

Participle constructions to express [ausdrücken] reason and time

Participle constructions can replace relative clauses (mostly in written English). But they can also be used in place [anstelle von] of other sub-clauses [Nebensätze], for example instead of adverbial clauses of reason [Grund] or of time. In German these clauses are called „Kausalsätze“ (reason) and „Temporalsätze“ (time).

Participle construction to express a reason



Compare the two constructions on the left and right

#	Adverbial clause construction	Participle construction
1	He didn't hear the phone because he was listening to loud music.	Listening to loud music he didn't hear the phone
2	Peter heard everything Anne said because he was standing next to her.	Standing next to Anne Peter heard everything she said.
3	As [= because] she was given only a small portion of food, Sarah was hungry for the rest of the evening.	Given only a small portion of food, Sarah was hungry for the rest of the evening.
4	Jack doesn't have time to answer all e-mails because he is contacted by many people every day.	Contacted by many people every day, Jack doesn't have time to answer all e-mails.



- The participle construction on the right replaces [ersetzen] the adverbial clause construction on the left (this is similar [ähnlich] to the [participle construction instead of a relative clause](#)). The meaning of both constructions is the same. Participle constructions are especially common in written English. They sound more formal [förmlich] than relative clauses.
- As you can see, the participle construction usually comes at the beginning of the sentence.
- The **present participle** has an **active** meaning (walking) and the **past participle** has a **passive** meaning (mentioned).
- In German, you usually translate a participle construction with an adverbial clause because the German language doesn't have such a construction (e.g. „Weil ...“, „Da ...“)

Participle construction to express time



Compare the two constructions on the left and right

#	Adverbial clause construction	Participle construction
1	When Susan came home she realised that she didn't have her keys.	Coming home Susan realised that she didn't have her keys.
2	While she was watching TV she fell asleep.	Watching TV she fell asleep
3	When he was offered a job at the IT department he called his brother right away [sofort].	Offered a job at the IT department he called his brother right away.
4	When Sam was told to be quiet he left the room.	Told to be quiet he left the room.



- Again, the participle construction on the right replaces [ersetzen] the adverbial clause construction on the left.
- The **present participle** has an **active** meaning (walking) and the **past participle** has a **passive** meaning (mentioned).
- In German, you usually translate a participle construction with an adverbial clause because the German language doesn't have such a construction (e.g. „Als... “)