

# ADVERBIAL PARTICIPIALS and their PHRASES

## ○ USAGE:

“Seeing a deer, I stopped my car.”

In conversation, people don't usually use participial phrases as they sound rather formal. In **casual speech**, we would more likely say:

“I saw a deer on the road and I stopped my car.”

In **writing**, they are very economic, and show sophistication and skill when used well.

## ○ TERMINOLOGY:

Since the **Dependent Adverb Clause** is reduced and no longer expresses a **subject**, it is no longer a clause. It is now a **phrase**.

Since the verb is reduced to either an **-ed** or **-ing participle**, and is no longer conjugated or truly showing tense, we have “**Participial phrase**” or just “**Participial**”.

These “**adverbial phrases**” are different from **adjective** clauses and phrases.

(**While I was**) walking down the street,

I saw my friend (**who was**) running across the street.

*Dependent Adverb Clause*

*Dependent Adjective Clause*

1. usually precede but can follow
2. always non-restrictive
3. embed meaning
4. can produce dangling errors

1. Always follow noun/pronoun
2. Restrictive & non-restrictive
3. Do not embed meaning

Since the **subject** is not expressed it **must be the same** as the subject expressed in the main clause; otherwise, the modifying phrase is **DANGLING**.

Remember the rule: “missing subject IS next subject.”

= (since **I** was) Discussing participial phrases, **I** wrote an example of one.

= The **student** was working on his grammar, (as **he** was) trying to remember rules.

≠ (the **student** was) Feeling sleepy, the student's **sentence** came out incorrect.

## ○ STRUCTURE:

Since the verb is not fully conjugated, participials are (**partially**) tenseless, and sometimes require context. The **verb tense** of the sentence is shown in the **main clause**.

Written as an example, this sentence { *showed*  
*shows*  
*will show* } a participial phrase.

Participial phrases have **three** forms, and they can show **negativity** and take on **adverbs**.

### 1) Active Participles

Working on his grammar, he **got** tired.

Walking home, he **thinks** of another way.

**Not** hearing the news, he **won't** know until tomorrow.

**Sometimes** on hearing sad news, he **would begin** to sing.

**Without** knowing the answer, he **got** it right anyway.

### 2) Passive Participles

Given the key to the door, he **let** himself in.

Built for speed, this car **will tear** up the road.

**Not** heard coming in, he **slept** undisturbed.

**Always** told to smile, he rarely **showed** his sadness.

Used sparingly, whisky can help his mood.



### 3) Perfect Participles

Perfect participials can be **either** active or passive, and the “having” denotes **completion**. Remember that only **transitive** verbs can make passive participials.

- Passive: *Told* everyday he was improving at English, he never **gave** up.  
Perfect Passive: *Having been told* to come early, he still **came** late  
Perfect Active: *Having **already** known* of problem, she **arrived** well prepared.  
Perfect Passive: *Having been known* by all, her name **lived** on for many decades.  
+ Negative: **Not** *having known* she was going to be there, he **showed** up with his girlfriend.  
+ Adverb: *Having **always** heard* he was trouble, she **left** quickly.

#### ○ EMBEDDED MEANING: Deleting or Retaining Conjunctions

**When:** Active & Passive Participials may retain “when” to imply a more general condition.

- |                                               |                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Seeing the news, she cried                    | She cried when she saw the news.                     |
| <b>When</b> seeing the news, she cried/cries. | When <b>ever</b> she sees the news, she cried/cries. |
| <b>When</b> told to be on time, he is.        | <b>When</b> used safely, the product is wonder.      |

**After:** Perfect Participials show completion but may retain “after” for emphasis.

- Having learned he was a liar, I ignored him.  
After having learned he was a liar, I *began* to ignore him.

**Because, Since, As:** These conjunctions are not permitted when **Participials** show **conditions, reasons, causes, or results**.

- Since** he had been sick for weeks, he had a lot of work to catch up on.  
*Having been* sick for weeks, he had a lot of work to catch up on.

- Because** he had heard that the movie was excellent, Johnny went to see it.  
*Having heard* that the movie was excellent, Johnny went to see it.

- Johnny was surprised by the custom, **as** he came from a traditional family.  
Having come from a traditional family, Johnny was surprised by the custom.

**Since** can also be a preposition. Note in the third example, the “knowing” is a gerund and **not** a reduced adverb phrase.

- Since** moving to Alaska, he has missed his family greatly.  
**Since** knowing the truth, he no longer speaks of it.  
Since knowing the truth was ill advised, he didn’t believe him.

**While** conveys different meanings for **perfect** (*even though*) **active** (*at the same time*).

- While** having known him for years, I only just realized that he is a liar.  
**While** working on my homework, I got stuck on a word.

**Before** conveys different meanings when preceding or following the verb.

- Before** being invited to the festival, he had never even heard of the event.  
Having been invited **before** to the festival, he was very excited to attend again.

#### ○ RETAINING PREPOSITIONS

- |                                                   |                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Instead</b> of walking away, she stood strong. | <b>On</b> hearing the news, he wept.        |
| <b>Without</b> knowing what to do, he froze.      | <b>Upon</b> knowing the truth, he shivered. |

#### ○ PARTICIPIAL PREPOSITIONS – see [grammarist](#) for more.

Certain Participials have become frozen over time and no longer necessarily create dangling modifiers. These Participials include: according to, assuming, barring, considering, during, given, provided.

