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.