

GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES

GERUNDS

A gerund is a noun made from a verb by adding "-ing." The gerund form of the verb "read" is "reading."

You can use a gerund as the subject, the complement, or the object of a sentence.

- o **Reading** helps you learn English. *subject of sentence*
- o Her favorite hobby is **reading**. *complement of sentence*
- o I enjoy **reading**. *object of sentence*

Gerunds can be made negative by adding "not."

- o He enjoys **not working**.
- o The best thing for your health is **not smoking**.

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INFINITIVES

Infinitives are the "to" form of the verb. The infinitive form of "learn" is "to learn."

You can also use an infinitive as the subject, the complement, or the object of a sentence.

- o **To learn** is important. *subject of sentence*
- o The most important thing is **to learn**. *complement of sentence*
- o He wants **to learn**. *object of sentence*

Infinitives can be made negative by adding "not."

- o I decided **not to go**.
- o The most important thing is **not to give up**.

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GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES (1)

Both gerunds and infinitives can be used as **the subject or the complement of a sentence**.

As subjects or complements, gerunds usually sound more like **normal, spoken English**, whereas infinitives sound more abstract.

Just remember that 90% of the time, **you will use a gerund as the subject or complement of a sentence**.

- o **Learning** is important. *normal subject*
- o **To learn** is important. *abstract subject - less common*
- o The most important thing is **learning**. *normal complement*
- o The most important thing is **to learn**. *abstract complement - less common*

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GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES (2)

As the **object of a sentence**, it is more difficult to choose between a gerund or an infinitive. In such situations, gerunds and infinitives are not normally interchangeable. Usually, the main verb in the sentence determines whether you use a gerund or an infinitive.

- o He **enjoys swimming**. "*Enjoy*" requires a gerund.
- o She **suggested going** to a movie.
- o Mary **keeps talking** about her problems.

Some verbs are followed by gerunds as objects. (List of Verbs Followed by Gerunds)

- o He wants to swim. "*Want*" requires an infinitive.
- o She **wants to go** to a movie.
- o Mary **needs to talk** about her problems.

Some verbs are followed by infinitives. (List of Verbs Followed by Infinitives)

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GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES (3)

1) We use gerunds (verb + ing):

- o After **certain verbs** - I **enjoy singing**
- o After prepositions - I drank a cup of coffee **before leaving**
- o As the subject or object of a sentence - **Swimming** is good exercise

2) We use 'to' + infinitive:

- o After **certain verbs** - We **decided to leave**
- o After many adjectives - It's **difficult to get up** early
- o To show purpose - I came to London **to study** English

3) We use the bare infinitive (the infinitive without 'to'):

- o After **modal verbs** - I can **meet** you at six o'clock
- o After 'let', 'make' and (sometimes) 'help' - The teacher let us **leave** early
- o After some verbs of perception (see, watch, hear, notice, feel, sense) - I watched her **walk** away
- o After expressions with 'why' - why **go** out the night before an exam?

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Verbs Followed by an Infinitive

She agreed to speak before the game.

| | | | | |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| agree | consent | have | offer | shoot |
| aim | continue | hesitate | ought | start |
| appear | dare | hope | plan | stop |
| arrange | decide | hurry | prefer | strive |
| ask | deserve | intend | prepare | swear |
| attempt | detest | leap | proceed | threaten |
| be able | dislike | leave | promise | try |
| beg | expect | like | propose | use |
| begin | fail | long | refuse | wait |
| care | forget | love | remember | want |
| choose | get | mean | say | wish |
| condescend | happen | neglect | | |

Verbs Followed by an Object and an Infinitive

Everyone expected her to win.

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|
| advise | choose | have | love | remind |
| allow | command | hire | motivate | require |
| ask | dare | instruct | order | send |
| beg | direct | invite | pay | teach |
| bring | encourage | lead | permit | tell |
| build | expect | leave | persuade | urge |
| buy | forbid | let | prepare | want |
| challenge | force | like | promise | warn |

Note: Some of these verbs are included in the list above and may be used without an object.

Verbs Followed by a Gerund

They enjoyed working on the boat.

| | | | | |
|------------|---------|-------------|----------|--------------|
| admit | delay | finish | permit | resist |
| advise | deny | forbid | postpone | resume |
| appreciate | detest | get through | practice | risk |
| avoid | dislike | have | quit | spend (time) |
| can't help | enjoy | imagine | recall | suggest |
| complete | escape | mind | report | tolerate |
| consider | excuse | miss | resent | waste (time) |

Verbs Followed by a Preposition and a Gerund

We concentrated on doing well.

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| admit to | depend on | plan on |
| approve of | disapprove of | prevent (someone) from |
| argue about | discourage from | refrain from |
| believe in | dream about | succeed in |
| care about | feel like | talk about |
| complain about | forget about | think about |
| concentrate on | insist on | worry about |
| confess to | object to | |

List of common verbs and phrases that are followed by a gerund

admit • advise • avoid • be used to • can't help • can't stand • consider • deny • discuss • dislike • end up • enjoy • feel like • finish • forget • get used to • give up • go on • have difficulty • have problems • have trouble • imagine • it's no use • it's worthwhile • keep • look forward to • mention • mind • miss • recommend • remember • quit • spend time • stop • suggest • understand • waste time • work at

List of common verbs that can be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive without causing a change in meaning

begin • continue • hate • intend • like • love • prefer • start

List of common verbs that can be followed by a gerund or infinitive but with a change in meaning

forget • remember • stop

List of common verbs are followed by an infinitive

afford • agree • appear • arrange • ask • care • decide • demand • expect • fail • forget • hope • learn • manage • mean • offer • plan • prepare • pretend • promise • refuse • remember • seem • stop • volunteer • wait • want • wish

List of common verbs that are directly followed by a noun or pronoun and then by an infinitive

advise • allow • ask • cause • challenge • command • convince • expect • forbid • force • hire • instruct • invite • order • pay • permit • program • remind • teach • tell • urge • want • warn

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Gerunds and infinitives

| VERB + VERB+-ING | VERB + INFINITIVE | VERB + OBJECT + INFINITIVE | VERB+ BOTH FORMS |
|---|---|---|--|
| adore can't bear can't stand detest don't mind enjoy dislike finish look forward to love hate like | agree choose decide expect forget manage promise refuse seem try want would hate would like would love would prefer | advise allow help invite remind tell want would like | begin continue forget remember start stop try (sometimes the meaning changes) |

1) I don't fancy (go) out tonight.

2) She avoided (tell) him about her plans.

3) I would like (come) to the party with you.

4) He enjoys (have) a bath in the evening.

5) She kept (talk) during the film.

6) I am learning (speak) English.

7) Do you mind (give) me a hand?

8) She helped me (carry) my suitcases.

9) I've finished (cook) - come and eat!

10) He decided (study) biology.

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11) I dislike (wait).

12) He asked (come) with us.

13) I promise (help) you tomorrow.

14) We discussed (go) to the cinema, but in the end we stayed at home.

15) She agreed (bring) the pudding to the dinner.

16) I don't recommend (take) the bus - it takes forever!

17) We hope (visit) Amsterdam next month.

18) She suggested (go) to the museum.

19) They plan (start) college in the autumn.

20) I don't want (leave) yet.

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1) She delayed (get) out of bed.

2) He demanded (speak) to the manager.

3) I offered (help).

4) I miss (go) to the beach.

5) We postponed (do).

6) I'd hate (arrive) too late.

7) She admitted (steal) the money.

8) I chose (work) here.

9) She waited (buy) a drink.

10) I really appreciate (be) on holiday.

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- 11) I couldn't help (laugh).
- 12) It seems (be) raining.
- 13) I considered (move) to Spain.
- 14) They practised (speak).
- 15) Finally I managed (finish) the work.
- 16) I really can't stand (wait) for the bus.
- 17) Unfortunately, we can't afford (buy) a new car this year.
- 18) She risked (be) late.
- 19) I'd love (come) with you.
- 20) I prepared (go) on holiday.

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- 1) It appears (be) raining.
- 2) We intend (go) to the countryside this weekend.
- 3) I pretended (be) sick so I didn't have to go to work.
- 4) Can you imagine (live) without TV?
- 5) They tolerate (smoke) but they prefer people not to.
- 6) I anticipate (arrive) on Tuesday.
- 7) A wedding involves (negotiate) with everyone in the family.
- 8) He denies (steal) the money.
- 9) He claims (be) a millionaire but I don't believe him.
- 10) I expect (be) there about seven.

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- 11) Julia reported (see) the boys to the police.
- 12) It tends (rain) a lot in Scotland.
- 13) Do you recall (meet) her at the party last week?
- 14) She mentioned (go) to the cinema, but I don't know what she decided to do in the end.
- 15) The teenager refused (go) on holiday with his parents.
- 16) I understand (be) late once or twice, but every day is too much!
- 17) I would prefer you (come) early if you can.
- 18) That criminal deserves (get) a long sentence.
- 19) She completed (paint) her flat.
- 20) We arranged (meet) at four but at four thirty she still hadn't arrived.

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REMEMBER

Remember + gerund

This is when you remember something that has happened in the past. You have a memory of it.

- I remember going to the beach when I was a child. (= I have a memory of going to the beach).
- He remembers closing the door. (= He has a memory of closing the door).

Remember + to + infinitive

This is when you think of something that you need to do.

- She remembered to send a card to her grandmother.
- I remembered to buy milk. (= I was walking home I bought some).

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FORGET

Forget + gerund

It's when you forget about a memory, something that you've done in the past.

- Have we really studied this topic before? I forget reading about it.
- I told my brother that we'd spent Christmas at Granny's house in 1985, but he'd forgotten going there.

Forget + to + infinitive

It's when you want to do something, but you forget about it.

- I forgot to call my mother. (= I wanted to call my mother, but I forgot.)
- She forgot to bring his book back.

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TRY (1)

Try + gerund

This is when you do something as an experiment. The thing you do is not difficult, but you want to see if doing it will have the result that you want.

- I wanted to stop smoking, so I tried using the electronic cigarette.
- She tried giving up chocolate, but it didn't help her lose weight.

Try + to + infinitive

This is when the thing you do itself is difficult and you don't succeed in doing it.

- I tried to lift the suitcase, but it was too heavy.
- She tried to catch the bus, but she couldn't run fast enough.

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TRY (2)

Look at the difference!

- It was too hot in the room. I tried opening the window. It didn't help though, because it was very hot outside too.
- I tried to open the window, but I couldn't because it was stuck.

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STOP (1)

Stop + gerund

When we stop doing something it means the verb in the gerund is the thing that we stop.

- I stopped working when I was expecting a baby.
- My grandmother stopped driving when she was 85.

Stop + to + infinitive

In this case, we stop something else in order to do the verb in the infinitive.

- I stopped to eat lunch.
- She was shopping and she stopped to get a cup of coffee.

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STOP (2)

Look at the difference!

- I stopped smoking. (I gave up cigarettes OR I threw away my cigarette at that moment).
- I stopped to smoke. (I stopped doing something else because I wanted to have a cigarette).

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FOR EXPLANATIONS AND LISTS OF VERBS THAT GO WITH GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES

- <http://www.englishpage.com/gerunds/>
- <http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/gerunds-and-infinitives.html>
- <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/verblist.htm>
- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/english-as-a-second-language/gerunds>
- <http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/infinitive-gerund>

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