

Ablative Absolutes

Definition:

An ablative absolute is a subordinate clause composed of two elements, both in the ablative case. Neither of these elements relates grammatically to any elements in the independent clause (sometimes known as the main sentence). There are five common types of ablative absolutes and each has a literal but awkward translation:

Type of Ablative Absolute	Literal Translation
1. Noun (Pronoun) - Noun (or Pronoun)	1. With the <i>Noun (Pronoun)</i> being <i>Noun (Pronoun)</i>
2. Noun (Pronoun) - Adjective	2. With the <i>Noun (Pronoun)</i> being <i>Adjective</i>
3. Noun (Pronoun) - Present Act. Participle	3. With the <i>Noun (Pronoun)</i> <i>Verbing</i>
4. Noun (Pronoun) - Perfect Pas. Participle	4. With the <i>Noun (Pronoun)</i> having been <i>Verbed</i>
5. Noun (Pronoun) - Future Act. Participle	5. With the <i>Noun (Pronoun)</i> about to <i>Verb</i>

Latin Examples:	Literal English Translation
1. Cicerone consule, res publica servata est.	1. With Cicero being consul, the republic was saved.
2. Matre diligenti, servi laboraverunt.	2. With mother being diligent, the slaves worked.
3. Magistro docente, discipuli discebant.	3. With the teacher teaching, the students learned.
4. Epistula scripta, puer dormiebat.	4. With the letter having been written, the boy slept.
5. Milite morituro, puella lacrimat.	5. With the soldier about to die, the girl cries.

Although the literal translations of the five types of ablative absolutes convey the meaning of the subordinate clause, it is much better to convert the ablative absolute into a subordinate clause in English by adding a word such as *when*, *since*, or *after* into the English sentence and converting the participle to a complete verb. Remember when converting the participle into a verb that present participles denote action happening at the same time as the main verb, perfect participles denote action happening before the main verb, and future participles denote action happening after the main verb.

Latin Examples:	Clause English Translation
1. Cicerone consule, res publica servata est.	1. When Cicero was consul, the republic was saved.
2. Matre diligenti, servi laboraverunt.	2. Since mother was diligent, the slaves worked.
3. Magistro docente, discipuli discebant.	3. While the teacher taught, the students learned.
4. Epistula scripta, puer dormiebat.	4. After the letter had been written, the boy slept.
5. Milite morituro, puella lacrimat.	5. Since the soldier will die, the girl cries.

Ablative Absolute Translations

Translation I: Translate each ablative absolute literally.

1. patria victa, _____
2. mari periculoso, _____
3. consule novo, _____
4. civibus auditis, _____
5. oratore dicente, _____
6. civibus locuturis, _____
7. fabula narrata, _____
8. ancilla coquente, _____
9. armis iactis, _____
10. hostibus impeditis _____
11. incendio magno, _____
12. parentibus moraturis, _____
13. horto pulchro, _____
14. taberna clausa, _____
15. agricola ambulante, _____

Ablative Absolute Translations

Translation II: Translate each ablative absolute literally and then as a clause.

1. Puero dormiente, cibus in mensa positus est. _____

2. Pace facta, cives erant laeti. _____

3. Epistula recepta, puella sub arbore sedet. _____

4. Discipulis staturis, magister audire parat. _____

5. Gladiatore pugnante, populus diu clamabat. _____

6. Culina magna, servi bene laborant. _____

7. Militibus profecturis, rex laudem dat. _____

8. Puella ancilla, multi labores acti sunt. _____

9. Servo ab patre vocato, omnes audiverunt. _____
