

Participles

Participles are so called because they “participate” (Lat. *participo*) in two grammatical categories, verb and adjective. As such, they decline like adjectives and have different tenses like verbs. They are also defined as verbal adjectives. In principle, each and every participle maintains both a verbal and an adjectival component, though, depending on the context, the one is likely to prevail significantly over the other. When used as adjectives, they usually agree with a noun or pronoun. Participles can also be substantivised, i.e. used as nouns. The ordinary Latin verb has three types of participles: the present participle, the perfect participle, and the future participle.

Present Participles

In the nominative case, present participles end in *-ns* (first conjugation *-ans*, all other verbs *-ens*). They decline like 3rd declension adjectives with one ending, i.e. the same ending for all three genders.

	singular		plural	
	m./f.	n.	m./f.	n.
nominative	<i>laudans</i>	<i>laudans</i>	<i>laudantes</i>	<i>laudantia</i>
genitive	<i>laudantis</i>	<i>laudantis</i>	<i>laudantium</i>	<i>laudantium</i>
dative	<i>laudanti</i>	<i>laudanti</i>	<i>laudantibus</i>	<i>laudantibus</i>
accusative	<i>laudantem</i>	<i>laudans</i>	<i>laudantes / laudantis</i>	<i>laudantia</i>
vocative	<i>laudans</i>	<i>laudans</i>	<i>laudantes</i>	<i>laudantia</i>
ablative	<i>laudanti / laudante</i>	<i>laudanti / laudante</i>	<i>laudantibus</i>	<i>laudantibus.</i>

- The ablative singular ends in *-i* when the participle is used in adjectival sense, but it ends in *-e* when it is substantivised or used in verbal sense.
- The present participle is active.
- The action described in the present participle always takes place at the same time as the action of the main verb (cf. English ‘while’ or ‘during’).

Flumen transiens, puer de ponte cecidit.

‘Crossing the river, the boy fell from the bridge.’

- *Sum* does not have present participle, but *absum* and *praesum* do (*absens* ‘absent’, *praesens* ‘present, participating’).

Past Participles

Past participles are formed by adding *-us*, *-a*, *-um* to the supine stem of the verb, i.e. the supine minus *-um*. They therefore decline as adjectives of the first class (masculine and neuter follow the second declension, the feminine follows the first declension).

	singular			plural		
	m.	f.	n.	m.	f.	n.
nominative	<i>laudatus</i>	<i>laudata</i>	<i>laudatum</i>	<i>laudati</i>	<i>laudatae</i>	<i>laudata</i>
genitive	<i>laudati</i>	<i>laudatae</i>	<i>laudati</i>	<i>laudatorum</i>	<i>laudatarum</i>	<i>laudatorum</i>
dative	<i>laudato</i>	<i>laudatae</i>	<i>laudato</i>	<i>laudatis</i>	<i>laudatis</i>	<i>laudatis</i>
accusative	<i>laudatum</i>	<i>laudatam</i>	<i>laudatum</i>	<i>laudatos</i>	<i>laudatas</i>	<i>laudata</i>
vocative	<i>laudate</i>	<i>laudata</i>	<i>laudatum</i>	<i>laudati</i>	<i>laudatae</i>	<i>laudata</i>
ablative	<i>laudato</i>	<i>laudata</i>	<i>laudato</i>	<i>laudatis</i>	<i>laudatis</i>	<i>laudatis</i>

- All those formed from active verbs (the vast majority) are passive in meaning.

Captivi, ab hostibus liberati, domum regressi sunt.

‘The prisoners, having been set free by the enemy, returned home.’

- Deponent verbs have perfect active participles.

Senex, multas iniurias passus, auxilium a patrono petivit.

‘The old man, having suffered many acts of injustice, sought help from his patron.’

Future Participles

Future participles are formed by adding *-urus, -ura, -urum* to the supine stem of the verb. They decline like past participles.

	singular			plural		
	m.	f.	n.	m.	f.	n.
nominative	<i>laudaturus</i>	<i>laudatura</i>	<i>laudaturum</i>	<i>laudaturi</i>	<i>laudaturae</i>	<i>laudatura</i>
genitive	<i>laudaturi</i>	<i>laudaturae</i>	<i>laudaturi</i>	<i>laudaturorum</i>	<i>laudaturarum</i>	<i>laudaturorum</i>
dative	<i>laudaturo</i>	<i>laudaturae</i>	<i>laudaturo</i>	<i>laudaturis</i>	<i>laudaturis</i>	<i>laudaturis</i>
accusative	<i>laudaturum</i>	<i>laudaturam</i>	<i>laudaturum</i>	<i>laudaturos</i>	<i>laudaturas</i>	<i>laudatura</i>
vocative	<i>laudature</i>	<i>laudatura</i>	<i>laudaturum</i>	<i>laudaturi</i>	<i>laudaturae</i>	<i>laudatura</i>
ablative	<i>laudaturo</i>	<i>laudatura</i>	<i>laudaturo</i>	<i>laudaturis</i>	<i>laudaturis</i>	<i>laudaturis</i>

- Future participles are active in meaning (‘about to...’, ‘on the point of...’).
- They can be formed from deponents.
- They can express purpose.
- The future participle of *sum* is *futurus, -a, -um*.
- The future participle is commonly used as a complement to the verb *sum*, to express ‘about to’, ‘likely to’ or ‘intending to’.

Facite quod vobis libet: daturus non sum amplius.

‘Do whatever you like: I do not intend to give any more’.

Romam relicturus es?

Are you about to leave Rome?

The Ablative Absolute

Sometimes, a participle is used in conjunction with a noun to form a phrase which is grammatically detached (*absolutus* means in fact ‘freed’) from the main sentence. Both the noun and the participle are in the ablative case. The present participle indicates contemporaneity with what happens in the main clause, while the past participle indicates anteriority. The ablative absolute often indicates when or why something happens:

Duce loquente, nuntius accurrit.

'While the leader was speaking, a messenger came dashing up.'

C. Flaminius, religione neglecta, cecidit apud Trasumenum.

'Caius Flaminius, because he had ignored the claims of religion, fell at the battle of Trasimene.'

At times, ablatives absolute can also form hypothetical ('if...'), concessive ('although...'), adversative clauses ('while...'), or hypothetical comparisons ('as though...').