

# THE ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE

## FORMATION:

1. The ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE is composed of two major elements that make up a phrase or independent clause.
  - a. a NOUN (or PRON.) + PARTICIPLE in the ABLATIVE case
  - b. a NOUN (or PRON.) + a NOUN (or PRONOUN) in the ABLATIVE case
2. The Ablative Absolute is not grammatically related to any other word in the main clause. (“Absolute” meaning “free from.”)
3. Note that the two words that make up the ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE must be in the ABLATIVE case and have the same number (*sing.* or *pl.*).

## TRANSLATION:

- The ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE can be used to show the situation of an action that has occurred
  1. prior (PERFECT PARTICIPLE) to the main clause
  2. at the same time (PRESENT PARTICIPLE) as the main clause
- The translation of the Ablative Absolute depends entirely upon context.

### SITUATION #1 • Noun + Noun

e.g., CAESARE DUCE      Literally, “with Caesar [as] the general”

### SITUATION #2 • Noun + Pres. Act. Participle

e.g., LUCIO LABORANTE      Literally, “with Lucius working”  
Loosely: Present Participle – supply “while” or “as”  
While Lucius was working . . .

### SITUATION #3 • Noun + Perf. Pass. Participle

e.g., ME CAPTO      Literally, “with me (having been) caught”  
Loosely: Perfect Participle – supply “after,” “since,” or “because”  
Since I was captured . . .

NB: Situation #3 is probably the most common; the Romans liked making ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE from the last principal parts of verbs.

## Examples:

1. aedificiō ardente, liberī matrēsq̄ e fenestrīs clamābant.

Literal:

Loose:

2. librīs lectīs, magister multās litterās scripsit.

Literal:

Loose:

# PRACTICING ABLATIVE ABSOLUTES

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these Latin phrases into English phrases.*

1. comite non reveniente .....
2. Cogidubnō laudatō .....
3. amicīs collectīs .....
4. puerīs pugnantibus .....
5. tē dormiente .....
6. mendace numquam accusatō .....
7. Caesare vehementer interfectō .....
8. militibus metū superatīs .....
9. osculīs bene acceptīs .....
10. illō facinore factō .....
11. hospitibus silentium frangentibus .....
12. arcū tandem exstructō .....
13. beneficiō nobis ostentō .....
14. carminibus suaviter cantatīs .....
15. Elizabetā reginā .....
16. me paucōs iocōs narrante .....
17. heredibus senem honorantibus .....
18. facibus ardentibus .....
19. gemitibus draconis auditīs .....
20. urbe annō decimō captā .....
21. testibus diu tacentibus .....
22. mille navibus in undīs visīs .....

23. matre patreque dolore lacrimantibus.....
24. iussīs legatōrum datīs .....
25. totō regnō gaudente .....

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these English phrases into Latin ablative absolutes.*

1. Since (our) son is pleasantly helping .....
2. When Romulus had been king .....
3. As the sailors are greedily drinking.....
4. While I was swiftly fleeing .....
5. After (her) life had been freely given.....
6. Because the speeches have been badly written.....
7. Once the report had been carefully read.....
8. As the danger is now approaching .....
9. Since (our) enemies are yielding .....
10. Because the book had been stolen .....

26. Lucindā meā uxore .....
27. vobis liberīs .....
28. cohortibus tacitē incedentibus .....
29. captivīs ē carcere liberatīs .....
30. salute populī servatā .....

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these Latin phrases into English phrases.*

1. amicā responsum piē exspectante .....
2. aurō argentōque feliciter inventīs .....
3. basiīs suaviter datīs .....
4. custode solō missō .....
5. effigiebus barbarē agentibus .....
6. exercitū tutē procedente .....
7. fidē plenē refectā .....
8. frigore hiemis sensō .....
9. gente atrociter interfectā .....
10. hospitibus semper excedentibus .....
11. iaculis ab inimicis captis .....
12. impedimento a servis lato .....
13. imperio a concilio dato .....
14. ingenio in puella reperto .....
15. initio in proelio acto .....
16. iudiciis post spectaculum auditis .....
17. labris oratoris (gen.sg.) clausis .....
18. liberīs non venientibus .....
19. lucro in exsilio quaesito .....
20. monstris a venefica lectis .....
21. nuntio ad stadium misso .....
22. odio ab beneficio domito .....
23. officiis cum gaudio actis .....
24. oppido propter decretum petito .....
25. ostiis tablini clausis .....
26. ostio sepulchri clauso .....
27. otio in harena spectaculoque acto .....
28. pomis de arboribus captis .....
29. pretio belli a senatoribus probato .....
30. principio historiae Romae narrato .....
31. proeliis a colonis visis .....
32. regno in silentio occupato .....
33. remedio a medico facto et a puella bibito .....
34. rostris praemiis belli ornatis (to decorate) .....
35. rupe longē iactā .....
36. sacrificio Mercurio facto .....
37. saxis ad inimicis iactis .....
38. scelere acriter profectō .....
39. sepulchro ab inimicis regni rapto .....

40. servīs corpora sepelientibus .....
41. silentio verbis poetarum fracto .....
42. spectaculis ab toto populo visis .....
43. suppliciiis a captivis latis .....
44. tecto novo post exitium templi facto.....
45. verbis populo dictis .....
46. vinculis a captivo solutis .....
47. vino a concilio bibito .....
48. vino cum studio bibito .....
49. vitiis Graecorum Romanis monstratis.....
50. vobis laborāre nolentibus .....

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these English phrases into Latin ablative absolutes.*

11. After the box was fiercely opened .....
12. Since (our) enemies are yielding .....
13. Because the book had been stolen .....
14. While Apollo was standing near you .....
15. Once war has been waged in Italy .....

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these Latin phrases into English phrases.*

1. ludō ob diluvium clausō .....
2. corde venenīs infectō .....
3. currū trans arvom volutō .....
4. Augustō imperatore .....
5. corpore regis in sepulchrum latō .....
6. vinculis circum captivum solutīs .....
7. mercatore extra Romam habitante .....
8. paucīs fabulīs mihi narratīs .....
9. pecuniā pro familiīs mortuōrum quaesitā .....
10. Elissabeatā Primā reginā .....

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these English phrases into Latin ablative absolutes.*

16. Since (our) son is pleasantly helping .....
17. When Romulus was king .....
18. As the sailors are greedily drinking.....
19. While I was swiftly fleeing .....
20. After (her) life had been freely given.....
21. Because the speeches were badly written.....
22. Once the report had been carefully read.....
23. As the danger is now approaching .....
24. Since the water was sweetly refreshing .....
25. Lord willing .....

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these phrases into English. (Other words have been added for a little extra zing.)*

1. poculō plenē expletō .....
2. castrīs nostrīs relictīs .....
3. illō infante appellātō .....
4. magnō bellō fortiter gestō .....
5. meō furore denique placatō .....
6. causā aliā creditā .....
7. venenō atrocī bibitō .....
8. totā classe rursū pulsā .....
9. hīs piratīs acriter punītīs .....
10. multā fame sensā .....
11. hōc itinere celeriter factō .....
12. voluntatibus tuīs cognītīs .....
13. corpore Caesaris tectō .....
14. parvīs oppidīs oppugnātīs .....
15. magnā urbe bene rectā .....
16. omnibus nuntiīs missīs .....
17. hāc gente discedere coactā .....
18. inopiā pecuniae inventā .....
19. malīs ducibus tradītīs .....
20. illīs custodibus monītīs .....

## Ablative Absolutes Worksheet

(with a little Marius vs. Sulla action thrown in just for fun)

**DIRECTIONS:** *Translate these Latin sentences into literal but fluid English.*

1. Romanīs ducibus Iugurtham non superantibus, Senatus Marium bellum in Africā perficere iussit.
2. Iugurthā auxiliō Sullae victō, Marius rursus ad Italiam processit ut Germanōs prohiberet.
3. Centurionibus militēs defendere urbem exercentibus, Marius “consul” identidem factus est.
4. Omnibus rebus paratīs, Marii legionēs tribūs Germanās in duobus magnīs proeliīs vastaverunt.
5. Romanā civitate pro aliīs gentibus negatā, socii Italiani contra Romam insurrexerunt.
6. Mariō Sullāque exercituum dissimilium ducibus, bellum sociale per Italiam gestum est.
7. Romā onera bellī ferente, Mithridates rex Ponti provinciam Asiam incurrebat.
8. Omnibus Romanīs in Asiā iussū regis interfectīs, Senatus Sullam Mithridatem domāre iussit.
9. Sullā in Graeciā et Asiā pugnante, Marius et Cinna et Popularēs potestatem pro se in Romā cēperunt.
10. Mariō tempore septimō consule, multī Optimatēs (amicī et socii Sullae) rapti et necati sunt.
11. Sullā ad Italiam rursus veniente, Marius ob dolorem acrem in capite suō cecidit.
12. Cinnā et ceteris Popularibus se pro impetū Sullae parantibus, Sulla et exercitus in Romam processit.
13. Inimicis Sullae proscriptis et interfectis, potestas Senatūs et Optimatum refecta est.
14. Civibus iram Dictatoris timentibus, Sulla tutē per viās in vesperō solus incedebat.
15. Corpore Sullae sepultō, haec verba in rupe scripta erant: “Nullus melior amicus, nullus peior inimicus.”

## GLOSSARY

exercēre • *to train, prepare*  
identidem • *adv. again and again*  
incedere • *to walk, march*  
incurrere • *to invade, rush in*  
insurgere • *to rise up, rebel*  
onus, oneris, n. • *burden, labor, work*

- parāre • *to prepare, ready*
- procedere • *to advance, march*
- prohibēre • *to stop, prevent, block*
- proscribere • *to proscribe, outlaw*
- rursum • *adv. back*
- septimus • *adj. seventh*
- superāre • *to overcome, defeat, succeed*
- timēre • *to fear*

## THE ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE: PRACTICE PROBLEMS

### Practice I:

*Translate the following Ablative Absolute phrases as literally as possible.*

1. fābulā narrātā \_\_\_\_\_
2. vestīmentīs indūtīs \_\_\_\_\_
3. verbīs dictīs \_\_\_\_\_
4. ignibus exstinctīs \_\_\_\_\_
5. rege loquente \_\_\_\_\_

### Practice II:

*Translate each of the following Ablative Absolute phrases literally and then loosely.*

1. ventīs tempestate agitātīs, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. litterīs sine morā scriptīs, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. cenā celeriter sumptā, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Practice III:

*Translate the following sentence into English.*

Librīs lectīs, magister multās litterās scripsit.



legō, legre, lēgī, lectus, *to read*

**Additional Practice:**

*Translate the following phrases and sentences into English. Which of the following are ablative absolute constructions?*

1. Amīcus auditus . . .
2. Servus captus . . .
3. Nautae captī . . .
4. Servō fugiente . . .
5. Liber lectus . . .
6. Captivī currentēs . . .
7. Hostibus oppressīs . . .
8. Perīculō remōtō . . .
9. Opere cōfectō, virī domum missī sunt.
10. Librō aliō scrīptō, auctor alium scrībere coepit.
11. Mediā nocte ad amicum litterās portantēs vērunt.
12. Servīs liberātīs, dominus suōs filiōs labōrāre in agrīs iussit.

13. Rēge crūdēlī interfectō, aliī civēs gaudiō clāmant, aliī timōre tacent.

14. Hīs ā imperatore dictīs, turba in amphiteatro clamāvit.

aliō . . . alium, *one/some . . . another/other*