

Participle clauses with adverbial meaning (2)

A

We can use prepositions such as **after**, **before**, **besides**, **by**, **in**, **on**, **since**, **through**, **while**, **with**, and **without** with a present participle (-ing) clause with an adverbial meaning (see also Unit 58):

- While understanding** her problem, I don't know how I can help. (= Although I understand...)
- After spending** so much money on the car, I can't afford a holiday.
- Before being changed** last year, the speed limit was 70 kph. (passive form)

Less formal alternatives have a clause with a verb that can change according to tense and subject. Compare:

- Since moving** to London, we haven't had time to go to the theatre. *and*
- Since we moved** to London, we haven't had time to go to the theatre. (less formal)

B

by, in, on + -ing

<input type="checkbox"/> By working hard , she passed her maths exam.	= the -ing clause indicates 'the method or means used'
<input type="checkbox"/> They only survived by eating roots and berries in the forest.	
<input type="checkbox"/> On returning from Beijing, he wrote to the Chinese embassy.	= the -ing clause indicates 'when'
<input type="checkbox"/> John was the first person I saw on leaving hospital.	
<input type="checkbox"/> In criticising the painting, I knew I would offend her.	= the -ing clause indicates 'cause'
<input type="checkbox"/> In choosing Marco, the People's Party has moved to the left.	

We can often use **by + -ing** or **in + -ing** with a similar meaning, although **by + -ing** is preferred in informal contexts:

- In/By writing** the essay about Spanish culture, I came to understand the country better. ('In writing...' = the consequence of writing was to understand...; 'By writing...' = the method I used to understand the country better was to write...)

But compare:

- By telephoning** every hour, she managed to speak to the doctor. (*not* In telephoning...; the method, not the consequence)

C

with -ing; without -ing

With + -ing often introduces a reason for something in the main clause. This use is fairly informal. Notice that a subject has to come between **with** and **-ing**:

- With Louise living** in Spain, we don't see her often. (= Because Louise lives in Spain...)
- With sunshine streaming** through the window, Hugh found it impossible to sleep. (= Because the sunshine was streaming...)

With and **what with** can also be used with a noun phrase to introduce a reason:

- With my bad back** I won't be able to lift a heavy suitcase.
- What with the traffic and the heavy rain**, it's no wonder you were late.

We can use **without + ing** to say that a second action doesn't happen:

- I went to work **without eating** breakfast.
- They left **without paying**.

Often, however, it has a similar meaning to 'although...not' or 'unless':

- Without meaning** to, I seem to have offended her. (= Although I didn't mean to...)
- Without seeing** the photo, I can't judge how good it is. (= Unless I see the photo...)

D

Adverbial meanings can also be added by a clause beginning with a conjunction or adjective but with no verb, having the same meaning as a clause beginning with a **conjunction + subject + be**. This is used in fairly formal English. More informal alternatives are given in brackets:

- While in Poland**, they will play two concerts in Warsaw. (*or While they are in Poland...*)
- Although just two feet apart**, they didn't speak. (*or Although they were just...*)
- I try to use public transport **whenever possible**. (*or ...whenever it is possible.*)
- Unhappy with the decision**, Johnson swore at the referee. (*or Because he was unhappy...*)
- James relaxed, **pleased with his day's work**. (*or ...because he was pleased...*)

Exercises

Unit 59

59.1 Complete these sentences with a preposition from (i) and a verb from (ii). Use an **-ing** form of the verb or **being + past participle**, as appropriate. You will need to use some of the words from (i) more than once. (A)

i	after	before	since	ii	come	interview	leave	overthrow
	through	while			sell	take	welcome	work

- 1 *Since coming* out of hospital, I have been to the gym every day.
- 2 on TV last night, the minister mentioned that she would be retiring soon.
- 3 the back off the computer, make sure it is unplugged.
- 4 the government's new policy, I think it should have been introduced months ago.
- 5 in a military takeover, the king has been under house arrest.
- 6 with young children for the last 40 years, she has come to understand their behaviour better than most.
- 7 in supermarkets, most milk is pasteurised.
- 8 Oxford University in 1953, Painter spent three years teaching at a local school.

59.2 Match the items on the left with those on the right. Then write sentences beginning by **+ -ing**, **on + -ing**, or **in + -ing**, as in the example. (B)

- 1 She returned home.
- 2 She gave up sugar.
- 3 She turned down the job.
- 4 She moved to a smaller flat.
- 5 She entered the classroom.
- 6 She criticised her father.

- a She soon began to lose weight.
- b She saved over a hundred pounds a month.
- c She knew that she might offend him.
- d ~~She found Dave waiting outside her front door.~~
- e She gave up the possibility of a huge salary.
- f She was surprised when all the children stood up quietly.

1+ d *On returning home, she found Dave waiting outside her front door.*

59.3 Rewrite these sentences beginning **With... -ing** or **Without... -ing**. (C)

- 1 We couldn't go on holiday because Kathy had flu.
.....
- 2 I won't be able to advise you unless I have more information.
.....
- 3 He had solved the problem, although he didn't realise it.
.....
- 4 I couldn't wait for Ken any longer as time was running out before the train left.
.....

59.4 Match the sentence halves and write new sentences with a reduced clause, as in the examples in D.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 When you are in Madrid,... | a ...she continued to climb. |
| 2 Because he was popular with his fellow pupils,... | b ...the flowers are a welcome addition to any garden. |
| 3 Although she was exhausted,... | c ...she practised for hours every day. |
| 4 As she was determined to do well in the concert,... | d ...students can refer to their dictionary. |
| 5 Since they are attractive to butterflies,... | e ...he was elected head boy at the school. |
| 6 Where it is necessary,... | f ...you must visit the Prado Museum. |

1+ d *When in Madrid, you must visit the Prado Museum.*