

# #15

## Participles: What Are They?

Present participles and past participles are two of the five forms of a verb.

Verb	Simple Present	Simple Past	Present Participle	Past Participle	Infinitive
Miss	Miss	Missed	Missing	Missed	To Miss
Run	Run	Ran	Running	Run	To Run
Forget	Forget	Forgot	Forgetting	Forgotten	To Forget

Notice that verbs in the present participle form all take -ing endings, but that past participle forms vary. You'll have to do some memorizing with these.

### When do we use participles?

Participles are weird because we use them for a number of different reasons.

- We use present participles to form progressive tense verbs.

Examples:

I am running to your house. (Am running is a verb phrase in the present progressive tense. It shows an action currently happening. Notice the present participle form of the verb run).

I was handing out flyers on the street. (Was handing is a verb phrase in the past progressive tense. It shows an action that was in the process of happening at one point in the past).

- We use past participles to form perfect tense verbs.

Examples:

Kobe Bryant had missed four shots before he finally hit the game winner. (Has missed is a verb phrase in the past perfect tense, showing an action that occurred in the past up until a certain point. We use the past participle form of the verb.)

My grandmother has forgotten many of our names. (Has forgotten is a verb phrase in the present perfect tense. Notice the irregular past participle form "forgotten," not forgot.

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- We use participles as modifiers too. When we do this, the participle is not acting as a verb, but as an adjective.

Examples:

Dashing around the corner, Claire bumped into her old friend. (The present participle dashing is functioning as an adjective modifying the subject Claire. Dashing around the corner is a participial phrase since it functions together as one grammatical unit to modify Claire).

The broken cell phone is not useful to anyone. (The past participle broken is functioning as an adjective modifying the noun cell phone. Notice the irregular past participle ending).

*\* For a more thorough explanation of participle adjectives, see the VERBALS handout.*

**PRACTICE:** Now you try some.

Write two sentences using present participles as adjectives.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
—
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
—

Now write two sentences using past participles as adjectives.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
—
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
—

Finally, write one sentence in a progressive tense using a present participle and one sentence in a perfect tense using a past participle.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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