Participle constructions instead of relative clauses

What are participles and how can they be used?

There are two different participle forms in English. Here's how they are formed:

1. the **present participle**: it is formed by adding "-ing" to the end of the verb (e.g. talking, listening, writing)
2. the **past participle**: it is formed by adding "-ed" to the end of the verb, it is the "3rd verb form" of any verb (e.g. talked, listened, written)

How are they used?

Both participles are part of various [verschieden] other grammar constructions, e.g.

1. the **present participle**
    1. is part of the progressive form (I am **walking**)
    2. can be used to make an (active) adjective from a verb (the **winning** team)
    3. can be used as a gerund (**Walking** is good for you)
2. the **past participle**
    1. is part of the perfect verb forms – present perfect and past perfect (I have **walked**, I had **walked**)
    2. can be used to make a (passive) adjective from a verb (the **defeated** team)

On this page, you can learn another common [verbreitet] use of participles: They can be used to replace [ersetzen] relative clauses.

Participles to replace relative clauses

Speakers of English often use participle constructions instead of relative clauses. Compare the following constructions. Both of them have the same meaning.

#	relative clause construction	participle construction
1	One morning I saw a man **who walked** along the river.	One morning I saw a man **walking** along the river.
2	The person **who was walking** next to me looked really tired.	The pupil **walking** next to me looked really tired.
3	We visited the city **which was mentioned** in our travel guide.	We visited the city **mentioned** in our travel guide.

- As you can see, the participle construction on the right replaces [ersetzen] the relative clause construction on the left. The meaning of both constructions is the same. Participle constructions are especially common in written English. They sound more formal [förmlich] than relative clauses.
- The **present participle** has an **active** meaning (walking) and the **past participle** has a **passive** meaning (mentioned).
- The **present participle** can replace a simple form or a progressive form (see examples 1 + 2).
- In German, you usually translate a participle construction with a relative clause because the German language doesn’t have such a construction.

Practice

- Relativsatz durch Partizipialkonstruktion ersetzen

grammar, englisch