

Adjectives ending in *-ed* or *-ing*



Writing Center

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Words ending in *-ing* or *-ed* are used in the following ways:

- As part of a complete active verb phrase with auxiliaries:
They **are crying** because of the news.
The police **stopped** them.
- As part of a complete passive verb phrase (*-ed*)
They **were stopped** by the police.
The project **was stopped** by the CEO.
- To add information into a sentence:
Crying and shaking, the woman opened the door.
Stopped by the police, the driver took out his license.
- As adjectives:
The **crying** child kept everyone awake for many hours.
The **stopped** project left several workers unemployed.

Using the adjective forms correctly depends on the writer's knowledge of the following:

- Transitive and intransitive verbs
 - A transitive verb will take an object:
Example: The boy **swallowed** a fish.
 - An intransitive verb will not take an object:
Example: The fish **vanished**.
- Active or passive nature of the noun or noun phrase being described
 - A **tiring job** -----active
The job is actively causing "tiredness."
 - A **tired student**-----passive
The student feels a certain way—without causing any new action.

Guidelines:

- The ending *-ing* conveys an active meaning; the noun it modifies does something.
- The ending *-ed* conveys a passive meaning; the noun it modifies is acted upon.

In general, the *-ed* form often describes **how someone feels**:

The **frightened** campers tried to call for help.

All his friends had left for the summer, so Ryan felt very **bored**.

The **-ing** form **points to others or causes of the feeling**:

Godzilla was quite **frightening** to many children at the theater.

The **boring** class made several students fall asleep.

Compare the following examples:

1. Erik has a very **tiring** job. (The job causes “tiredness.”)
He is always **tired** when he gets home from work. (He feels tired.)
2. It was **surprising** that Kelly passed the exam. (The news caused surprise.)
I was truly **surprised** when I heard the news. (I felt surprised.)
3. The story of their marriage was really **fascinating**. (The story causes fascination.)
I was **fascinated** by the story of their marriage. (I felt fascinated.)
4. What can be more **exciting** than a roller coaster ride? (The ride causes excitement.)
Gina was **excited** about going to the amusement park. (Gina felt excited.)
5. The headlines in the newspaper were **embarrassing**. (They caused embarrassment.)
Mary was (very) **embarrassed** when she saw the pictures. (She felt embarrassed.)

The following is a list of other adjectives ending in **-ing** or **-ed** that frequently cause confusion:

amusing	amused	frightening	frightened
amazing	amazed	horrifying	horrified
annoying	annoyed	interesting	interested
astonishing	astonished	overwhelming	overwhelmed
confusing	confused	pleasing	pleased
depressing	depressed	satisfying	satisfied
disappointing	disappointed	shocking	shocked
disgusting	disgusted	surprising	surprised
exciting	excited	terrifying	terrified
exhausting	exhausted	worrying	worried