

Present participles worksheet

[this worksheet accompanies the video on the present active participle by Maria-Elpiniki Oikonomou]

What is a participle?

A participle is an adjective formed from a verb. As it comes from a verb it has tense and voice, and can have a direct or indirect object or complement; but it behaves like an adjective, and so qualifies a noun, meaning that it has case, gender and number:

Smiling, the girl opens the door.

The participle, 'smiling':

- comes from a verb ('to smile')
- describes the girl
- shows us something that is happening at the same time as the action in the main verb. Its form remains the same irrespective of the tense of the main verb:

Smiling, the girl opened the door.

The same situation occurs in Greek.

Forms of the Greek present participle

The masculine and neuter forms follow the pattern of the third declension. The feminine forms follow the pattern of the first declension:

		Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
S I N G.	Nom.	ἔχων	ἔχουσα	ἔχον
	Acc.	ἔχοντα	ἔχουσαν	ἔχον
	Gen.	ἔχοντος	ἐχούσης	ἔχοντος
	Dat.	ἔχοντι	ἐχούσῃ	ἔχοντι
P L U R.	Nom.	ἔχοντες	ἔχουσαι	ἔχύοντα
	Acc.	ἔχοντας	ἐχούσας	ἔχοντα
	Gen.	ἐχόντων	ἐχουσῶν	ἐχόντων
	Dat.	ἔχουσι(ν)	ἐχούσαις	ἔχουσι(ν)

Note that the -vt- of the stem drops out in front of -σι(ν) in the masculine and neuter dative plural. This form is the same as that of a 3rd person plural present tense verb; context will make it clear whether the word you are looking at is a 3rd person plural verb or a participle.

Present participle of the verb 'to be'

		Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
S I N G.	Nom.	ὢν	οὔσα	ὄν
	Acc.	ὄντα	οὔσαν	ὄν
	Gen.	ὄντος	οὔσης	ὄντος
	Dat.	ὄντι	οὔσῃ	ὄντι
P L U R.	Nom.	ὄντες	οὔσαι	ὄντα
	Acc.	ὄντας	οὔσας	ὄντα
	Gen.	ὄντων	οὔσων	ὄντων
	Dat.	οὔσι(ν)	οὔσαις	οὔσι(ν)

Using the present participle

The present participle can convey a range of meanings in Greek:

λέγουσα, ἡ κόρη ἔπεσεν.

Speaking, the girl fell.

While speaking, the girl fell.

As / when she was speaking, the girl fell.

Because she was speaking, the girl fell.

(πεσ- = second aorist stem of πίπτω, I fall).

τοῦτο **λέγουσα**, ἡ κόρη ἔπεσεν.

Saying this, the girl fell.

While saying this, the girl fell.

Participles can tell us information about the subject of the verb when no noun is used and we infer the person from the ending:

τὴν οἰκίαν λείπων χρήματα ἠῦρεν.

Leaving the house, **he** found money.

(εῦρ- = second aorist stem of εὕρισκω, I find).

The masculine nominative participle tells us that the otherwise unspecified subject of the verb is a man.

Sometimes the participle is best translated as a separate clause describing the noun it agrees with:

τούς στρατηγούς ἐθαύμασα ἀνδρείους **ὄντας**.

I admired the generals, **who were** brave.
(literally, " I admired the generals, **being** brave.)"

Working with participles in Greek sentences

- Find the participle, and identify its case, gender and number
- Make sure you are clear which noun it agrees with
- Try the literal translation of "-ing" first, then see whether it is better translated as
 - A temporal clause – while/when/since/as
 - A causal clause – because/since/as
 - A relative clause – who, which, that

The participle with the definite article

The participle is also used with the definite article

ὁ παῖς ὁ τὸν ἵππον **διώκων** ἐκεῖ μένει.

The child – **the one chasing** the horse – is staying there.
The child **who is chasing** the horse is staying there.

πιστεύομεν τοῖς νεανίαις **τοῖς** τιμὰς **ἔχουσιν**.

We trust the young men **who have** honours.

The participle can also be used with an article but without a noun:

οἱ τούς λίθους **βάλλοντες** φεύγουσιν.

The ones throwing stones are fleeing.

ἡ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν **πέμπουσα** νόσον ἔχει.

The one sending the letter has a disease.

Cf. ὁ ἄρχων = the one ruling = the ruler.

Practice sentences

1. τὰ ζῶα **ἐξάγοντες**, οἱ νεανίαί τὸν ποιητὴν εἶδον.
(vocabulary – ζῶον, τό: animal; ἐξάγω: I lead out; ποιητής, ὁ: poet; ἰδ- = second aorist stem of ὀρῶ, I see)

2. τὸν σῖτον **ἐσθίοντες**, οἱ παῖδες τὸν τοῦ γέροντος μῦθον ἤκουον.
(vocabulary – σῖτος, ὄ: food; γέρων, γέροντος, ὄ: old man; μῦθος, ὄ: story)
3. τὴν ὁδὸν οὐχ εὐρίσκοντες, ἐν λιμένι ἐμένομεν.
(vocabulary – λιμήν, λιμένος, ὄ: harbour)
4. ὁ γίγας ὁ τὰς ὄρνιθας ἐσθίων μέγας τε καὶ χαλεπός ἐστιν.
(vocabulary – ὄρνις, ὄρνιθος, ἦ: bird; χαλεπός, -ή, -όν: cruel)
5. οἱ τὸν πόλεμον ἐθέλοντες μωροί εἰσιν.
(vocabulary – μωρός, -ά, -όν: stupid)

Practice sentences – extension

6. ἐδιώξατε τοὺς κριτὰς τοὺς ἀδίκως κρίνοντας.
(vocabulary – ἀδίκως: unjustly; κρίνω: I judge)
7. οἱ οὐ φεύγοντες πολλὰ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ λέγουσιν.
(vocabulary – πολλά: many things)
8. οἱ τοῖς κριταῖς πιστεύοντες οὐδέποτε πάσχουσιν.
(vocabulary – οὐδέποτε: never; πάσχω: suffer)
9. θαυμάζομεν τοὺς νεανίας δῶρα τοῖς θεοῖς φέροντας.
10. οἱ ναῦται τὰ πλοῖα φυλάσσοντες τοὺς πολεμίους φεύγειν κωλύουσιν.
(vocabulary – πολέμιος, -α, -ον: hostile; can be used as a noun to mean "the enemy"; φεύγειν: to flee (infinitive); κωλύω: prevent)

Practice sentences – answers (see video for full explanation)

1. Leading out the animals, the young men saw the poet.
2. Eating their food, the children were listening to the story of the old man.
3. Not finding the way, we were staying in the harbour.
4. The giant who eats birds is both big and cruel.
5. Those wishing for war are stupid.
6. You chased the judges who were judging unjustly.
7. Those who are not being prosecuted / accused say many things in the agora.
8. Those who trust the judges never suffer.
9. We admire the young men who bring gifts to the gods.
10. The sailors guarding the ships are preventing the enemies from fleeing.