

French Grammar Express- Present Participle

A present participle is a word derived from a verb, used as an adjective or to form a 'continuous verb tense'.

In English, it is formed by adding **-ing** to the base form of a verb.

To shock → This is shocking. *adjective*

To eat → I am eating *Present continuous*

To write → He was writing *Past continuous*

How is a present participle formed in French?

→ Take the '**nous**' form of the present tense.

-ER Verbs	-IR Verbs	-RE verbs	Irregular verbs
Danser - to dance	Finir - to finish	Vendre - to sell	
dansant <i>dancing</i>	finissant <i>finishing</i>	vendant <i>selling</i>	faisant <i>doing</i> prenant <i>taking</i> voyant <i>seeing</i>

→ Knock off the '**nous**' and its endings.

→ Add the ending **-ant** [ã]

Exceptions:

être (to be) → étant
avoir (to have) → ayant
savoir (to know) → sachant

Warning!
Continuous tense verbs are NOT translated by the present participle in French!

English	French Tense	French Verb
I am eating.	Present Continuous	Je mange
I was eating.	Past Continuous	Je mangeais
I will be eating.	Future Continuous	Je mangerai

Present
Imperfect
Simple Future

So, when do we use a present participle?

amuser - to amuse

adjective

C'est un livre **amusant**.

It's an **amusing** book.

(m.)	Un livre amusant
(f.)	Une histoire amusante
(m.pl)	Des livres amusants
(f.pl)	Des histoires amusantes

→ The present participle describes the nature of the **noun** (book), it is therefore an **adjective** and works like an adjective.

while

Ils sifflaient **en travaillant**.

They were whistling **while working**.

↓

The action described by the present participle (working) **happens at the same time** as the action described by the main verb (whistling).

while

Il ronflait, **dormant** profondément.

He was snoring, **sleeping** deeply.

↑

The action described by the present participle (working) **happens at the same time** as the action described by the main verb (whistling).

upon

Il a ri **en entendant** la blague.

He laughed **upon hearing** the joke.

↓

The action described by the main verb (laughed) **happens as a result** of the action described by the present participle (hearing), that happened **immediately before**.

as

ayant une migraine, il s'est couché.

Having a migraine, he went to bed.

↓

The action described by the main verb (went to bed) **happens as a consequence** of the action described by the present participle (having a migraine).

by + ing

Il a perdu du poids **en évitant** le sucre.

He lost weight **by avoiding** sugar.

↓

The action described by the main verb (lost) happens **because of** the action described by the present participle (avoiding).

who/that

Les gens **qui voyagent** vers la France.

Les gens **voyageant** vers la France.

People **traveling** towards France.

→ The present participle (traveling) describe the **main action happening as we speak**.