

Zeus' Guide to Participles

Hello! My name is Zeus! As Lord of the Universe, I invented something for my favorite language in the universe. That invention is *participles* (PTCs).

Here follows my user-friendly "Guide to Participles." Yes, it's a bit long and intricate. But it's also designed to direct you to the info you need. Enjoy!

1 FORMS: Rules of Thumb

Remember certain rules of thumb:

1. When working with PTCs, try your best to determine (a) if it really is a PTC in the first place, and (b), if so, *what its form is*. Use the very excellent paradigm tables at the end of vols. 1 and 2 of *Athenaze*. Do not, in other words, simply guess; *check!*
2. *Middle* PTCs (-μενος etc. forms) are declined (have adjective endings) like 1st/2nd declension adjectives, for instance, **καλός** (masc. 2nd decl.), **καλή** (fem. 1st decl), **καλόν** (neut. 2nd decl.). Hence pres. mid PTCs of **λύομαι**, "ransom,"

	SINGULAR		
	masc.	fem.	neut.
nom.	λυμόμεν-ος	λυμομέν-η	λύομεν-ον
gen.	λυμομέν-ου	λυμομέν-ης	λυμομέν-ου
	etc.		

3. *Active* PTCs and *aurist passive* PTCs *always* decline according to the following, basic pattern:

- masc. & neut: THIRD DECL.
- feminine: FIRST DECL. (like nouns with short alpha).

For example:

Present active ptc of λύω

λύων	λύουσα	λύον
λύοντος	λυούσης	λύοντος
λύοντι	λυούση	λύοντι
λύοντα	λύουσιν	λύον
<i>etc.</i>		

Aorist passive ptc of λύω

λυθείς λυθεῖσα λυθέν
 λυθέντος λυθείσης λυθέντος
etc.

4. As *adjectival forms of verbs*, PTCs must agree with the noun or pronoun (expressed or implied) that they modify in *case, number, and gender*.
5. Generally speaking, *when making finite verbs into PTCs, retain the tense*.
 - a. PTCs don't always, though they can, indicate time.
 - b. Where they indicate time, that's *relative to the main verb*. (Aorist = time prior to main verb, present = time during.)
 - c. Otherwise, they indicate *aspect*. (Aorist ptc = "undefined" aspect, i.e., simple action. Present PTCs = *imperfective aspect*, action repeated, continuous, initiated, vivid, etc.)

2 "Generic" or "Default" Translating

PTCs can *almost* (but not quite) always be translated with an *-ing* form (active and middle) or with some variant of an *-ed* form (passive).

ὁ κύων **τρέχων** οἴκαδε σπεύδει. "The dog, **running**, hurries home."

ὁ **τρέχων** κύων. "The **running** dog."

Still, the *syntax* of PTCs can mostly be understood as alternate ways of expressing something else, often a clause of some kind. Try always to translate PTCs *idiomatically*, not mechanically; see further below.

3 SYNTAX: "Clause Replacement" Use of Participles

Here follow various "clause-replacement" uses of PTCs: usages that can be understood as standing in for a variety of *subordinate clauses*. These will be PTCs in the *predicate position* (no article attached to front of them). These usually go best into English as if you're translating *the subordinate clause they're interchangeable with*.

3.1 Conditional

"If the dog is (isn't) **running**, it is (isn't) happy."

ὁ κύων, **ἐὰν (μὴ) τρέχη**, (οὐ) χαίρει.

ὁ κύων **(μὴ) τρέχων** (οὐ) χαίρει.

Note that a negative protasis, whether clause or PTC, always μὴ.

3.2 Causal

“Because/since/inasmuch as the dog is (isn’t) running, it is (isn’t) happy.”

ὁ κύων (οὐ) χαίρει **ὅτι (οὐ) τρέχει.**

ὁ κύων (οὐ) χαίρει **ἅτε (οὐ) τρέχων.**

Note the οὐ negative in preceding.

ἅτε can be translated as “inasmuch as.” You don’t need it for causal PTCs; it stresses that the speaker or writer alleges the cause on her/his own authority.

3.3 Concessive

“Although the dog is running, still, it is isn’t happy.”

ὁ κύων, **εἰ καὶ τρέχει,** ὅμως οὐ χαίρει.

ὁ κύων, **καίπερ τρέχων,** ὅμως οὐ χαίρει.

καίπερ can be translated as “although.” It emphasizes concession, but is not always found with concessive PTCs.

3.4 Temporal/Circumstantial

“When(ever) the dog is running, it is happy.”

ὁ κύων, **ὅταν τρέχη,** χαίρει.

ὁ κύων **τρέχων** χαίρει.

These can be indistinguishable from conditional or causal PTCs.

3.5 Future Participle of Purpose

“The dog runs in order to be happy.”

ὁ κύων τρέχει **ἵνα χαίρη.**

ὁ κύων τρέχει **χαιρήσων.**

3.6 Use of ὥς with Participles

ὥς with a participle “sets forth the ground of belief on which the agent acts” (Smyth 2086), especially with ptcs of cause or purpose:

ὁ κύων χαίρει **ὥς τρέχων** (cause).

“The dog is happy because, so it thinks, it is running.”

OR “The dog is happy as if because it is running.”

OR “The dog is happy under the pretence that it is running.”

ὁ κύων τρέχει **ὡς χαιρήσων** (purpose).

“The dog runs in the belief that it will thereby be happy.”

OR “The dog runs as if for the purpose of becoming happy.”

3.7 Absolute Participles

Greek has two absolute ptcs constructions: genitive and accusative.

The term “absolute” here simply means that the PTC is in a case (gen. or acc.) flagging its *non-participation in the syntax of the main part of the sentence*.

(Actually, the origin of these was probably not absolute but adverbial: for gen. abs., genitive of cause, for acc., the adverbial accusative.)

Absolute PTCs, whether genitive or accusative, are always of the “clause-replacement” variety.

3.7.1 Genitive Absolute: When Used, When Not

The point of the genitive is only to show that the noun or pronoun the PTC modifies has no syntactic connection to the rest of the sentence.

Not gen. absol.:

ὁ κύων χαίρει **ἅτε τρέχων**. (“The dog is happy **inasmuch as it is running**.”)

The PTC (τρέχων) modifies a noun (κύων) playing a grammar role in the main part of the sentence.

Yes gen. absol.!

ὁ φίλιππος χαίρει **ἅτε τοῦ κυνὸς τρέχοντος**. (“Philip is happy **inasmuch as the dog is running**.”)

*The PTC (τρέχοντος) does not modify a noun (κυνός) **not** playing a grammar role in the main part of the sentence.*

3.7.2 Accusative Absolute

Accusative absolute is like the genitive absolute except in one way: *the noun/pronoun it modifies is always **impersonal** and **unexpressed** — i.e., it is used only with impersonal verbs.*

Acc. absolutes are always impersonal verbs in a neuter accusative singular form of the PTC:

“It being necessary for the dog to run, Philip is happy.”

δέον τὸν κύνα τρέχειν, ὁ Φίλιππος χαίρει.

The PTC phrase still stands outside the syntax of the rest of the sentence, except that the PTC itself is impersonal and so has nothing it modifies.

3.8 Modal Participles

3.8.1 Regular Modal Participles

Modal PTCs are like clause-replacement PTCs (above), except they are usually translated as if adverbs. That is, *in terms of meaning, that have to do with the "how" of the verb, though in terms of grammar, they still modify an expressed or unexpressed noun or pronoun.*

"The dog **happily** runs (lit. "**being-happy** runs")."

ὁ κύων τρέχει **χαίρων**.

3.8.2 Special/Idiomatic Modal Participles: **λανθάνω, φθάνω**

λανθάνω and φθάνω regularly appear as modal PTCs (usually in aorist) with idiomatic meanings:

"The dog runs **unseen** to the boy."

ὁ κύων τρέχει **λαθών** τὸν παῖδα. (Quasi-Lit., "The dog runs '**blinding**' the boy [to its running].")

"The dog runs **before the boy gets a chance to.**" (Lit., "The dog **anticipating the boy** runs.")

ὁ κύων τρέχει **φθάσας τὸν παῖδα**.

4 SYNTAX: "Series Replacement" Participles

These are PTCs that replace verbs lined up sequentially, one action following the preceding in time. All but the last action will typically be represented by an aorist participle; but the non-ptc at end may well be in aor, too!

"The dog **got up, went out, ran**, and went back in." (Lit., "**Having got up, gone out, run**, the dog went back in.")

ὁ κύων, **ἑαυτὸν ἄρας, ἐξελθὼν, δραμὼν**, εἰσηλθεν.

5 SYNTAX: Noun-Phrase/Clause

This is the use of ptcs *in the attributive position*, i.e., preceded by an article. These can be translated with noun phrases, relative clauses (w/ w/o demonstrative), nouns, etc.

"The dogs **that run**," "the **running** dogs"

οἱ **τρέχοντες** κύνες

"Those **who run**," "the **runners**"

οἱ **τρέχοντες**

You can even find these without the article: **τρέχοντες**, “**those who run**,” “**runners**”

6 SYNTAX: Indirect Discourse Participles with Verbs of Perception

“I see the dog running.” “I see that the dog is running.”

ὁρῶ τὸν κύνα τρέχοντα.

7 SYNTAX: Complementary Participles

The following are basically idiomatic usages of PTCs “filling out” (complementary) the meaning of a special verb. Note that the PTC itself usually cannot be translated into an English *-ing* or *-ed* form.

“The dog *happens to be running*.” (Lit., “The dog *hits-upon [while] running*.”)

ὁ κύων τυγχάνει **τρέχων**.

“The dog *is evidently/plainly running*.”

ὁ κύων φαίνεται **τρέχων**.