75 Participle clauses

> **Written** in 1961, *Catch-22* is a novel about a young American soldier, John Yossarian. In the middle of World War Two he is sent to fight in Italy, **leaving** his friends and family behind.

1 Participle clauses

Participle clauses give more information about a noun. We use the *-ed* or *-ing* form of the verb. Participle clauses don't have a subject because their subject is the noun/pronoun in the main clause:

  participle clause   subject

Written in 1961, 'Catch-22' is a novel about a young American soldier, John Yossarian.

     subject   participle clause

In the middle of World War Two, he is sent to fight in Italy, leaving his friends and family behind.

FORMALITY CHECK In written English we often put participle clauses in front of the main clause. We use a comma to separate the two clauses.

Participle clauses are common in written English because they let us give a lot of information in a single sentence.

More on sentence-building ➤ Module 19

2 Participle clauses of reason, result, time, etc.

	FULL CLAUSE	PARTICIPLE CLAUSE
reason	*Because he's a student he can get a discount on rail travel.*	*Being a student, he can get a discount on rail travel.*
result	*A snowstorm covered the motorway. The result was that dozens of drivers were trapped in their cars.*	*A snowstorm covered the motorway, trapping dozens of drivers in their cars.*
condition	*If you give it enough water and sunlight, the plant will grow to three metres.*	*Given enough water and sunlight, the plant will grow to three metres.*
time/ sequence	*As I walked into the room I noticed the flowers by the window.*	*Walking into the room, I noticed the flowers by the window.*

There is also a perfect form, *having* + past participle (➤ **Unit 64.1**), which we can use to talk about an action that happened earlier:

Having paid the entrance fee, we walked into the museum.
(= After we had paid the entrance fee, we walked into the museum.)

3 Forms for active and passive meanings

In participle clauses the *-ing* form has an active meaning:
*The bank manager **opened** the safe and noticed something strange inside.* (active verb)
→ ***Opening** the safe, the bank manager noticed something strange inside.*

The *-ed* form has a passive meaning:
*The flood victim stood on the roof. He **was trapped** by the rising water.* (passive verb)
→ *The flood victim stood on the roof, **trapped** by the rising water.*