ADJECTIVES IN -ED / -ING

B2 — Upper-Intermediate

English Grammar Worksheets | Participial Adjectives: bored / boring • Feelings vs Causes • Use in Context

4 Worksheets: Gradability & Extreme Pairs • Attributive Use & Participles • Collocation & Register • Analysis & Writing | Answer Key Included

Worksheet 1: Gradability and Extreme Pairs

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference

Gradable (very, rather, a bit)	Extreme (absolutely, utterly, completely)
tired	exhausted / shattered
surprised	astonished / astounded / stunned
frightened	terrified / petrified
interesting	fascinating / gripping / riveting
annoying	infuriating / exasperating / maddening
worrying	alarming

Exercise A – Choose the natural combination.

1. The documentary was very gripping / absolutely gripping — I watched it twice without a break.

2. I was absolutely surprised / absolutely astonished to see him there.

3. The delays were a bit infuriating / utterly infuriating.

4. She was very petrified / absolutely petrified of the dark as a child.

5. The figures are somewhat worrying / utterly worrying, though not yet catastrophic.

6. After the night shift he was completely shattered / very shattered.

Exercise B – Upgrade each sentence: replace the gradable adjective + very with an extreme -ed/-ing adjective + a suitable intensifier.

1. The queue was very annoying.

_____

2. We were very surprised by the verdict.

_____

3. The documentary was very interesting.

_____

4. The children were very frightened.

_____

5. I was very tired after the flight.

_____

Exercise C – "Quite" changes meaning: quite + gradable = fairly; quite + extreme = completely. Paraphrase each.

1. "The talk was quite interesting."

_____

2. "The talk was quite fascinating."

_____

Score: _____ / 13

Worksheet 2: Attributive Use and the Participle Borderline

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Both forms work attributively: *the **bored** students, a **boring** lecture*. But -ing/-ed words are sometimes true **verb participles**, not adjectives:
• *an **entertaining** host* (adjective: very entertaining ✓)
• *the host **entertaining** the guests* (participle: *very entertaining the guests ✗)
Tests: can it follow *very*? can it follow *seem*? (*seems entertaining* ✓ adjective).

Exercise A – Adjective (ADJ) or verb participle (V)? Apply a test to justify your answer.

1. a promising young violinist ( )

_____

2. the letter promising a full refund ( )

_____

3. the broken window ( )

_____

4. the window broken by the storm ( )

_____

5. a calculating opponent ( )

_____

6. a machine calculating the average ( )

_____

Exercise B – Combine into one noun phrase with an attributive -ed/-ing adjective. Example: "The results disappoint us. They are the results." → "the disappointing results".

1. The audience was thrilled. → the _____ audience

2. The pace exhausts the runners. → an _____ pace

3. The evidence convinces nobody. → (add un-) _____ evidence

4. The knock at the door alarmed us. → an _____ knock

5. The employee was overworked and underpaid. → an _____ , _____ employee

Exercise C – Both orders exist; explain the difference: "the students bored by the lecture left early" vs "the bored students left early".

_____

_____

_____

Score: _____ / 14

Worksheet 3: Collocation, Compounds and Register

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Exercise A – Compound participial adjectives. Match the halves, then use three of them in sentences of your own.

1. mind-	a. warming
2. heart-	b. numbing
3. long-	c. wracking
4. nerve-	d. awaited
5. record-	e. looking
6. odd-	f. breaking

1.

_____

2.

_____

3.

_____

Exercise B – Register. Rank each set from informal to formal, then mark which you would use in a report.

1. gobsmacked — astonished — surprised

_____

2. knackered — exhausted — tired

_____

3. freaked out — alarmed — concerned

_____

Exercise C – Complete the collocations with a suitable -ing adjective (several answers possible).

1. a _____ silence (uncomfortable)

2. a _____ thought (that stays and troubles you)

3. _____ results (very good, giving hope)

4. a _____ lack of interest (surprising in a bad way)

5. a _____ schedule (extremely demanding)

Score: _____ / 17

Worksheet 4: Analysis and Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Part A – Read the passage and answer the questions.

The committee's long-awaited report makes for depressing reading. Its findings are alarming: staff describe an exhausting workload, unconvincing leadership and a deeply demoralising culture of blame. More worrying still is the response of management, who seem less embarrassed by the findings than irritated at their publication. Employees interviewed for the report remain unconvinced that anything will change.

1. Sort every -ed/-ing form in the passage into: (a) -ing adjective, (b) -ed adjective, (c) verb participle.

_____

_____

_____

2. "less embarrassed by the findings than irritated at their publication" — explain what this comparison implies about management.

_____

_____

3. Two forms carry the negative prefix un-. What does un- + -ing vs un- + -ed each describe here?

_____

_____

4. "More worrying still" — what is the function of this fronted comparative phrase?

_____

Part B – Transformations.

1. "The report worried everyone, and this got worse over time." → Use "increasingly" + -ing adjective.

_____

2. "Nobody was convinced by the minister's answer." → Use unconvincing attributively.

_____

3. "The negotiations exhausted both teams." → Two versions: one -ing, one -ed.

_____

4. "The decision surprised analysts because they did not expect it." → Use an extreme -ed adjective + intensifier.

_____

Part C – Write a formal complaint or report extract (120–150 words) about a service, workplace or event. Requirements: at least three extreme -ed/-ing adjectives with natural intensifiers, one un- form, one compound participial adjective, register consistently formal.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 22

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only

Worksheet 1

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Combinations	**absolutely gripping; absolutely astonished; utterly infuriating; absolutely petrified; somewhat worrying (worrying is gradable); completely shattered. Rule: extreme adjectives reject "very / a bit"; gradable ones reject "utterly / absolutely".**
B	Upgrades	**utterly infuriating; absolutely astonished/stunned; absolutely fascinating/gripping; absolutely terrified/petrified; completely exhausted/shattered**
C	quite	**1 fairly/moderately interesting. 2 completely fascinating (emphatic).**

Worksheet 2

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	ADJ vs V	**1 ADJ (very promising ✓); 2 V (has an object); 3 ADJ (seems broken ✓); 4 V (by-phrase, event reading); 5 ADJ (character trait, very calculating ✓); 6 V (object: the average).**
B	Noun phrases	**thrilled; exhausting; unconvincing; alarming; overworked, underpaid**
C	Position	**Postposed participle phrase = event-specific (those bored by that lecture); attributive = a property of the students as presented, cause unspecified.**

Worksheet 3

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Compounds	**1-b, 2-a, 3-d, 4-c, 5-f, 6-e. Sentences: check hyphenation and attributive use.**
B	Register	**Informal → formal: gobsmacked < surprised < astonished (report: surprised/astonished); knackered < tired < exhausted (report: exhausted); freaked out < alarmed/concerned (report: concerned).**
C	Collocations	**embarrassing/awkward silence (accept deafening); nagging/troubling thought; encouraging/promising results; astonishing/staggering lack of interest; punishing/gruelling schedule**

Worksheet 4

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	Sorting	**-ing adj: depressing, alarming, exhausting, unconvincing, demoralising, worrying. -ed adj: long-awaited (compound), embarrassed, irritated, unconvinced. Participle: interviewed (employees interviewed for the report — reduced relative).**
A2	Comparison	**Management's feelings target the exposure, not the problems — implying indifference to the substance and concern for image.**

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A3	un- forms	**unconvincing = failing to convince others (cause); unconvinced = not persuaded (experiencer state).**
A4	Fronting	**Focus/escalation: signals a climactic addition and links cohesively to the previous evaluation.**
B	Transformations	**1 The report was increasingly worrying. 2 The minister gave an unconvincing answer. 3 The negotiations were exhausting. / Both teams were exhausted. 4 Analysts were absolutely astonished/stunned by the decision.**
C	Writing	**Rubric: requirements 0–4; collocation accuracy 0–3; register 0–3.**