

PARTICIPLES

Participles are *verbal adjectives*. As adjectives, participles must agree with the noun they qualify in *case, number, and gender*. As verbs, participles have *tense* and *voice*, are modified by adverbs, and govern objects and indirect objects. Latin verbs have only three participles: Present, Future and Past (Perfect). The present and future participles are always active; the past participle is *usually* passive—as we will learn in M&F, Unit Eleven (pp. 76–68), there is one class of verbs (deponents) whose past participle is always active. NB: There is **no** present passive participle, and only deponents have a perfect active participle (and thereby lack a perfect passive participle).

I. PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE

The present participle (always active) is formed by adding **-ns** to the present stem, e.g., *optans, implens, ducens, incipiens, audiens*. It declines as a third declension adjective, whose paradigm will be learned in Unit Eight (p. 127). The present participle denotes an incomplete action *contemporaneous* with the main verb. Our word ‘present’ is itself derived from the present participle of *praesum* (to preside or be present at): *praesens*, genitive *praesentis*. This can provide a clue to the formation and translation of the *present* participle.

II. FUTURE ACTIVE PARTICIPLE

The future participle (always active) is formed by inserting **-ur-** before **-us** (**-a, -um**) of the fourth principle part, e.g., *optaturus, impleturus, ducturus, incepturus, auditurus*. It declines as a first and second declension adjective (i.e., like *bonus, -a, -um*.) The future participle denotes an action *subsequent* to the main verb. The *gerundive*, a verbal adjective passive in meaning, is sometimes used as a future passive participle. It is formed by adding **-ndus** (**-a, -um**) to the present stem, e.g., *optandus, implendus, ducendus, incipiendus, audiendus*. It declines like a first and second declension adjective. Note that our word ‘future’ is itself derived from the future participle of *sum*: *futurus*. This can provide a clue to formation and translation of the *future* participle.

III. PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE

The past participle (always passive, save for deponent verbs) is the fourth principle part, e.g., *optatus, impletus, ductus, inceptus, auditus*. It declines as a first and second declension adjective (i.e., like *bonus, -a, -um*). While the past participle is often regularly formed in most first and second conjugation verbs (*amatus, coronatus, clamatus – deletus, impletus* [but *habitus*]), the past participle of third and fourth conjugation verbs is best regarded as unpredictable and should be memorized. The past participle denotes an action which is *prior* to the main verb. Our word ‘perfect’ (e.g., the perfect system) is itself derived from the *perfect* passive participle of *perficio* (‘to complete or finish’); hence, *perfectum* is ‘something having been completed’. This can provide an occasional clue to the formation and translation of the *perfect* participle.