Uses of the Participle

Present Participle As an object complement

The present participle can be used as an object complement placed after the object.

He kept me waiting.
I found the child sitting outside.

As a subject complement

The present participle can be used as a subject complement placed after verbs like be, seem, look, turn, become, appear etc.

The story was interesting.
The child seemed smiling.
The long journey was tiring.

As an adjective phrase

The present participle can be used as part of an adjective phrase generally put after the noun it qualifies.

The boy standing at the gate is John.
Who is that woman talking with your husband?
Call the man waiting outside.

To talk about an earlier action

The present participle can be used to talk about an earlier action, or one of the actions of the same subject.

Seeing the snake, the man ran away.
Finding none in the class, the teacher became angry.
Entering the room, we found the child sleeping.

In the appositive position

The present participle can be used in the appositive position.

The woman, quivering and trembling, ran away.

As an adverb modifying an adjective

It is piping hot.
It is freezing cold.
She was **dripping** wet.

**In absolute phrases**

The participles are used in absolute phrases with a noun or pronoun going before them:

*God willing,* we shall meet again.

The sea **being rough,** they abandoned the journey.

Note that each of these absolute phrases can be transformed into a subordinate clause:

*If God is willing,* we shall meet again.

*As the sea was rough,* they abandoned the journey.

**Uses of the past participle**

**To form the perfect tenses**

The past participle is used to form the perfect tenses.

*They have arrived.* (Present perfect)

*They have been invited.* (Present perfect - passive)

*They had left.* (Past perfect)

*They will have returned.* (Future perfect)

**As an adjective**

The past participle can be used as an adjective in all the positions and functions of a typical adjective.

She swept away the **fallen** leaves.

A **burnt** child dreads fire.

He wore a **torn** shirt.

Here the past participles are used as adjectives before the nouns they qualify.

**As part of the predicate**

The past participle can be used as part of the predicate after copular verbs such as be, seem, look, appear etc.

The woman looked **distressed**.

She seemed **surprised**.

He was left **stranded**.
In the appositive position

The past participle can be used in the appositive position.

Dejected he left the room.

As object complements

Past participles can be used as object complements.

I found him somewhat recovered.

As an adverb

The past participle can be used as an adverb modifying an adjective.

I am dead tired.
He was dead drunk.

To express an earlier action of the same subject

Deceived by his friends, he killed himself.
Terrified, they fled from the scene.

Past participles can also be used in absolute phrases with a noun or pronoun going before them.

The fog having lifted the plane took off.