

Vergil's Verb Tips: The Participle

If the participle ends in it's this kind of participle:	. . . and is normally translated as
-āns, -ēns, -iēns (genitive singular: -ntis) ¹	present active	x'ing
-tus/-a/-um or -sus/-a/-um² (= 4th principal part) ³	perfect passive ⁴	(having been) x'ed
	perfect active ⁵	having x'ed
-tūrus/-a/-um or -sūrus/-a/-um (4th stem + -ūrus/-a/-um) ⁶	future active	about to x
-andus/-a/-um, -endus/-a/-um, -iendus/-a/-um (verb stem minus any vowel/s + endings) ⁷	future passive ⁸ (gerundive) ⁹	(needing) to be x'ed

Notes

- Present active participles are the only participles that belong to the third declension. Their nominative singular form for all three genders ends in *-ns*, their stems in *-nt-*. 1st conjugation has *-āns*. 2nd and 3rd conjugations have *-ēns*. 3rd *-iō* and 4th conjugations have *-iēns*. Like all third declension adjectives, present active participles take the maximum number of i-stem endings possible: ablative singular in *-ī*, genitive plural in *-ium*, neuter nominative and accusative plural in *-ia*. Ablative singular forms present a special difficulty, however. When used strictly as attributive adjectives (i.e., modifying a noun) with no verbal force, present participles end in *-ī*: *cum pugnanti gladiātore* ("with the fighting gladiator"). When used substantively (i.e., as a noun), present active participles end in the standard ablative singular *-e* of third declension: *ab amante fugit* ("he flees from his lover"). When used participially (i.e., with both adjectival and verbal force, as in the ablative absolute), present active participles end in *-e* in ablative singular: *cum gladiātore in arēnā pugnante* ("with the gladiator fighting in the arena"), *Quintō fugiente ad Agricolam* ("with Quintus fleeing to Agricola," "while Quintus was fleeing to Agricola").

2. This participle always ends either in *-s-* or *-t-* plus the standard first and second declension endings.
3. For the vast majority of Latin verbs, the 4th principal part you have learned is the perfect passive participle. As an exception, deponent verbs have only three principal parts. Example: *sequor, sequī, secūtus (sum)*. As another exception, certain verbs cannot have passive forms. The most obvious example is *sum* (“be”), which cannot be passive. Such verbs are sometimes listed with a substitution form, the future active participle. See note 6 below. Note: Latin forms the perfect passive system of tenses with the 4th principal part of the verb + the forms of *sum*.
4. For verbs with a first principal part in *-ō*, the 4th principal part is the perfect passive participle. Examples: *tollō* (“lift”) has 4th form *sublātus* (“having been lifted”); *caedō* (“slaughter”) has 4th form *caesus* (“having been slaughtered”). Note: There is no way in Latin to say “having lifted” or “having slaughtered” for normal verbs. Nonetheless, the best translation for the ablative absolute sometimes renders the Latin passive as an English active. Example: *Hostibus caesīs, Caesar ad castra revēnit* (literally “With the enemy having been slaughtered, Caesar returned to camp”; “Having slaughtered / After he had slaughtered the enemy, Caesar returned to camp”).
5. Only deponent verbs have a perfect active participle. Examples: *sequor* (“follow”) to *secūtus* (“having followed”), *ingredior* (“enter”) to *ingressus* (“having entered”).
6. To form the future active participle, knock the *-us/-a/-um* off the 4th principal part and replace it with *-ūrus/-ūra/-ūrum*. As noted above in 4, some lists substitute the future active participle for a nonexistent 4th principal part. The most common example is *sum, esse, fuī, futūrus*.
7. The verb stem minus any vowel/s means *vocō*→*voc-*, *teneō*→*ten-*, *dūcō*→*dūc-*, *capiō*→*cap-*, *audiō*→*aud-*. 1st conjugation verbs add *-andus/-a/-um*. 2nd and 3rd conjugation verbs add *-endus/-a/-um*. 3rd *-iō* and 4th conjugation verbs add *-iendus/-a/-um*.
8. The future passive participle is passive for all verbs, even deponents. Examples: *tollō* to *tollendus/-a/-um* (“needing to be lifted”), *sequor* to *sequendus/-a/-um* (“needing to be followed”). Verbs such as *sum* that cannot be passive do not have a future passive participle.
9. Also called the gerundive, the future passive participle is used with *sum* and the dative of agent to form the passive periphrastic. Examples: *mihi fugiendum est* (“I must flee”), *milēs explorātōrī sequendus est* (“The spy must follow the soldier”).