hoping</b> to find a solution, we called an emergency meeting.  I didn't take a pen and paper to the workshop, <b>knowing</b> that they'd be provided.  <b>Having written</b> down the wrong time, I turned up an hour early!

<p>To talk about a time - an alternative to using words such as 'while' and 'as soon as'</p>	<p><b>Chatting</b> with my colleagues at lunch, I suddenly remembered I had a meeting.</p> <p><b>Hearing</b> that Julia had got the manager's job, I decided to resign.</p> <p><b>Walking</b> past the church on my left, I followed a narrow street to the main square.</p> <p><b>Seen</b> from a distance, he looked/looks like his brother.</p>
<p>In conditional sentences, particularly when giving recommendations or advice</p>	<p><b>Heated</b> gently, the soup retains its flavour.</p> <p><b>Serviced</b> regularly, this car will go on for years.</p> <p>Better <b>paid</b>, they'd probably work harder.</p> <p><b>Dealt with</b> sooner, it wouldn't have got as bad as this.</p>
<p>To talk about something happening at the same time as the activity in the main clause or to give further information about the main clause <b>Note:</b> Mainly seen in formal literature</p>	<p>The people in this team are quite young, most <b>being</b> under twenty-five.</p> <p>Her voice <b>getting</b> louder, she continued to tell him how she felt.</p>

## Participle clauses after conjunctions and prepositions

Present and perfect participle clauses are often used after certain conjunctions and prepositions. Here are some examples:

**Before** **telling** everyone the date, could you make sure there's a room available?

**After** **having read** all my emails, I didn't have much time for anything else.

**On** **seeing** there was no one in the room, he realised he'd got the time wrong.

Mind the gap **when** **boarding** the train.

**While/whilst** **accepting** the need for new desks, the management didn't want to pay for them.

## Participle clauses after a noun

Also known as 'reduced relative clauses', these give information about a noun. They use present or past participles, including 'being'.

**Present participles are used for a variety of tenses, not just the present continuous:**

The man **organising** the conference is my colleague. [the man who is organising..]

Passengers **arriving** from the EU need to queue here. [who arrive, or who are arriving]

She was the one **talking** to Harry. [who was talking]

**Past participles are used with a passive meaning:**

Did you read the report **written** by the HR department? [which was written]

He likes shoes **made** in Italy. [which are made]

**'Being' + past participle is used with a continuous passive meaning:**

The room **being decorated** at the moment is the manager's office. [which is...]

The subject **being discussed** when he arrived was the delayed delivery. [which was...]

## Examples



She broke her arm **playing** tennis.



**Noticing** the time, she decided to head back to the office.



**Watered** regularly, these plants will produce flowers all summer.



The dinner all **prepared**, she decided to relax for an hour or so.



He decided to get a new car after **breaking** down yet again.



The couple **living** next door last year were really friendly.

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