



GERUNDS VS. INFINITIVES

GRAMMAR LESSON



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Shakespeare once asked, "to be or not to be? This is exactly the question that we will be answering in today's lesson. This lesson will teach you how to use verbs as nouns. A noun is typically the subject or object of a sentence. However, in this lesson, we will look at how we change verbs into verbal nouns called gerunds and infinitives; and how we can effectively use these two grammar tools.

GERUNDS

A gerund is a verb that ends in "-ing" that acts as a noun.

For example, we can take the base verb "walk" and add -ing to make "walking." Walking is our gerund.

If we make a sentence with this gerund, we can use walking as our subject.

Walking always puts me in a good mood.



Keep in mind that not every verb that ends in -ing is a gerund!

The progressive tenses use a be verb (am, is, are, etc.) + the present participle, which adds "-ing" to a base verb.

How do we know if it is a gerund or a present participle?



Gerunds always act as **nouns** or noun phrases, ~~never as verbs!~~



EXAMPLES

GERUND

Jenny enjoys **walking**.

Walking is acting as the object of this sentence, what does Jenny enjoy? **Walking**.

PRESENT PARTICIPLE

Jenny is walking right now

What is Jenny doing? She is walking. Walking is acting as our verb.

INFINITIVES

We also use infinitives to create verbal nouns. An infinitive is the simplest form of a verb. To make an infinitive, we place "to" in front of the verb. Infinitives are sometimes called "to infinitives."

Let's take our verb "walk." To create an infinitive, we add "to" and we now have **to walk**.

If we use the infinitive **to walk** in a sentence, it would look like this:

She expected **to walk** right in.

GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES AS OBJECTS OF A SENTENCE

GERUNDS

The basic form of a sentence in English is:

subject + verb + object

When a **gerund** comes before the main verb in a sentence, it will act as the subject of that sentence. Like our example earlier, **walking always puts me in a good mood**. **Walking** is the subject of the sentence. If we replace "walking" with a different noun, like a movie title, **Harry Potter always puts me in a good mood**. We can see that a gerund can function perfectly as a subject.



EXAMPLES

Playing the guitar was always his favourite hobby.

Baking is a great way to relieve stress.

Reading helps me keep my mind sharp.

Cheating will never get you anywhere in life!

Gerunds are often part of nouns phrases as we can see in the first example; **playing the guitar was always his favourite hobby**. **Playing the guitar** is our noun phrase.

INFINITIVES

Using an **infinitive** as a subject is a bit different. Using an infinitive often sounds quite formal. We typically only use infinitives as a subject in written English.

Swimming gives me great pleasure.	the use of a gerund sounds natural
To swim gives me great pleasure.	the use of an infinitive sounds old fashioned and posh

You can use an infinitive as a subject when giving directions, explanation, quoting someone, or a dictionary definition. For example,

To cook properly, place the fish skin side down.

To get there, take the bus to the highstreet and then cross the road.

GERUND OR AN INFINITIVE AFTER CERTAIN VERBS

Certain verbs allow the use of a **gerund** or an **infinitive**. Please see the examples on the following page.



Gerund	Infinitive
She hates sleeping late.	She hates to sleep late.
We prefer eating at home.	We prefer to eat at home.
They started working on the project at school.	They started to work on the project at school.
The car needs cleaning .	The car needs to be cleaned .
Gary tried working from home, but didn't like it.	Gary tried to work from home, but didn't like it.

WHEN AND HOW TO USE GERUNDS

There are certain verbs that are only followed by gerunds. The gerunds in these sentences function as a direct object.

Verb	Example
Consider	He <u>considered</u> moving to Spain last year.
Deny	Jack <u>denied</u> cheating on his test.
Enjoy	Wendy <u>enjoys</u> watching movies at the weekends.
Imagine	We <u>imagined</u> waking up to a beautiful sunrise.
Suggest	Dan <u>suggested</u> bringing home a rescue dog.

We can also use the verb “go” + a gerund when talking about hobbies or other recreational activities.

<u>Go</u> hiking	<u>Going</u> swimming	<u>Went</u> sightseeing
<u>Go</u> fishing	<u>Going</u> shopping	<u>Went</u> snorkelling



GERUNDS AS THE OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION

Another common use of gerunds is to use them after prepositions. Let's look at some common prepositions and how we can use them with a gerund.

Preposition	Example
before	Even before completing university, he already had many job offers.
by	By going to bed early, I am ready for my morning runs.
since	I have been thinking of him nonstop since meeting him.
except	He hates all forms of creative expression except writing .
without	We decided to take a trip without planning .
after	After recovering from his injury, Will retired from rugby.

WHEN AND HOW TO USE INFINITIVES

Just like gerunds, infinitives follow certain verbs. The infinitives will function as the direct objects of these sentences. Let's look at a few examples:

Verb	Example
Agree	We agreed to never speak to each other again.
Demand	They are demanding to change their flight.
Manage	He managed to sell his house after only three days on the market.
Plan	She is planning to quit her job after she returns from holiday.
Want	Ben wants to travel to London by train.

INFINITIVES AFTER VERB + OBJECT COMBINATIONS

There are also instances when we use an object after a verb. We will use an infinitive after these objects. The sentence pattern will be:

Subject + verb + object + infinitive

They asked us **to help** with washing up.

She told him **to bring** home dog food.

He encouraged her **to follow** her dreams.

INFINITIVES AFTER ADJECTIVES

We can also use infinitives after adjectives. Let's take a look at some examples:

He was happy **to include** her in the new project at work.

They were sad **to leave** the island at the end of the holiday.

We are pleased **to welcome** you into our home!

QUICK TIP!

If you are still unsure of when to use a gerund or infinitive, there is a little trick that can help you.

Just keep in mind that it doesn't work in EVERY situation.

When to use an infinitive:

If the first action leads to the second action, we use an infinitive.

He wants to eat pizza for dinner.

When to use a gerund:

If the first action is happening at the same time as the second action, we use a gerund.

He likes eating pizza for dinner.



Activity

Choose the correct verbal noun for each sentence.

1) Rachel forgot _____ out the rubbish out last night.

- a. to take
- b. to taking out
- c. taking

2) She disliked _____ in school, but now she loves it!

- a. to reads
- b. reading
- c. to reading

3) He avoided _____ to the doctor for months.

- a. go
- b. going
- c. to go

4) We pretended _____ the food when my mum walked in the room.

- a. to likes
- b. to liking
- c. to like

5) I finished _____ that book yesterday. Do you have any others you recommend?

- a. to read
- b. to reading
- c. reading

6) You started _____ Italian last month? That is amazing!

- a. to learning
- b. learning
- c. to learns

7) We enjoyed _____ you last week. Let's do it again soon!

- a. to see
- b. seeing
- c. to seeing

8) He hates _____ out of work.

- a) calling
- b) to calling
- c. calls

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The End