

## Chapter 24: The Uses of Participles

Chapter 24 covers the following: the formation and use of the ablative absolute; the formation and use of the passive periphrastic; and the dative of agent. At the end of the lesson we'll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

There are four important rules to remember in this chapter: (1) Ablative absolutes come in three basic forms: “with X [X = a noun] having been Y-ed [Y = a verb]”; “with X Y-ing”; and “with X as X<sup>2</sup>/Z [X<sup>2</sup> = a second noun; Z = an adjective]. (2) Ideally, the noun (subject) of an ablative absolute is “absolute” from the main sentence, meaning it's not a constituent in it. (3) The passive periphrastic carries a sense of obligation or necessity, best translated as “must, have to.” (4) The passive periphrastic expects a dative of agent (with no preposition).

This chapter marks an important turning point in your study of Latin. Henceforth, we'll focus on syntax (how words go together) over formation (how individual words are created). In other words, our attention will move away from building new types of words — not that there aren't new forms still to come: there's an infinitive or two, adverbs, and the whole subjunctive mood is lurking ahead — but overall we'll spend more time learning how to use what we've already got in new and productive ways, especially in forming various types of clauses.

And the first of these new pieces of syntax is the ablative absolute, one of the simplest constructions in Latin. It's yet another use of the ablative that's equivalent to English “with,” but “with” in a sense we haven't encountered yet, what grammarians call the “absolute” construction. In essence, an ablative absolute is made up of two ablatives, most often a noun and a participle, which stand apart from the grammar of the main sentence. Thus, it's called an “absolute,” a term derived from the Latin word *absolutum*, the perfect passive participle of the verb *absolvere*, “to detach”; thus, it means “having been detached.” Let's talk about how ablative absolutes are formed before we explore why they have to be “detached” from the grammar of the main sentence. The “why” will make more sense after you've seen the “how.”

There are three major types of ablative absolute. The type found most often in Latin uses an ablative noun and an ablative perfect passive participle, creating a phrase that translates literally into English as “with the noun having been verb-ed.” The second most common type employs a present participle in place of the perfect passive participle: “with the noun verb-ing.” The last and least frequent type combines either two nouns in the ablative or a noun and an adjective, both in the ablative: “with noun 1 (being/as) noun 2” or “with the noun (being/as) the adjective.”

Let's look first at the most common type of ablative absolute, “with the noun having been verb-ed,” for example, “with this having been done, ...” The noun/subject of the ablative absolute is “this”; its participle/verb is “having been done.” In Latin this would be *hōc facto*. Here's another example: “with the city having been rescued, ...” In Latin that would be *urbe ereptā*. Note that, because this type of ablative absolute has a passive participle, it expects an agent, for instance, “... by the Greeks”; in Latin, *a Graecis*.

The second most common type of ablative absolute uses a present active participle, following the formula “with the noun verb-ing,” for instance, “with them coming, ...” which Latin would render as *eis/illis venientibus*. Here’s another example: “With Caesar listening, ...” which in Latin would be *Caesare audiente*. This type of ablative absolute uses an active participle so it expects a direct object, for example, *Caesare amicos audiente ...* (“With Caesar listening to his friends, ...”). Or the participle can have after it anything that naturally follows it, for example, an indirect object: “With Caesar giving presents *to this friends, ...*”

Finally, an ablative absolute can have only two nouns or a noun and an adjective, that is, no participle: “with a noun (as/being) another noun” or “with a noun (as/being) an adjective,” for example, “With Cicero (as) citizen, ...” In Latin, that’s *Cicerone cive*. Or, “With the end (being) certain, ...” which in Latin would be *fine certo*. The second noun or adjective acts like a predicate nominative but in the ablative case because its “subject” (the thing to which it refers) is ablative by the rules of this construction.

This type of ablative absolute would be a minor variation not worth noting in a beginning Latin class if it weren’t for the fact that Latin has no word equivalent to “being.” Without a present participle for *sum*, the Romans can’t say “With Caesar *being* general, ...” They’re forced to say “With Caesar general, ...” So the two-ablative-noun variation of the ablative absolute occurs much more often in Latin than the equivalent construction happens in English, which is all but never.

What an ablative absolute — let’s abbreviate that “A<sup>2</sup>” and save ourselves a lot of ink and air — what an ablative absolute really shows is, according to grammarians, “attendant circumstance,” something that’s happening around and may in some way affect the message of the main sentence, but the reason the attendant circumstance is being mentioned is not necessarily stated explicitly. It can be and often is implied. That is, the speaker or writer assumes the connection between the main sentence and the attendant circumstance is clear and doesn’t have to be expressed as such. And sometimes Roman writers are just being coy and trying to say something without actually saying it. Ablative absolutes are very good for that. So what are the implications of those attendant circumstances?

Well, an ablative absolute like “With Caesar (as) general” can imply cause. Thus, interpreting that ablative absolute as “Since Caesar was the general” makes sense, particularly if the main sentence goes on to say something like “... the Romans defeated the Gauls.” But in other circumstances an A<sup>2</sup> may merely show circumstance, not cause, in which case it’s best to translate this A<sup>2</sup> as “When Caesar was general, ... [Rome experienced civil turmoil.]” or something like that! An A<sup>2</sup> can also imply an unexpected outcome, in which case it’s called “concessive” and it’s best to use “although” in the English translation: “Although Caesar was general, the Romans were defeated.”

Now that you understand how ablative absolutes are formed, we can talk about why the subject or noun of the A<sup>2</sup> can’t be part of the main sentence. The reason for this is very simple. If the noun recurs in the sentence, there’s no need for an A<sup>2</sup>. Just attach the participle to the noun. Why create a separate (“absolute”) construction when you don’t have to? So if there’s any way to incorporate into the main sentence the thought embodied in an A<sup>2</sup>, do it. Often it’s possible to

use the direct object or some other noun in the A<sup>2</sup>, not just its subject. In theory, nothing in the A<sup>2</sup> should reappear in the main sentence.

So it's wrong to say "With Caesar leading the army, Caesar defeated the Gauls." Instead of creating an A<sup>2</sup>, just attach the participial phrase "leading the army" to the word "Caesar" in the main sentence and say: "Caesar, (while) leading the army, defeated the Gauls." Again, it's wrong to say "With Caesar leading the army, the army defeated the Gauls." In this case, make the participle "leading" passive ("[having been] led") and attach it to "army" in the main sentence. Then change "Caesar" from subject to agent, resulting in "(Having been) led by Caesar, the army defeated the Gauls."

Here again it's important to understand how to shift correctly back and forth between relative and absolute time, because changing ablative absolutes into clauses entails converting participles which show relative time to finite verbs in clauses that reflect absolute time. So, for instance, "With Caesar coming, the enemy fled." When is the enemy's fleeing happening? In the past. So when is Caesar's coming happening? At the same time, the past. How then do you change "With Caesar coming" into a when-clause with a finite verb? What tense do you use? The past, of course: "When Caesar *was* coming, the enemy fled." And how about "With Caesar having been killed, no one rejoiced"? [A giant lie, but let's go with it.] Change the A<sup>2</sup> into a clause starting with "after." "After Caesar ..." *is* killed? *was* killed? When is the killing happening relative to the rejoicing (or lack thereof)? Before it, of course. And the main verb is past-tense. So what tense in absolute time shows action prior to the past? The pluperfect. "After Caesar *had* been killed, no one rejoiced." I told you relative vs. absolute time would keep coming up in this class. And this isn't the last time. Just wait until the next chapter. Yikes. It's going to be an absolute-relative romp.

The second participle-based construction introduced in this chapter is the passive periphrastic. We've already encountered the term "periphrastic," meaning something that's "a long way of saying a simple thing," when we talked about the future active periphrastic, "I *am going/about to* do something," a circuitous trek around the simpler expression "I *will* do it." The word comes from Greek where *peri-* means "around" — Latin uses *circum-* to say the same — and *-phras-* means "speak." In Latin that's *locut-*, from a verb we haven't studied yet — but will! So "periphrasis" is the Greek equivalent of our Latin-based word "circumlocution." Do you know what "circumlocution" means? If not, learn it now: "the act of speaking around a topic," that is, not addressing a subject directly, usually for some underhanded reason.

But with the passive periphrastic, there's nothing underhanded at hand, just a construction that takes more words than necessary to say a simple thing, and uses the passive, in this case, with the meaning "must be" or "have to be." The upshot is that Latin can't say "must" or "have to," the active forms, at least not using this construction. The Romans had to use the passive voice if they wanted to say "must" this way. Or to put it the way Latin would, "The passive voice had to be used by the Romans, if they wanted to say 'must' this way." Get it? Now, they did have other ways of expressing the idea of necessity, but they liked the passive periphrastic and used it a lot, in spite of its innate restriction, its passivity.

The formula for the passive periphrastic is very simple. Take the gerundive (which is just another name for the future passive participle, one of the forms we learned in the previous chapter), and add a form of the verb *esse*. Therefore, it means literally “is to be done.” Thus, a more accurate name for this construction would be “the gerundive of obligation or necessity.” Whether that’s a *better* name, I don’t know. [I can hear the groans from here, so I’m guessing it’s not. Seriously, you prefer “passive periphrastic”? Oh, you don’t like either. Okay, then, let’s give it another name. How about Andy? Then maybe you’ll remember that it has an *-nd-* in the participle. “Necessary Andy”? I don’t care what you call it as long as you learn it.]

And here are some examples of Andy in action.

- *Caesar laudandus est*, meaning “Caesar must (has to) be praised.”
- *Veritas narranda est*, meaning “The truth must (has to) be told.”
- *Bellum gerendum erat*, meaning “The war had to be waged.”

Note in the last example that you can’t say “*must have been* waged,” because that construction doesn’t carry a sense of obligation but probability. English has an odd convention in which “must” in the present shows obligation, but in its past-tense forms denotes likelihood. Compare “He must go” (obligation) versus “He must have gone” (probability). So Latin’s not the only language with “necessary” weirdness. Note also that all these gerundives (future passive participles) in Passive Andy’s are really predicate nominatives, and as such must agree in number, gender and case with the subject. That means they’ll change form as the subject changes.

See how all the gerundives here have the same gender as the subjects they go with? *Laudandus* is masculine to go with *Caesar*, *narranda* is feminine to go with *veritas*, and *gerendum* neuter to go with *bellum*. As you can see, the same is true of number. So what if *bellum* in the last example were plural, *bella* (“wars”)? Well, first, that means the verb would have to become *erant*. But how would changing the number of *bellum* affect the gerundive? Of course, it would have to become *gerenda* to agree with *bella*.

So let’s review. The most complicated thing about passive periphrastics is learning to spell “periphrastic.” Just take the *-nd-* form of the verb (the gerundive or future passive participle), add some incarnation of the verb *esse* (“to be”), and you have one way of saying “must be, have to be” in Latin. There are a few other things to remember, too. In the past tense in English you can’t use “must” because “must have” shows probability, not necessity and this is a passive periphrastic. You can’t say just “must” this way, only “must be.”

And here’s another odd feature of Andy, the passive periphrastic. To say “by” as in “it has to be done by you,” the passive periphrastic doesn’t use an ablative of personal agent, but a dative of agent, for example, *Caesar nobis laudandus est*, “Caesar must be praised by us.” As a rule, the dative expresses agent only with passive periphrastics, although later classical Roman authors extended the practice to all passive forms, just to be cute, I guess, and to make our lives more difficult. You can ignore that sad fact of history for now. In this class, the dative of agent will occur only with a passive periphrastic.

Let's look at some examples of passive periphrastics with datives of agent. Translate the following sentences please.

- *Bella nemini gerenda sunt*. What does that mean in Latin? That's right. "Wars must be waged by no one." *Nemini* is a dative of agent.
- Next sentence: *Graeci Romanis iuvandi erant*. Translate please: "The Greeks had to be helped by the Romans." *Romanis* is a dative of agent. Also, note you have to say "had to" here since it's past-tense.
- Another sentence: *Urbs vobis delenda erit. Erit!* Whoa! How can you incorporate a future-tense form of *esse* into a passive periphrastic? Can you say in English "will must"? No, of course not! So you will have to use "will have to," won't you? "The city will have to be destroyed by y'all."

Finally, let's address the ramifications of this unusual way of expressing necessity in Latin, this periphrastic that "must be" passive. Where the Latin construction "has to be" expressed in the passive, the English does not. English can use the active, making it good practice to change the voice when rendering our friend Andy into English. That way, you avoid over-literal, stilted translations. Take, for example, this sentence: *Veritas omnibus narranda est*. Literally, this means "The truth must be told by everyone." But better English allows, indeed demands, the active equivalent: "Everyone must always tell the truth."

Going back to our previous sentences, let's practice converting passive periphrastics into active-voice constructions in English, without changing the meaning of the sentence. Start with the first sentence: *Bella nemini gerenda sunt*, literally "Wars must be waged by no one." Change the English sentence to active, please. And how do you do that? Well, take the subject (in green) and make it the direct object. Then take the agent (in red) and make it the subject. The result is ... "No one must wage wars." Or, "No one ought to wage wars." Next sentence: *Graeci Romanis iuvandi erant*, literally "The Greeks had to be helped by the Romans." Make the subject the direct object, and make the agent the subject. "The Romans had to help the Greeks." Last sentence: *Urbs vobis delenda erit*, "The city will have to be destroyed by y'all." Make it active. Y'all will have to destroy the city." Got it? It's not hard to do. It's just weird that you ... *have to* do it. Or in Latin "it *has to be done* by you." And what case would "by you" be if that were a Latin sentence? Good, dative. End of grammar.

Now let's look at the vocabulary for this chapter.

The first word is *dux, ducis*, m., meaning "leader, guide, commander, general." It's a 3<sup>rd</sup>-declension masculine noun. The question is: is it *i*-stem? No! It is monosyllabic in its nominative singular, but it doesn't have two consonants at the end of its base. So what's its genitive plural? Excellent! *Ducum*, not *ducium*.

The next word is *imperium, -ii*, n., meaning "power to command, supreme power, authority, command, control." It's a 2<sup>nd</sup>-declension neuter noun. This is the term the Romans used for what the Senate gave a general who was assigned to a legionary command. Thus, the Latin word for general, *imperator*, means literally "commander, a man with *imperium*." What would the nominative plural of this word be? Good for you! *Imperia*.

The next word is *servus*, -i, m., meaning “slave.” It’s a 2<sup>nd</sup>-declension masculine noun. There’s nothing particularly interesting to say about it, so moving on,

the next word is *quisque*, *quidque*, about which there is much interesting to say, unfortunately. It’s a pronoun meaning “each, each one, each person.” You can see that it’s actually a compound of *quis*, *quid* (“who?, what?”) and *-que* (“and”), that is, the interrogative pronoun + *-que*, meaning literally “and who?” Somehow, to the Romans that betokened “each,” often used as a substantive as is “Each is ... (whatever),” meaning “Each person is ...” Though Wheelock doesn’t include it here, there is also an adjective form of this pronoun — *quique*, *quaeque*, *quodque* — which is used when “each” modifies a noun. Naturally, the interrogative adjective (*qui*, *quae*, *quod*) replaces the interrogative pronoun (*quis*, *quid*) when “each” is used as an adjective with a noun expressed, say, for instance, “Each speaker ...” (*quique orator* ...). I won’t test you on this, but it’s not a bad thing to know. What’s the genitive singular of *quisque/quique*? Yes, *cuiusque*.

The next entry on this vocabulary list is a prefix, *re-* (sometimes *red-*), meaning “back, again” It’s seen often attached onto the front of Latin verbs, and consequently many English derivatives, too, for example, *remaneo*, *repello*, *repugno*, *requiro*, *repeto*, *revoco*, *relinquo*, all of which have important English derivatives.

The next word is another small, simple form: the interrogative adverb *cur*, meaning “why?” Originally, in early Latin it was *quor*, a combination of the question form *qu(o)* and *-r*, an adverbial ending seen also in English “here” and “where.”

Next on this vocabulary list follows a series of verbs, the first of which is *accipio*, -ere, -cepi, -ceptum, meaning “take, get, receive, accept.” It belongs to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-*io* conjugation. This is clearly a compound formed by adding *ad* (“to [oneself]”) to *-cipio* (the vowel-gradated form of *capio*), meaning literally “to take for oneself.” The prefix *ad-* really only intensifies the basic sense of *capio*. The next word is another compound of *capio*, this one using the prefix we just learned, *re-*: *recipio*, -ere, -cepi, -ceptum, meaning “take back, regain, admit, receive.” And just like *capio* and most of its compounds, it’s third-*io*.

The next two entries are also another pair of basic verb and compound, *pello* and *expello*: first the basic verb, *pello*, -ere, *pepuli*, *pulsum*, meaning “strike, push, drive out, banish.” It’s 3<sup>rd</sup>-conjugation. There are two things worth noting about its perfect active form (the third principal part *pepuli*). First, there’s only one *l* vs. the two *l*’s in the present base because one of the *l*’s in the present is really an *-n-* infix signaling that the verb is present-tense. Naturally, that’s not carried into the perfect tense. Also, the perfect active reduplicates, adding *pe-* to the front of the base, creating *pepuli*. The next verb is a compound of *pello*: *expello*, -ere, *expuli*, *expulsum*, meaning “drive out, expel, banish,” virtually the same thing as *pello* so all the prefix really does is to intensify the verb’s basic meaning. Like *pello*, *expello* is 3<sup>rd</sup>. But notice one important difference: the perfect active of *expello*, *expuli*, does not reduplicate. The Romans during the classical age were in the process of removing reduplicated forms from Latin — reduplication made no more sense to the average Roman than it does to you — and that process often began with compounds which are easier to regularize than the often-heard base verbs. Remember that the more a word is used, the greater the likelihood it will sustain irregularity. Or to put it the

other way around, irregular forms will quickly regularize if they're not constantly being drummed into your "dear little ear." Bonus points for anyone who gets that reference.

The next word is *quaero*, *-ere*, *quaesivi*, *quaesitum*, meaning "seek, look for, strive for, ask, inquire." It's a 3<sup>rd</sup>-conjugation verb, though its perfect active base *quaesiv-* is more typical of 4<sup>th</sup>-conjugation. Originally, the base was \**quaes-* but in early Latin there was a process called rhotacism in which a single *-s-* in between vowels changed to *-r-*. The result was that *quaeso* turned into *quaero*, but rhotacism didn't affect the perfect because it originally had two *-ss-* (\**quaessivi*).

The next word is *relinquo*, *-ere*, *-liqui*, *-lictum*, meaning "leave (behind), abandon, desert." It's a 3<sup>rd</sup>-conjugation verb. Note again that the present base *relinqu-* has an *-n-* in it — that's the nasal infix present marker — which is lost in the perfect base *reliqu-*. By now you should be getting used to that.

The next word is *cupiditas*, *-tatis*, ... what gender does this word have to be in Latin? Feminine, of course, as are all 3<sup>rd</sup>-declension abstract nouns that end *-tas*, *-tatis*. *Cupiditas* is the noun representing the abstract quality contained in the adjective *cupidus* ("eager for, greedy, desirous"), so *cupiditas* means "desire, longing, passion, cupidity, avarice." Compare the god Cupid, the personification of such feelings.

The next word is another verb, *narro* (1), meaning "tell, report, narrate." How do you say "about to tell" in Latin? And since that's a participle (an adjective!), we need to specify the number, gender and case. Let's say masculine nominative singular. [What type of participle is translated as "about to"? When is it happening? In the future, of course. Is it active or passive? No "be" so it's active. How does Latin form the future active participle? The future is when "you're" going to do something, right? "You're"! Think about it: *-ur-*! So the answer is ...] *narraturus*.

And the final word in this ridiculously long vocabulary list is *rideo*, *-ere*, *risi*, *risum*, meaning "laugh (at)." It's a 2<sup>nd</sup>-conjugation verb. So what's the Latin for "we will laugh"? [How is the future formed in 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation? Is it *-bi-* or *-e-*? It's *-bi-*, so the answer is ...] *ridebimus*. Now make that 3<sup>rd</sup>-person singular pluperfect passive (masculine): "he had been laughed at." [How many words do you need in Latin to make any perfect passive finite verb form? Two: the perfect passive participle and a form of *esse*. But what form of *esse*? The perfect passive participle is -1 in time value; you need another -1 to make the pluperfect which is -2, so you'll need the past tense of *esse*, 3<sup>rd</sup>-singular. And make sure the participle agrees the subject "he." That would be ...] *risus erat*. Finally, what do you think the English derivative "risible" means? It's an adjective. Yes, exactly. "Laughable, absurd." No comment.

Do the rules that were cited at the beginning of this chapter now make sense to you? If not, please review this presentation. If so, please proceed to the next slide. For the next class meeting, please bring in a copy of the worksheet for Chapter 24. Here's a link to that worksheet. *Hōc perfecto, multum a vobis susceptum atque vobis suscipiendum est.*