

PARTICIPIAL ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are an important part of good writing because they provide specific, qualifying detail.

There are various kinds of adjectives that perform this function but the focus here is on the use of **participles** as adjectives.

They will provide variety, and make your writing more interesting.

STUDY TIPS

Remember the **present participle** has an active meaning, referring to a person or thing that causes a feeling, while the **past participle** has a passive meaning, referring to a person who experiences a feeling. Set time aside to learn the differences between and uses of these two participles.

Participles used as Adjectives: -ing and -ed forms

Adjectives provide specific, qualifying detail. There are various kinds of adjectives that perform this function but these notes focus on the use of **participles** as adjectives.

There are two forms of participles:

- present participle (-ing)
- past participle (-ed)

FORMS

Infinitive	Present Participle	Simple Past	Past Participle
fascinate	fascinating	fascinated	fascinated
interest	interesting	interested	interested
entertain	entertaining	entertained	entertained

MEANING

The **present participle (-ing)** has an active meaning, indicating an active state.

For example:

The **interesting** and **entertaining** performance attracted huge crowds.

The **past participle (-ed)** carries a passive meaning.

For example:

The audience was thoroughly **entertained** and **fascinated** by the performance.

Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether the present or past participle should be used, particularly with pairs of participial adjectives that express emotion or describe feelings and reactions.

Was the audience entertained or entertaining?

The **-ing form** is used to describe a person or thing that makes us have a feeling or reaction; it refers to the person or thing that causes an emotion.

The audience was **entertaining** because they participated in the performance and contributed to the enjoyment.

Meaning: the audience causes the feeling of being entertained.

The **-ed form** is used to describe a person’s feeling or reaction; it refers to the person who feels the emotion.

The audience was thoroughly **entertained** and **fascinated** by the performance.

Meaning: the audience experiences the feeling of being entertained and fascinated

Pairs of Participial Adjectives describing Emotions, Feelings or Reactions

-ing form	-ed form
amazing	amazed
annoying	annoyed
appalling	appalled
astonishing	astonished
boring	bored
charming	charmed
confusing	confused
disappointing	disappointed
disturbing	disturbed
embarrassing	embarrassed
entertaining	entertained
exciting	excited
fascinating	fascinated
frightening	frightened
horrifying	horrified
impressing	impressed
insulting	insulted
interesting	interested
overwhelming	overwhelmed
pleasing	pleased
reassuring	reassured
relaxing	relaxed
surprising	surprised
satisfying	satisfied
terrifying	terrified
tiring	tired
touching	touched
worrying	worried