

## Participle clauses with adverbial meaning (1)

A

We can use **present participle (-ing)** and **past participle (-ed)** clauses with an adverbial meaning. (See also Unit 59.) Clauses like these often give information about the timing, causes, and results of the events described:

- Opening her eyes*, the baby began to cry. (= When she opened her eyes...)
- Faced with a bill for £10,000*, John has taken an extra job. (= Because he is faced...)
- Looked after carefully*, the plant can live through the winter. (= If it is looked after...)
- Having completed the book*, he had a holiday. (perfect; = When/Because he had completed...)
- The fruit was expensive, *being imported*. (simple passive; = ...because it was imported)
- Having been hunted close to extinction*, the rhino is once again common in this area. (perfect passive; = Although it had been hunted close to extinction...)

B

The implied subject of a participle clause (that is, a subject known but not directly mentioned) is usually the same as the subject of the main clause:

- Arriving at the party*, we saw Ruth standing alone. (= When we arrived...we saw...)

However, sometimes the implied subject is not referred to in the main clause:

- Having wanted to drive a train all his life*, this was an opportunity not to be missed.

In careful speech and writing we avoid different subjects for the participle and main clause:

- Turning round quickly, the door hit me in the face. (first implied subject = 'I'; second subject = 'the door')

C

In formal English, the participle clause sometimes has its own subject, which is often a pronoun or includes one:

- The collection of vases is priceless, *some being over two thousand years old*.
- Her voice breaking with emotion*, Jean spoke about her father's illness.

We use a present participle (-ing) clause to talk about something happening at the same time as an event in the main clause, or to give information about the facts given in the main clause.

D

When we use **not** in a participle clause it usually comes before the participle. However, it can follow the participle, depending on the part of the sentences affected by **not**. Compare:

- Wishing not to go out that night*, I made an excuse. ('not' relates to 'to go out that night'; the sentence means 'I didn't want to go out on that particular night') *and*
- Not wishing to go out that night*, I made an excuse. ('not' relates to 'wish to go out that night'; the sentence could mean 'going out on that particular night wasn't my wish')

E

We use a clause beginning with **having + past participle** rather than a present participle if the action in the main clause is the consequence of the event in the participle clause:

- Having won every major judo title*, Mark retired from international competition. (*or After winning...*; *not* Winning every major judo title...)
- Having broken her leg the last time she went*, Brenda decided not to go on the school skiing trip this year. (*or After breaking her leg...*; *not* Breaking her leg...)

We can use either a **present participle (-ing)** clause or a **having + past participle** clause with a similar meaning when the action in the participle clause is complete before the action in the main clause begins. Compare:

- Taking off his shoes*, Ray walked into the house. (*Having taken off...* has a similar meaning) *and*
- Running across the field*, I fell and hurt my ankle. (= While I was running...; 'Having run...' would suggest that I fell *after* I had run across the field)

## Exercises

## Unit 58

58.1 Rewrite the sentences beginning with one of the clause forms shown in A and D.

- 1 When she saw the dog coming towards her, she quickly crossed the road.  
*Seeing the dog coming towards her, she quickly crossed the road.*
- 2 As she was dressed all in black, she couldn't be seen in the starless night.
- 3 As I don't have a credit card, I found it difficult to book an airline ticket over the phone.
- 4 Keith spent a lot of time filling in job application forms because he was unemployed.
- 5 Because I was walking quickly, I soon caught up with her.
- 6 The house was built of wood, so it was clearly a fire risk.
- 7 I was eager to catch the bus in good time because I had been told off the day before for arriving late.
- 8 She didn't know where the theatre was, so she asked for directions at the hotel reception.
- 9 As she was a nurse, she knew what to do after the accident.
- 10 He had spent his childhood in Oslo so he knew the city well.

58.2 Where the implied subject of the two clauses is the same write S and where it is different write D. In the sentences where it is different, rewrite the sentence to make it more acceptable. (B)

- 1 Waiting for the bus, a car went through a puddle and splashed water all over me.
- 2 Known mainly as a writer of novels, James has now written a successful biography.
- 3 Keeping a careful eye on the spider, Suzanne hurried out of the bathroom.
- 4 Looking down from the hill, the town spread out before us towards the coast.
- 5 Feeling rather sick, the boat ploughed through the huge waves.
- 6 Found only in the Andes, the plant is used by local people to treat skin diseases.

58.3 Choose the more appropriate position for not in these sentences. (D)

- 1 ..... wishing ..... to boast, she said nothing about her success.
- 2 ..... pretending ..... to notice that people were staring at me, I carried on looking on the floor for my lost contact lens.
- 3 ..... determined ..... to be beaten, she put all her energy into the serve.
- 4 ..... feeling ..... well, she went home early.
- 5 ..... bothering ..... to put on his coat, he left the house.
- 6 ..... trying ..... to cry, she waved to Mark as the train pulled out.

58.4 Complete the sentences with either **having + past participle** or the **-ing** form of one of these verbs. In which is it also possible to use either form with a similar meaning? (E)

move   park   suffer   wait   walk

- 1 ..... the car about a kilometre from the stadium, I walked the rest of the way.
- 2 ..... out of the city, she felt much happier.
- 3 ..... through the tunnel, I banged my head on the low roof.
- 4 ..... six months for the washing machine to be delivered, I decided to cancel the order.
- 5 ..... from depression himself as a teenager, Kevin could understand how his son was feeling.