

CAPUT XXIV: WORKSHEET for ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE

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1. DEFINITION: A participial phrase containing a noun/pronoun and a participle in the ablative case and describing an action related to the action of the main clause. Unlike other participial phrases, whose participles modify some noun/pronoun in the attached clause, the ablative absolute is self-contained (hence “absolute”), i.e., both the participle and the noun it modifies are in the same phrase.

ENGLISH EXAMPLE: “Rome having been seen, the men were rejoicing.”

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH: “Seeing Rome, the men rejoiced.” (Here the participle “seeing” modifies “men” in the main clause; thus “seeing Rome” is just a regular participial phrase: **Rōmam videntēs, virī gaudēbant.**)

2. RECOGNITION: Look for a noun/pronoun and a participle (or occasionally two nouns with the verb “to be” understood, e.g., **Caesare duce**, *with Caesar being our leader* = *with Caesar as our leader*) in the ablative case, usually set off by commas.

EXAMPLE: **Rōmā vīsā, virī gaudēbant.**

3. TRANSLATION: Supply the word “with” (common with the ablative), then translate the noun and the participle literally:

EXAMPLE: **Rōmā vīsā, virī gaudēbant.**
With Rome having been seen, the men were rejoicing.

Or, “with” may be omitted: *Rome having been seen, the men were rejoicing.*

Or (and this generally produces more idiomatic English) transform the PHRASE into a CLAUSE, supplying the appropriate conjunction (usually “when,” “since,” or “although,” whichever best suits the context) and transforming the participle into the appropriate verb tense:

Since Rome had been seen, the men were rejoicing.

PRACTICE WITH THESE:

Tyrannō expulsō, cīvēs gaudent.

PHRASE: _____

CLAUSE: _____

Omnibus virīs audientibus, poēta carmina recitāvit.

PHRASE: _____

CLAUSE: _____

Catilīnā ab Cicerōne superātō, Rōmānī tamen aliōs coniūrātōs timēbant.

PHRASE: _____

CLAUSE: _____