

SKILL 4: BE CAREFUL OF PRESENT PARTICIPLES

A present participle is the *-ing* form of the verb (*talking, playing*). In structure questions on the TOEFL test, a present participle can cause confusion because it can be either a part of the verb or an adjective. It is part of the verb when it is preceded by some form of the verb *be*.

The man is talking to his friend.
VERB

In this sentence *talking* is part of the verb because it is accompanied by *is*.

A present participle is an adjective when it is not accompanied by some form of the verb *be*.

The man talking to his friend has a beard.
ADJECTIVE

In this sentence *talking* is an adjective and not part of the verb because it is not accompanied by some form of *be*. The verb in this sentence is *has*.

The following example shows how a present participle can be confused with the verb in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



The child _____ playing in the yard is my son.

- (A) now
- (B) is
- (C) he
- (D) was

In this example, if you look at only the first words of the sentence, it appears that *child* is the subject and *playing* is part of the verb. If you think that *playing* is part of the verb, you might choose answer (B), *is*, or answer (D), *was*, to complete the verb. However, these two answers are incorrect because *playing* is not part of the verb. You should recognize that *playing* is a participial adjective rather than a verb because there is another verb in the sentence *is*. In this sentence there is a complete subject *child* and a complete verb *is*, so this sentence does not need another subject or verb. The best answer here is (A).

The following chart outlines what you should remember about present participles:

PRESENT PARTICIPLES

A *present participle* is the *-ing* form of the verb. The **present participle** can be (1) **part of the verb** or (2) an **adjective**. It is part of the *verb* when it is accompanied by some form of the verb *be*. It is an *adjective* when it is not accompanied by some form of the verb *be*.

1. The boy is **standing** in the corner.
2. The boy **standing** in the corner was naughty.

EXERCISE 4: Each of the following sentences contains one or more present participles. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the present participles and label them as adjectives or verbs. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. The companies (offering) the lowest prices will have the most customers.
ADJ.
- I 2. Those travelers are (completing) their trip on Delta should report to Gate Three.
VERB
- _____ 3. The artisans were demonstrating various handicrafts at booths throughout the fair.
- _____ 4. The fraternities are giving the wildest parties attract the most new pledges.
- _____ 5. The first team winning four games is awarded the championship.
- _____ 6. The speaker was trying to make his point was often interrupted vociferously.
- _____ 7. The fruits were rotting because of the moisture in the crates carrying them to market.
- _____ 8. Any students desiring official transcripts should complete the appropriate form.
- _____ 9. The advertisements were announcing the half-day sale received a lot of attention.
- _____ 10. The spices flavoring the meal were quite distinctive.

SKILL 5: BE CAREFUL OF PAST PARTICIPLES

Past participles can cause confusion in structure questions on the TOEFL test because a past participle can be either an adjective or a part of a verb. The past participle is the form of the verb that appears with *have* or *be*. It often ends in *-ed*, but there are also many irregular past participles in English. (See Appendix F for a list of irregular past participles.)

The family has purchased a television.
VERB

The poem was written by Paul.
VERB

In the first sentence the past participle *purchased* is part of the verb because it is accompanied by *has*. In the second sentence the past participle *written* is part of the verb because it is accompanied by *was*.

A past participle is an adjective when it is not accompanied by some form of *be* or *have*.

The television purchased yesterday was expensive.
ADJECTIVE

The poem written by Paul appeared in the magazine.
ADJECTIVE

In the first sentence *purchased* is an adjective rather than a verb because it is not accompanied by a form of *be* or *have* (and there is a verb, *was*, later in the sentence). In the second sentence *written* is an adjective rather than a verb because it is not accompanied by a form of *be* or *have* (and there is a verb, *appeared*, later in the sentence).

The following example shows how a past participle can be confused with the verb in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



The packages _____ mailed at the post office will arrive Monday.

- (A) have
- (B) were
- (C) them
- (D) just

In this example, if you look only at the first few words of the sentence, it appears that *packages* is the subject and *mailed* is either a complete verb or a past participle that needs a helping verb. But if you look further in the sentence, you will see that the verb is *will arrive*. You will then recognize that *mailed* is a participial adjective and is therefore not part of the verb. Answers (A) and (B) are incorrect because *mailed* is an adjective and does not need a helping verb such as *have* or *were*. Answer (C) is incorrect because there is no need for the object *them*. Answer (D) is the best answer to this question.

The following chart outlines what you should remember about past participles:

PAST PARTICIPLES

A *past participle* often ends in *-ed*, but there are also many irregular past participles. For many verbs, including *-ed* verbs, the *simple past* and the *past participle* are the same and can be easily confused. The *-ed* form of the verb can be (1) the *simple past*, (2) the *past participle* of a verb, or (3) an *adjective*.

1. She **Painted** this picture.
2. She has **Painted** this picture.
3. The picture **Painted** by Karen is now in a museum.

EXERCISE 5: Each of the following sentences contains one or more past participles. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the past participles and label them as adjectives or verbs. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. The money was (offered) by the client was not (accepted).
VERB VERB
- C 2. The car (listed) in the advertisement had already (stalled).
ADJ. VERB
- _____ 3. The chapters were taught by the professor this morning will be on next week's exam.
- _____ 4. The loaves of bread were baked in a brick oven at a low temperature for many hours.
- _____ 5. The ports were reached by the sailors were under the control of a foreign nation.
- _____ 6. Those suspected in the string of robberies were arrested by the police.
- _____ 7. The pizza is served in this restaurant is the tastiest in the county.

- _____ 8. The courses are listed on the second page of the brochure have several prerequisites.
- _____ 9. All the tenants were invited to the Independence Day barbecue at the apartment complex.
- _____ 10. Any bills paid by the first of the month will be credited to your account by the next day.

EXERCISE (Skills 1–5): Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice in each of the following sentences. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- _____ 1. For three weeks at the beginning of the semester students with fewer than the maximum number of units can add additional courses.
- _____ 2. On her lunch hour went to a nearby department store to purchase a wedding gift.
- _____ 3. The fir trees were grown for the holiday season were harvested in November.
- _____ 4. In the grove the overripe oranges were falling on the ground.
- _____ 5. The papers being delivered at 4:00 will contain the announcement of the president's resignation.
- _____ 6. A specialty shop with various blends from around the world in the shopping mall.
- _____ 7. The portraits exhibited in the Houston Museum last month are now on display in Dallas.
- _____ 8. With a sudden jerk of his hand threw the ball across the field to one of the other players.
- _____ 9. Construction of the housing development it will be underway by the first of the month.
- _____ 10. Those applicants returning their completed forms at the earliest date have the highest priority.

TOEFL EXERCISE (Skills 1–5): Choose the letter of the word or group of words that best completes the sentence.

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| <p>1. The North Platte River _____ from Wyoming into Nebraska.</p> <p>(A) it flowed</p> <p>(B) flows</p> <p>(C) flowing</p> <p>(D) with flowing water</p> | <p>2. _____ Biloxi received its name from a Sioux word meaning "first people."</p> <p>(A) The city of</p> <p>(B) Located in</p> <p>(C) It is in</p> <p>(D) The tour included</p> |
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3. A pride of lions _____ up to forty lions, including one to three males, several females, and cubs.
- (A) can contain
(B) it contains
(C) contain
(D) containing
4. _____ tea plant are small and white.
- (A) The
(B) On the
(C) Having flowers the
(D) The flowers of the
5. The tetracyclines, _____ antibiotics, are used to treat infections.
- (A) are a family of
(B) being a family
(C) a family of
(D) their family is
6. Any possible academic assistance from taking stimulants _____ marginal at best.
- (A) it is
(B) there is
(C) is
(D) as
7. Henry Adams, born in Boston, _____ famous as a historian and novelist.
- (A) became
(B) and became
(C) he was
(D) and he became
8. The major cause _____ the pull of the Moon on the Earth.
- (A) the ocean tides are
(B) of ocean tides is
(C) of the tides in the ocean
(D) the oceans' tides
9. Still a novelty in the late nineteenth century, _____ limited to the rich.
- (A) was
(B) was photography
(C) it was photography
(D) photography was
10. A computerized map of the freeways using information gathered by sensors embedded in the pavement _____ on a local cable channel during rush hours.
- (A) airs
(B) airing
(C) air
(D) to air

SENTENCES WITH MULTIPLE CLAUSES _____

Many sentences in English have more than one clause. (A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb.) Whenever you find a sentence on the TOEFL test with more than one clause, you need to make sure that every subject has a verb and every verb has a subject. Next you need to check that the various clauses in the sentence are correctly joined. There are various ways to join clauses in English. Certain patterns appear frequently in English and on the TOEFL test. You should be very familiar with these patterns.

SKILL 6: USE COORDINATE CONNECTORS CORRECTLY

When you have two clauses in an English sentence, you must connect the two clauses correctly. One way to connect two clauses is to use *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, or *yet* between the clauses.

Tom is singing, *and* Paul is dancing.

Tom is tall, *but* Paul is short.