Absolute participle

Spanish · British English › Spanish

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The Past Participle: Absolute Constructions (C1)

Welcome to the fascinating world of advanced Spanish grammar! Today, we're diving into **absolute constructions with the past participle** (*participio pasado*). This is an elegant way to express the circumstances (time, cause, or condition) of the main clause, often without using conjunctions.

Past Participle + **Noun** (or vice-versa)

The key to using these constructions correctly is understanding that the past participle functions as an adjective here. It **must agree in gender and number** with the noun it refers to.

Terminada la reunión, se fueron todos.
The meeting finished, everyone left. (Literally: Finished the meeting, everyone left.)

Another common form is the construction with '*con*', which highlights a state or accompanying circumstance.

Con la ventana cerrada, no se oía nada.
With the window closed, nothing could be heard.

- Expressing time (after something): *Abierta la tienda*, entraron los clientes. (After the shop opened, the customers came in.)
- Expressing cause: *Vista su reacción*, no insistimos. (Seeing his reaction, we didn't insist.)
- Expressing condition: *Hecho el pago*, recibirá el producto. (Once payment is made, you will receive the product.)
- Expressing manner/accompanying circumstance: *Con los brazos cruzados*, esperó. (With his arms crossed, he waited.)

Mind the agreement! The past participle must always agree with the noun in gender and number. A common mistake like '*Terminado la reunión*' immediately reveals a lack of fluency.

Memory trick: Think of the past participle as a **reflection** of the noun – it must perfectly mirror its gender and number!

Infinitive	Past Participle
abrir	abierto
decir	dicho
escribir	escrito
hacer	hecho
morir	muerto
poner	puesto
resolver	resuelto

Infinitive	Past Participle
romper	roto
ver	visto
volver	vuelto

Absolute constructions are characteristic of formal and written Spanish, and using them correctly demonstrates a high level of linguistic proficiency at C1. Practise them regularly to sound like a native speaker! ¡Mucha suerte!

Part 1 — Choose the correct word

Circle the option that correctly fills each gap.

1. _____ la emergencia, se activaron los protocolos.
   Once the emergency was declared, the protocols were activated.
   A) Declaradas B) Declarada C) Declarado D) Declarados

2. Con la verdad _____, se hizo justicia.
   With the truth revealed, justice was served.
   A) revelando B) reveladas C) revelado D) revelada

3. _____ la caja, encontraron el tesoro.
   After opening the chest, they found the treasure.
   A) Abiertas B) Abierta C) Abierto D) Abiertos

4. _____ el discurso, recibió una ovación.
   After finishing the speech, he received a standing ovation.
   A) Finalizado B) Finalizados C) Finalizadas D) Finalizada

5. Con la ventana _____, no se oía nada.
   With the window closed, nothing could be heard.
   A) cerrado B) cerradas C) cerrada D) cerrando

6. _____ el enigma, el detective sonrió.
   After solving the riddle, the detective smiled.
   A) Resuelto B) Resuelta C) Resueltos D) Resueltas

7. _____ el desafío, comenzaron a entrenar.
   After the challenge was accepted, they started training.
   A) Aceptadas B) Aceptado C) Aceptados D) Aceptada

8. _____ el plazo, no aceptaron más solicitudes.
   After the deadline passed, they didn't accept any more applications.
   A) Terminada B) Terminados C) Terminado D) Terminadas

Part 2 — Fill in the gap

Write the missing word or phrase on the line.

1. Con el camino _____, buscaron una alternativa.
   With the road blocked, they looked for an alternative.

2. Con la decisión _____, no había vuelta atrás.

With the decision taken, there was no going back.

3. Con la lección _____, no repitió el error.
   With the lesson learned, he did not repeat the mistake.

4. _____ la idea, se abrió el debate.
   Once the idea was proposed, the debate began.

5. _____ el testamento, se repartió la herencia.
   Once the will had been read, the inheritance was divided.

6. _____ la noticia, se alegraron mucho.
   After receiving the news, they were very happy.

Part 3 — Translate

Write each word in Spanish on the line.

1. to dispel › _____
2. to communicate › _____
3. dedicate › _____
4. to say › _____
5. to miss › _____
6. organise › _____

Part 4 — Match the pairs

Write the letter of the matching translation next to each term.

	Term		Translation
1.	encontrar	A	to exhaust
2.	analizar	B	gather
3.	reunir	C	to carry out
4.	realizar	D	to perfect
5.	vender	E	conclude
6.	concluir	F	to find
7.	perfeccionar	G	to sell
8.	agotar	H	to analyse

Answer Key

Part 1 — Choose the correct word

1. B) Declarada
2. D) revelada
3. B) Abierta
4. A) Finalizado
5. C) cerrada
6. A) Resuelto
7. B) Aceptado
8. C) Terminado

Part 2 — Fill in the gap

1. bloqueado
2. tomada
3. aprendida
4. Propuesta
5. Leído
6. Recibida

Part 3 — Translate

1. despejar
2. comunicar
3. dedicar
4. decir
5. perder
6. organizar

Part 4 — Match the pairs

1. F (to find)
2. H (to analyse)
3. B (gather)
4. C (to carry out)
5. G (to sell)
6. E (conclude)
7. D (to perfect)
8. A (to exhaust)