ADJECTIVES IN -ED / -ING

C1 — Advanced

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

4 Worksheets: Adjective or Participle? • Divergent Meanings • Academic Analysis • Register & Argumentation | Answer Key Included

Worksheet 1: Adjective or Participle? The Tests

Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Level: C1 (CEFR)*

At C1 the interesting question is not the bored/boring rule but the **category boundary**: when is an -ed/-ing form a true adjective, and when a verb?

Reference: Diagnostic Tests

Test	Adjective passes	Participle fails
very / too / rather	very frightening	*very frightening the children
seem / remain / become	seemed worried	*seemed being repaired
un- prefix	unconvincing, unexpected	*unarriving, *unbuying
comparative	more amusing than	*more amusing the crowd than
by-phrase / object	(weakens adjective reading)	admired by all; boring the class

Exercise A – Adjective (ADJ), participle (V), or genuinely ambiguous (AMB)? Apply at least one test in your justification.

1. "The results were encouraging."

_____

_____

2. "She was encouraging her students to apply."

_____

_____

3. "The door was closed." (Two readings — explain both.)

_____

_____

4. "His manner was calculated to offend."

_____

_____

5. "I found the argument wanting."

_____

_____

6. "The missing documents were never recovered."

_____

_____

Exercise B – The stative/eventive ambiguity. For each sentence, paraphrase the state reading and the event reading, and add one word that forces each.

1. "The shop was closed at five."

_____

_____

2. "The children were dressed."

_____

_____

Score: _____ / 16

Worksheet 2: Divergent Meanings and Idiomatic Forms

Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Level: C1 (CEFR)*

Some -ed/-ing pairs have drifted apart: *a **calculating** person* (scheming) is not simply one who calculates, and *a **calculated** risk* is not a risk that feels calculated.

Reference

Form	Idiomatic meaning
a trying day	testing one's patience, difficult
a moving speech	emotionally affecting
a pointed remark	deliberately critical, targeted
a guarded reply	cautious, revealing little
an engaging speaker / an engaged couple	charming vs betrothed (or occupied)
an involved explanation	complicated, intricate
a becoming outfit (dated/formal)	flattering, suitable
a fetching hat	attractive

Exercise A – Paraphrase the idiomatic meaning, then write a second sentence where the same form has its literal/verbal meaning.

1. "It has been a trying week."

_____

_____

2. "She gave a very involved answer."

_____

_____

3. "He made several pointed comments about punctuality."

_____

_____

4. "The minister was guarded on the subject of tax."

_____

_____

Exercise B – Choose the form and justify: the choice changes the meaning, not just the grammar.

1. His response was calculated / calculating — every word designed in advance to reassure investors.

_____

2. She is a calculated / calculating negotiator who befriends rivals only to undermine them.

_____

3. We heard a moving / moved account of the rescue.

_____

4. The audience, visibly moving / moved, rose to applaud.

_____

Exercise C – Explain the joke or oddity.

1. "I'm engaged." — "Congratulations! To whom?" — "No, I mean busy."

_____

_____

2. "The chicken is ready to eat." (Why is this ambiguous, and how does it relate to -ed/-ing meanings?)

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Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 3: Academic Reading and Critical Analysis

Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Level: C1 (CEFR)*

Part A – Read the passage and answer the questions.

Participial adjectives do quiet ideological work. To call unemployment figures "disappointing" is to presuppose a disappointed observer while naming none: the feeling is detached from any feeler and reattached to the world itself. Editorials favour such experiencer-deleting forms — "a worrying trend", "an encouraging sign" — precisely because they universalise a reaction that is, in fact, positioned. The -ed forms, by contrast, must name their experiencer ("investors were rattled"), which is why they feel more accountable, and why they are quietly rarer in headlines.

1. Explain "experiencer-deleting" in your own words, with one example from the passage.

_____

_____

2. Why, according to the writer, do -ed forms feel "more accountable"?

_____

_____

3. "a reaction that is, in fact, positioned" — what does "positioned" imply about supposedly neutral -ing adjectives?

_____

_____

4. Test the claim: rewrite the headline "Worrying rise in rents" so that the experiencer is named. What changes rhetorically?

_____

_____

Part B – Transformations, preserving core meaning.

1. "The findings worried the committee." → Experiencer-deleting version (no mention of the committee).

_____

2. "Everyone found the apology unconvincing." → Use unconvinced.

_____

3. "The trend alarms economists more and more." → Use increasingly + -ing.

_____

4. "The speech moved the audience deeply." → Two versions: attributive -ing; predicative -ed with intensifier.

_____

Part C – Guided paragraph (120–150 words). Analyse the use of -ed/-ing adjectives in any headline, review or report you recall. Include: one comment on experiencer deletion, one adjective/participle boundary case, one divergent-meaning form (Worksheet 2). Formal-academic register.

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Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 24

Worksheet 4: Register, Rewriting and Argumentation

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Register transformation. Rewrite the informal message below (60–80 words) as a formal review for a consumer site, replacing every informal -ed/-ing form with a register-appropriate alternative.

"Honestly, I was gutted. The demo looked amazing but the full game is mind-numbing — endless fetch quests, infuriating loading times, and a story so confusing I gave up caring. I was gobsmacked they charged full price. Not buying anything from this lot again — totally fed up."

_____

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Part B – Adversarial description. Recast each claim about the same facts with -ed/-ing adjectives of the opposite polarity; keep it defensible, not dishonest.

1. Claim: "A gripping, fast-moving thriller." (Recast negatively.)

_____

_____

2. Claim: "The reforms produced alarming disruption." (Recast positively.)

_____

_____

3. Claim: "Staff seemed bored and disengaged." (Recast sympathetically, shifting cause.)

_____

_____

Part C – Essay introduction (180–220 words). Proposition: "Adjectives that describe feelings without naming who feels them are the most persuasive words in public language." Requirements: at least five phenomena from this pack (experiencer deletion, adjective vs participle test, divergent-meaning pair, extreme/gradable intensification, un- forms), each exemplified; formal-academic register; clear line of argument.

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Word count: _____ Phenomena used: ____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only

Worksheet 1

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Category	**1 ADJ (very encouraging ✓). 2 V (object: her students). 3 AMB: state (the door was shut — adjective) vs event (someone closed it — passive participle). 4 V (passive + purpose clause; but "calculated" is ADJ in "a calculated insult"). 5 ADJ (idiomatic: deficient; "found it rather wanting" ✓). 6 ADJ (attributive; un-/very tests apply: cf. "the long-missing documents").**
B	State vs event	**1 State: it was shut at that time (already closed); event: the act of closing happened at five (closed by the manager at five). Force with "already" (state) / "by the manager" (event). 2 State: they had clothes on; event: someone dressed them. Force with "smartly/already" (state) / "by the nurse" (event).**

Worksheet 2

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Idiomatic vs literal	**1 trying = testing one's patience; literal: "We are trying a new method." 2 involved = intricate; literal: "She was involved in the project." 3 pointed = deliberately critical; literal: "He pointed at the map." 4 guarded = cautious; literal: "The palace was guarded by soldiers."**
B	Choice	**1 calculated (planned in advance). 2 calculating (scheming character). 3 moving (affecting account). 4 moved (experiencers).**
C	Jokes	**1 "engaged" is polysemous: betrothed vs occupied — the -ed adjective has two lexicalised senses. 2 "ready to eat" hides the experiencer/agent: the chicken as eater (agentive) vs as food (patient) — the same deletion that -ing/-ed pairs manage morphologically.**

Worksheet 3

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	Experiencer deletion	**The -ing form encodes a reaction without saying whose it is; e.g. "disappointing figures" implies someone is disappointed but names nobody.**
A2	Accountability	**-ed forms require an experiencer subject ("investors were rattled"), so the claim can be checked against identifiable people.**
A3	"Positioned"	**The reaction belongs to a particular standpoint (a government, a market, an editor) though grammar presents it as universal.**
A4	Headline	**e.g. "Tenants alarmed as rents rise" — the evaluation is now attributed and contestable; the -ing version reads as impersonal fact.**

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
B	Transformations	**1 The findings were worrying. 2 Everyone remained unconvinced by the apology. 3 The trend is increasingly alarming (to economists). 4 It was a deeply moving speech. / The audience was profoundly moved.**
C	Paragraph	**Use rubric below.**

Worksheet 4

#	Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Register model	**"I was deeply disappointed. The demo was impressive, but the full release is tedious: repetitive quests, exasperating loading times and a bewildering narrative. I was astonished at the full-price positioning and am disinclined to purchase from this developer again." Check: informal forms (gutted, gobsmacked, fed up, mind-numbing) upgraded; intensifier collocations natural.**
B	Recasts	**e.g. 1 "a frantic, exhausting film that mistakes pace for tension"; 2 "the reforms produced bracing, long-overdue change"; 3 "staff appeared drained by an unrelenting workload rather than uninterested in it".**
C	Essay rubric	**Phenomena engaged 0–10; analytical precision 0–8; register 0–6; argument & coherence 0–6; accuracy 0–5.**