

Athenaze 8a

Learning Objectives:

- learning vocabulary for 8a
- the present middle/passive participle
 - the participle is a verbal adjective:
 - as an adjective, it will modify a noun (stated or implied), with which it will agree in gender, number, and case
 - since it is verbal formation, however, it will have tense/aspect (present/progressive, aorist, or perfect) and voice (active, middle, or passive) — cf. the infinitive (a verbal noun)
 - like the infinitive, the participle does not technically display tense but aspect; like the infinitive, however, it is often used in contexts where it implies a particular form of the indicative — in those instances, the participle will be imply a particular tense, relative to that of the main verb.
 - like the infinitive, the participle can take an object, which will be in the same case as that employed with finite forms of the verb (e.g., *λυόμενος αὐτοῦς*; *ἐπόμενος αὐτοῖς*)
 - the present middle/passive participle is formed by taking the present stem, with the thematic vowel ο, and adding -μενος, -η, -ον, thus forming a 1st/2nd-declension adjective: *λυ-ό-μενος*, *φερ-ό-μενος*
 - the accentuation of present/progressive participles is recessive: e.g., *ἐρχόμενος*, *ἐρχομένη*, *ἐρχόμενον*
 - contract verbs contract according to their usual practice:
 - *ἤγε-όμενος* → *ἡγούμενος*
 - *θεα-όμενος* → *θεώμενος*
- in English, the participle is routinely employed as an attributive adjective that describes or specifies something about the noun it modifies:
 - the sleeping man
 - the running girl
 - the smoking gun
 - the cocked pistol

In Greek, however, it is relatively infrequent for a participle to be employed as a simple descriptive adjective.
- the participle has three principal uses:
 - attributive
 - predicative (circumstantial)
 - supplementary
- the attributive participle:
 - when it appears in the attributive position, the participle modifies its noun much like any other attributive adjective:
 - *ὁ παρῶν κίνδυνος* the present danger [*πάρειμι* = “I am present”]
 - such a participle is more often felt to offer a further item of information, however. As a result, it will often be translated into English via “who” or “that” (that is, via a relative clause):
 - *οἱ αὐτουργοὶ οἱ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ ἐργαζόμενοι* ... the farmers who are working in the field ...

- the predicative/circumstantial participle

- when the participle is in the predicative position, it actively states something about the noun it modifies. As a result, it functions as the equivalent of a subordinate clause, and is often best translated in this way, both for the sake of clarity and because good English style admits the use of participles to a much more limited degree than does Greek. When employed in such a fashion, the participle is referred to as a circumstantial participle, since it describes the circumstances that attend or inform the action indicated by the main verb of the sentence. Thus the sentence:

ὁ δοῦλος ἐν τῷ κήπῳ ἐργαζόμενος πολλὰς ἐλπίδας ἔχει.

could be translated in a number of ways:

- The slave, while working in the garden, has many hopes. [temporal]
- The slave, because he is working in the garden, has many hopes. [causal]
- The slave, although he is working in the garden, has many hopes. [concessive]
- The slave, if he is working in the garden, has many hopes. [conditional]

The decision how best to translate these participial clauses will rest in part on the particular clues offered by the context, and in part on your subjective sense of what makes the best sense: you will often find that there are reasonable arguments to be made for more than one translation. And, of course, the Greek reader was offered no such interpretation: he or she merely heard a participle. In this regard, it is clear that Greek authors relied on their auditor/reader to do a great deal more work than is felt to be appropriate in the case of the modern English reader. But it is equally clear that authors such as Plato and Thucydides have worked out the logic of their compositions quite carefully, and are relying on their audience to follow their train of thought. As a translator, your job is in part to make such decisions for your reader and pass them along via your translation.

- closely related is the participle used after a verb of perception:
 - *ὁρῶμεν αὐτὸν διαλεγόμενον* we see him conversing/while he is conversing

- the supplementary participle

- the participle as the complement of a number of verbs to complete the predicate:
 - *παύεται διαλεγόμενος* he stops conversing
 - *χαίρομεν θεώμεναι* we enjoy watching

- tense of the participle

- as noted above, participles have no absolute tense; rather, they take their tense relative to that of the main verb
- the present participle indicates that the action indicated by the participle is to be conceived as occurring simultaneously with the action indicated by the main verb