
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

-ing and -ed clauses



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Callum

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Callum.

Catherine

And me, Catherine.

Callum

Today we're focussing on **participle clauses**.

Catherine

Yes, that's clauses that begin with **present** or **past participles**.

Callum

We'll find out what they are and how to use them.

Catherine

And there'll be lots of examples and also a quiz. Before we start though Callum, are you all right?

Callum

What do you mean?

Catherine

Well you've got lots of little pieces of tissue stuck on your face.

Callum

Oh that, you noticed.

Catherine

Well, it's hard to miss them really.

Callum

I cut myself **shaving**.

Catherine

I see, that's convenient.

Callum

Not really, it hurt.

Catherine

But it did give you a perfect example of a **present participle clause**, which is today's topic.

Callum

Yes it did! Let's use that then as our first example. I cut myself **shaving**. First though let's remind everyone what a present participle is:

Catherine

Sure. The present participle is the **-ing form** of the verb. We use it to form the continuous verb forms. So if the infinitive is shave, the **present participle** is **shaving**.

Callum

The past continuous of shave is: "I was **shaving**."

Catherine

And something happened while you were **shaving**, Callum.

Callum

Yes, I cut myself.

Catherine

You did. Now we can make a number of different sentences with this information. You could say:

Callum

I was **shaving** and I cut myself or: While I was **shaving** I cut myself.

Catherine

Let's just swap those clauses around.

Callum

I cut myself while I was **shaving**.

Catherine

OK, now because the subject of each of those clauses is the same - you - we can make the sentence more efficient and sound more natural by not repeating the pronoun and auxiliary that goes with it.

Callum

I cut myself while **shaving**.

Catherine

This is fine, but we can also leave out the conjunction – while. Which leaves us with:

Callum

I cut myself **shaving**.

Catherine

So we can use this structure when two things happen at the same time.

Callum

Yes, let's have some more examples. Catherine, what were you doing last night?

Catherine

I was **sitting** on the sofa. I was **watching** TV. So I can say: I was **sitting** on the sofa **watching** TV. Callum, what are we doing now?

Callum

We are in the studio. We are recording 6 Minute Grammar. We're in the studio **recording** 6 Minute Grammar.

STING

Catherine

Today we're talking about **participle clauses**.

Callum

We've looked at one way you can use a **present participle clause**; now let's look at a **past participle clause**. First Catherine, let's review what a **past participle** is.

Catherine

It's the third form of the verb, so if you remember go, went, gone, or do, did, done; **gone** and **done** are the **past participles**. For regular verbs this is the **-ed form**. We use the **past participle** in perfect verb forms and also the passive.

Callum

So how would we use a **past participle clause**?

Catherine

Like **present participle clauses** it's a way of being more economical with language and avoiding repetition. Listen to these sentences.

Neil

The dog **was hit** by the car. **It** wasn't hurt.

The dog **that was hit** by the car wasn't hurt.

The dog **hit** by the car wasn't hurt.

Catherine

So we started there with two sentences. Both contained clauses that had the same subject.

We have **the dog** in the first sentence and in the second it's referred to with the pronoun **it**.

Neil

The dog was **hit** by a car. It wasn't hurt.

Catherine

We can combine these into one sentence by using a relative clause.

Neil

The dog that was **hit** by the car wasn't hurt.

Catherine

And we can further shorten this by leaving out the relative pronoun and the auxiliary that goes with it. This leaves us with:

Neil

The dog **hit** by the car wasn't hurt.

Callum

So effectively what we do is combine all the bits that identify the subject into one phrase.

Catherine

Yes, it's like a **reduced relative clause** that becomes the subject of the sentence. You can see this form quite regularly in warning notices in public places.

Neil

Cars **parked** here will be clamped.
Bicycles **chained** to this fence will be removed.

Catherine

Cars **parked** here is a shortened version of: Cars **which are parked** here...

Callum

And bicycles **chained** here is a shortened version of: Bicycles **which are chained** here.

Catherine

That's right.

STING

Callum

And now, quiz time. Join the two sentences together into one. Here's number one:

Catherine

I saw the cat. It was playing with a mouse.
I saw the cat. It was playing with a mouse.

Callum

And the answer is: I saw the cat playing with a mouse. Number two:

Catherine

The gold was stolen from the bank. It was never found.

The gold was stolen from the bank. It was never found.

Callum

The answer is: The gold stolen from the bank was never found. And finally number three.

Catherine

She made a lot of money. She was running her own company.

She made a lot of money. She was running her own company.

Callum

And the answer is: She made a lot of money running her own company. Well done if you got them all right.

Catherine

And that's all from us for this programme. There's more about this topic on our website.

Callum

Do join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

Both

Bye.