

143 Relative clauses: participle and to-infinitive

1 Relative clauses with a participle

Read this news report about an accident.

Several people were injured this morning when a lorry carrying concrete pipes overturned in the centre of town and hit two cars. Ambulances called to the scene took a long time to get through the rush hour traffic. The accident happened in Alfred Road, where road repairs are under way. People who saw the accident say that the lorry hit the cars after it swerved to avoid a pile of stones left in the road. The traffic chaos caused by the accident has meant long delays for people travelling to work.

Carrying concrete pipes, called to the scene, etc. are relative clauses: they relate to a noun. Carrying concrete pipes tells us something about a lorry.

We can form these clauses with an active participle, e.g. carrying, or a passive participle, e.g. called. The participles can refer to the present or the past.

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
There are delays this morning for people travelling to work. (= people who are travelling to work)	I have a message for people delayed by the traffic chaos. (= people who are being delayed)
A lorry carrying concrete pipes has overturned. (= a lorry which was carrying pipes)	We noticed a pile of stones left in the road. (= stones which had been left there)
the path leading to the church (= the path which leads/led to the church)	food sold in supermarkets (= food which is/was sold in supermarkets)
The active participle means the same as a pronoun + a continuous verb, e.g. which is/was carrying, or a pronoun + a simple verb, e.g. which leads/led.	The passive participle means the same as a pronoun + a passive verb, e.g. which is/was sold.
But we do NOT use the active participle for a single action in the past. The police want to interview people who saw the accident. NOT people seeing the accident	

2 Relative clauses with a to-infinitive

Look at this structure with the to-infinitive.

New Zealand was the **first** country **to give** women the vote.

(= the first country which gave women the vote)

Melanie was the **only** person **to write** a letter of thanks.

(= the only person who wrote a letter of thanks)

Here are some more examples.

The guest on our show is the **youngest** golfer **to win** the Open.

Emma Thompson is the **most famous** actress **to appear** on stage here.

We can use a to-infinitive with these words: first, second, etc; next and last; only; and superlatives, e.g. youngest, most famous.

We can leave out the noun (except after **only**) if the meaning is clear.

The captain was the **last to leave** the sinking ship.

Practice

A Relative clauses with a participle (1)

Complete the definitions. Put in an active or passive participle of these verbs: *add, arrive, block, own, play, take, tell, watch, wear*

- ▶ A competitor is someone **taking** part in a competition.
- ▶ Your property is everything **owned** by you.
- 1 Baseball is a game mainly in the US.
- 2 A wrist-watch is a watch on your wrist.
- 3 A latecomer is a person late.
- 4 An instruction is a statement you what to do.
- 5 A spectator is someone a game or an event.
- 6 An extension is a new part on to a building.
- 7 An obstacle is something your way.

B Relative clauses with a participle (1)

Write each news item as one sentence. Change the part in brackets into a clause with an active participle (e.g. *costing*) or a passive participle (e.g. *found*).

- ▶ A new motorway is planned. (It will cost £500 million.)
A new motorway **costing £500 million is planned.**
- ▶ Some weapons belong to the IRA. (They were found at a flat in Bristol.)
Some weapons **found at a flat in Bristol belong to the IRA.**
- 1 Families have been evicted. (They were living in an empty office building.)
Families
- 2 A chemical company has gone bankrupt. (It employed 4,000 people.)
A chemical company
- 3 A bridge has been declared unsafe. (It was built only two years ago.)
A bridge
- 4 People have marched to London. (They are protesting against pollution.)
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- 5 Tennis fans have been queuing all night at Wimbledon. (They hope to buy tickets.)
.....
- 6 A new drug may give us eternal youth. (It was developed at a British university.)
.....

C Relative clauses with a to-infinitive (2)

Comment on each situation. Use the to-infinitive structure.

- ▶ David offered his help. No one else did.
David was **the only person to offer his help.**
- 1 Olivia's daughter swam a length of the pool. No other girl as young as her did that.
Olivia's daughter was
- 2 The secretaries got a pay rise. No one else did.
The secretaries were
- 3 The pilot left the aircraft. Everyone else had left before him.
.....
- 4 Mrs Harper became Managing Director. No other woman had done that before.
.....
- 5 Daniel applied for the job. No other candidate as suitable as him applied.
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