Using Gerunds and Infinitives

Gerunds and infinitives are verb forms that can take the place of a noun in a sentence.

FOLLOWING A VERB (gerund or infinitive)

Both gerunds and infinitives can replace a noun as the object of a verb. Whether you use a gerund or an infinitive depends on the main verb in the sentence. Consult the lists below to find out which form to use following which verbs.

• I expect to have the report done by Friday. [INFINITIVE]

• I **anticipate** having the report done by Friday. [GERUND]

SOME COMMON VERBS FOLLOWED BY A GERUND (note: phrasal verbs, marked here with *, always fall into this category):

ACKNOWLEDGE She acknowledged receiving assistance.

* ACCUSE OF He was accused of smugaling contraband goods.

ADMIT They admitted falsifying the data.

ADVISE The author advises undertaking further study.

ALLOW They don't allow smoking here. Note that when an object is introduced an infinitive is used

instead of a gerund: They allowed <u>us</u> to leave early.

ANTICIPATE He anticipates having trouble with his supervisor.

APPRECIATE I appreciated having a chance to read your draft.

AVOID He avoided answering my question.

COMPLETE I finally completed writing my thesis.

CONSIDER They will consider granting you money.

DEFER She deferred writing her report.

DELAY We delayed reporting the results until we were sure.

DENY They denied copying the information.

DISCUSS They discussed running the experiments again.

ENTAIL This review procedure entails repeating the test.

FANCY Fancy meeting you here!

FINISH She finished writing the letter.

GO I go swimming.

IMAGINE He imagines meeting her one day.

* INSIST ON He insisted on proofreading the article again.

INVOLVE This procedure involves testing each sample twice.

JUSTIFY My results justify taking drastic action.

* LOOK AFTER He will look after mailing the tickets.

KEEP He keeps complaining about his girlfriend.

MENTION The author mentions seeing this event.

MIND Would you mind helping me?

MISS He misses talking to her.

PERMIT They don't permit smoking here. Note that, like allow, when an object is introduced an infinitive is

used instead of a gerund: They permitted <u>us</u> to leave early.

* PLAN ON They had planned on attending the conference. POSTPONE The committee has postponed writing the report.

PRACTICE She practiced painting.

RECALL I cannot recall getting those results before.

RESENT He resented spending so much time on the project.

RECOMMEND She recommends reading Marx.
REJECT He rejected working with them.

RESIST The writer resists giving any easy answers.

RISK She risks losing her viewing time.

SANCTION They will not sanction copying without permission.

SUGGEST I suggest repeating the experiment.

* TAKE CARE OF He will take care of sending it to you.

TOLERATE She can't tolerate waiting for results.

WASTE (time/money) Don't waste my time complaining.

SOME COMMON VERBS FOLLOWED BY AN INFINITIVE:

[Page 2]

AFFORD We cannot afford to hesitate.

AGREE The professors agreed to disagree.

AIM The government aims to reduce illiteracy rates.

APPEAR The results appear to support your theory.

ARRANGE They had arranged to meet at noon.

ATTEMPT He attempted to join them.

BEG I beg to differ with you.

CARE Would you care to respond?
CHOOSE He chose to stay at home.
CLAIM She claims to have new data.
CONSENT Will you consent to run for office?
DECIDE When did he decide to withdraw?

DEMAND I demand to see the results of the survey.

DESERVE She deserves to have a fair hearina.

EXPECT The committee expects to decide by tomorrow.

FAIL The trial failed to confirm his hypothesis.

HAPPEN They happened to be at the theatre when we met them.

HELP She helped me to do the exercise. Note, help can also be followed by a bare infinitive:

She helped me do the exercise.

HESITATE

I hesitate to try the experiment again.

HOPE

What do you hope to accomplish?

INTEND

She intends to write an autobiography.

LEARN

We have learned to proceed with caution.

MANAGE

How did she manage to find the solution?

NEED Do we need to find new subjects?

NEGLECT The author neglected to provide an index.

OFFER We could offer to change the time of the meeting.

PLAN They had planned to attend the conference.

PREPARE He was not prepared to give a lecture.
PRETEND I do not pretend to know the answer.

PROCEED He proceeded to show us how to use the machine.

PROMISE They promise to demonstrate the new equipment.

REFUSE She refused to cooperate any longer.

SEEM Something seems to be wrong with your design.
STRUGGLE We struggled to understand her point of view.

SWEAR He swears to tell the truth.

THREATEN The team threatened to stop their research.

VOLUNTEER Will you volunteer to lead the group?
WAIT We could not wait to hear the outcome.

WANT She did not want to go first. WISH Do you wish to participate?

WOULD HATE He would hate to lose.

WOULD LIKE He would like to drink a cup of tea.

WOULD LOVE I would love to meet you.

Some verbs are followed by a pronoun or noun referring to a person, and then an infinitive. Gerunds cannot be used in this position.

SOME COMMON VERBS FOLLOWED BY AN INDIRECT OBJECT PLUS AN INFINITIVE:

ASK I must ask you to reconsider your statement.

BEG They begged her to stay for another term.

CAUSE His findings caused him to investigate further.

CHALLENGE Wilkins challenged Watson to continue the research.

CONVINCE Can we convince them to fund our study?

ENCOURAGE She encouraged him to look beyond the obvious.

EXPECT They did not expect us to win an award.

FORBID The author forbade me to change his wording.
FORCE They cannot force her to reveal her sources.

HIRE Did the department hire him to teach the new course?

INSTRUCT I will instruct her to prepare a handout.

INVITE We invite you to attend the ceremony.

NEED They need her to show the slides.

ORDER He ordered the group to leave the building.
PERSUADE Can we persuade you to contribute again?
REMIND Please remind him to check the references.
REQUIRE They will require you to submit an outline.

TEACH We should teach them to follow standard procedures.

TELL Did she tell him to make three copies?

URGE I urge you to read the instructions before you begin.

WANT I do not want you to have an accident.

WARN Why didn't they warn me to turn down the heat?

FOLLOWING A PREPOSITION (gerund only):

Gerunds can follow a preposition; infinitives cannot.

- Can you touch your toes without bending your knees?
- He was fined for driving over the speed limit.
- She got the money by selling the car.
- A corkscrew is a tool for <u>taking</u> corks out of bottles.
- I am interested in collecting stamps.
- After playing football I drank some orange juice.
- Let's go for a walk instead of playing video games.
- Are you any good **at tying** knots?

AFTER SOME EXPRESSIONS (gerund only):

It's no use ... / It's no good ... / There's no point in ... / I can't help... / I don't mind... / I can't stand/bear...

• It's no use <u>convincing</u> him to meet her.

AFTER "TOO" & "ENOUGH": TOO DIFFICULT / EASY ENOUGH (infinitive only):

- It's too difficult to convince him to be helpful.
- But it's easy **enough** to fool him to get what you want.

VERBS THAT CAN BE FOLLOWED BY BOTH INFINITIVE (to...) AND GERUND (-ing):

...WITH NO DIFFERENCE IN MEANING

LIKE/ LOVE/ DO NOT LIKE/ HATE

I love getting up early. (I love this experience.)
I love to get up early. (It's a habit I love.)

BEGIN/START

The girls left the room when the boys started to talk about football. The girls left the room when the boys started talking about football.

NOTE: you cannot say 'they were starting talking about' the correct form is: 'they started to talk about'. When start/begin is used in a progressive/continuous tense, 'starting/beginning' is followed by 'to'

...WITH A DIFFERENCE IN MEANING

REMEMBER

I never remember to switch off the lights before I leave home.

(I don't switch them off, because I forget to do it.)

I can't remember switching off the lights.

(Maybe I switched them off, maybe I didn't. I can't remember if I did it or not.)

FORGET

Don't forget to post this letter.

(I would like you to remember and go to the post office to post it. It's important that you do it.)

I'll never forget seeing her for the first time.

(Seeing her was such a significant experience in my life that I cannot forget it.)

GO ON (CONTINUE)

I wasn't listening to her, but she just went on talking about her new book.

(She didn't stop talking.)

Then she went on to talk about her new yacht.

(She stopped talking about the book & started talking about the yacht. She started doing something new.)

STOP

Tom and Barbara stopped talking to each other.

(They don't talk to each other anymore. Maybe they had an argument and don't want to talk to each other ever again.)

Tom and Barbara stopped to talk to each other.

(They were busy doing something, for example, working. Then they stopped working in order to talk to each other. Why did they stop working? To talk to each other.)

REGRET

I regret being rude to my parents.

(I was rude to them in the past and now I feel ashamed.)

I regret to inform you that your flight has been cancelled.

FORMULAIC...most often this phrase only (You are sorry to be giving bad news to somebody.)

TRY

I can't lose weight.

Have you tried eating less?

(Have you tried this method? When you try doing something, you make an experiment.)

I tried to talk to him about it, but I couldn't.

(I made an effort to do something difficult.)

Read "Ali's Story" below, and circle the correct answer for the words in **bold** [1 - 34]. Decide whether you need to use a gerund, infinitive or both forms of the word.

Ali's Story

Booking a School

Ali decided that he wanted [1] to study / studying abroad. In order [2] to achieve / achieving his goal, he had many things that he had [3] to do / doing. Firstly, he needed [4] to improve / improving his English so he could take the IELTS test. Unfortunately, Ali disliked [5] to learn / learning English so this would not be much fun. His friend recommended [6] to attend / attending a school close to his house. Ali went to look and from what he could see it seemed [7] to be / being a good school. He didn't delay [8] to register / registering for a course. He managed [9] to get / getting a good price for the course because they had a special offer on. This was good because he could not afford [10] to pay / paying too much.

Studyina

He had never read much in his life and knew he was weak in this area, so he practiced [11] to read / reading as much as he could. He hated [12] to write / writing in English too as his grammar was quite weak so he also planned [13] to practice / practicing writing as many essays as possible. His teachers agreed [14] to check / checking these for him. As it turned out, Ali actually really enjoyed [15] to study / studying English. The other students on the course didn't hesitate [16] to help / helping Ali and the teachers always offered [17] to assist / assisting him if he was stuck. He kept up his studying for a number of months because he wouldn't risk [18] to sit / sitting the exam until he was ready.

Taking the Test

Then came the time for Ali [19] to take / taking the test. He couldn't stop [20] to worry / worrying before the test. His teacher had recommended [21] to do / doing Task 2 first in the writing so he followed those instructions. He finished [22] to write / writing his Task 2 after exactly 40 minutes and then went on to Task 1. The speaking test seemed [23] to go / going quite well even though he was nervous. He could recall [24] to ask / asking the examiner at the end how well he had done but she refused [25] to tell /telling him. Then came the time for his result. He had expected [26] to get / getting a band 5.5 but he was surprised [27] to find / finding out that he had been given a band 6.

The Result

So Ali could now go and study abroad. Although he was happy, unfortunately this meant [28] to leave / leaving his wife and children for a year. He considered [29] to take / taking them with him but it would be too expensive. He knew he would miss [30] to see / seeing them every day but his parents offered [31] to take / taking care of them and promised [32] to make / making sure they were safe. Ali did love [33] to travel / traveling though, so he knew he would enjoy the trip. He began [34] to prepare / preparing for his trip immediately.

For each of the sentences below (1 - 15), complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence(s), using the word given for that sentence. **DO NOT CHANGE** the word given. You must use between two (2) and five (5) words, including the word given.

(1) It's really important that you pay the bill today.	REMEMBER
You must REMEMBER TO PAY the bill today.	
(2) I think it would be a good idea if you joined the beginner's class. SUGGEST JOINING the beginner's class.	SUGGEST
(3) Meeting John in town was really surprising. DIDNT EXPECT TO MEET John in town.	EXPECT
(4) In the future she became a successful business woman. She WENT ON TO BECOME a successful business woman.	WENT
(5) I'll help you with your homework. I DONT MIND HELPING you with your homework.	MIND
(6) Don't bother to apply for the job. There IS NO POINT APPLYING for the job.	POINT
(7) Our teachers never let us leave the school. We were not ALLOWED TO LEAVE the school.	ALLOWED
(8) I visited Paris with the idea of improving my French. I visited Paris IN ORDER TO IMPROVE my French.	ORDER
(9) The doctor told me to stop smoking. The doctor told me	GIVE
(10) I have no memory of my first day at school. DONT REMEMBER GOING to school on my first day.	REMEMBER
(11) Were you successful in passing the exam? Did YOU MANAGE TO PASS the exam?	MANAGE
(12) She has to do a lot of different things in the new job. Her new job INVOLVES DOING A LOT OF different things.	INVOLVES
(13) I didn't want to say that. I'm really sorry. REGRET SAYING that. I'm really sorry.	REGRET
(14) Joan was in favour of visiting the museum. Joan thought it would be <u>A GOOD IDEA TO GO</u> to the	IDEA museum.
(15) Did you succeed in getting in contact with the boss today? Did you MANAGE TO GET IN TOUCH with the boss today?	MANAGE

SOURCE: https://www.fluentu.com/blog/english/gerunds-and-infinitives/

RULE 1: Gerunds can be used as a subject of a sentence.

Take a look at some examples:

Walking is good for your health.

Making friends has become more difficult since I moved to a new city.

Becoming a millionaire is a dream of many young people today.

Here, the gerunds (**in bold**) are part of the sentence subjects ("walking," "making friends," "becoming a millionaire"). All three sentences sound like normal, everyday English.

Now read these two sentences:

"To be or not to be—that is the question."

"To mourn a mischief that is past and gone is the next way to draw new mischief on."

(Both sentences are quotes from William Shakespeare's works.)

They sound formal, don't they? They are poetic, aren't they? Shakespeare is one of the greatest authors of all time, but his English is famously difficult to understand. And that's because it is literature. It is formal and it is art.

In those two quotes, the infinitives "to be" and "to mourn" are used as the sentence subjects.

So, it is possible to use both infinitives and gerunds as subjects, but gerunds are much more commonly used as subjects. Just pay attention to how the choice reflects on the tone and meaning of your sentences.

RULE 2: Both gerunds and infinitives can be used as objects of a sentence.

You may say:

"I enjoy drawing."

You may also say:

"Yesterday, I decided to draw."

Both sentences are correct, but one has an infinitive as the object and the other has a gerund as the object.

What is the difference?

It's the verbs that precede (come before) the object! Some verbs require a gerund and some will require an infinitive. In the above examples, we can see that the formula is "enjoy" + [gerund] and "decide" + [infinitive].

With practice, you will be able to remember which one is which.

Here are a few examples of verbs that need to be followed by an infinitive:

agree: I agreed to go to a party with my friend.

decide: The president decided not to participate in the discussions.

deserve: Everyone deserves to be respected.

expect: I expect to know my exam grade by tomorrow. **hope**: We were hoping to avoid traffic by leaving early.

learn: He learned not to trust anyone. **need:** She needs to learn how to cook.

offer: I offered to help my brother with homework. **plan:** We are planning to watch a movie tonight.

promise: My friend promised to find the time to help me move.

seem: We seem to be lost.

wait: I cannot wait to see my family. want: I don't want to go to bed yet.

There are lots of verbs that require an infinitive after. You will learn them naturally, as you progress in your English studies.

admit: They admitted changing the schedule.

advise: I advise proceeding (moving forward) with caution.

avoid: She avoided looking me in the eye.

consider (think about): I considered staying silent, but I had to tell her.

deny: I denied knowing about his secret. **involve:** The course involved writing three tests.

mention (say something): She mentioned seeing my brother at a baseball game.

recommend: I recommend practicing gerunds and infinitives.

risk: Don't risk losing your job!

suggest: I suggest reading more English short stories.

RULE 3: Infinitives should be used after many adjectives.

Here are three sample sentences that will help to illustrate this rule:

It is not easy **to graduate** from university.

It is <u>necessary</u> to speak English to work in a hotel.

It is wonderful to have close friends.

When you describe something with an adjective (underlined in the examples above), an infinitive should follow (**in bold**). Using gerunds here would be incorrect.

But remember! If you want to make that object into a subject (see RULE 1), a gerund should be used:

Graduating from university is not easy.

Speaking English is necessary to work in a hotel.

Having close friends is wonderful.

How else do you know if an adjective should be followed by an infinitive? The construct "too + [adjective]" is another way to tell!

For example:

This dress is too big to wear.

This car is <u>too expensive</u> to buy.

And the same is true about "[adjective] + enough":

My child is not <u>tall enough</u> to ride this rollercoaster.

The course was <u>detailed</u> <u>enough</u> to widen his knowledge base.

This rule is <u>useful</u> <u>enough</u> **to understand** the usage of infinitives!

RULE 4: Only infinitives are used after certain verbs followed by nouns or pronouns referring to a person.

"We asked her not to go."

In this sentence, "we" is the subject, "asked" is the verb and "her" is the objective form of the pronoun "she." You must use an infinitive ("to go"), never a gerund, after certain verbs followed by nouns or pronouns referring to people.

To remember this rule, you will have to study verbs that take an object and an infinitive in this context.

Start with these examples. The objects (nouns and pronouns) are underlined. Notice how the underlined objects are all followed by infinitives.

ask: Can I ask <u>you</u> **to help** me with something?

expect: I never expected <u>him</u> to become famous.

hire (give a job to someone): Did the company hire you just to sit in your office?

invite: I invited a <u>friend</u> to attend the ceremony.

order: She ordered <u>the child</u> to stay at home.

remind: Please remind <u>me</u> to wash the dishes.

require: The test required <u>him</u> to concentrate fully.

teach: That will teach <u>you</u> to follow the rules!

tell: Who told you to come here?

urge: They urged <u>me</u> to continue my research.

warn: I am warning you not to do this!

Consider this sentence:

I talked him out of taking that job.

Here, the gerund "taking" follows the preposition "of."

Prepositions can follow any word, be it a noun, a pronoun, a verb or an adjective. In the examples below, the prepositions are underlined, followed by the gerunds in bold.

A preposition that follows a noun:

Novels <u>about</u> **growing up** are popular among teenagers. I have an interest <u>in</u> **becoming** a painter.

A preposition that follows a pronoun:

I forgive you for **not telling** the truth.

A preposition that follows a verb:

She is thinking <u>about</u> **trying** martial arts. He looks forward <u>to</u> **meeting** his cousins.

A preposition that follows an adjective:

I am wary <u>of</u> **going** alone. My mom is scared <u>of</u> **flying**.

There is one exception. Thankfully, it should be easy to remember!

THE EXCEPTION

"But" is a short word that connects two clauses of a sentence together. It is called a conjunction. Sometimes, "but" can also play a role of a preposition. When "but" is used as a preposition, it is the same in meaning as "except."

If "but" or "except" are used like this, they need to be followed by an infinitive:

I had no choice <u>but</u> to follow her.

(I had to follow her.)

Mary made no stops on the way except to get gas.

(Mary only stopped to get gas.)

There is nothing left for me to do but to collect my money and go.

(I only have to collect my money and go.)

You may not see "but" and "except" used this way often. Just follow the rule of gerunds after prepositions, and you will get it right most of the time!

Gerunds and infinitives may be confusing, but they make your English speech more varied and colorful. It is very useful to study them and practice using them correctly. The more you notice gerunds and infinitives in your study of the English language, the easier it will get!

Sometimes you will be unsure if you need to use an infinitive or a gerund in a sentence. In this situation, try changing the sentence and saying what you want to say in a different way.

- a) ... most sprays do not actually kill all of the fruit flies
- b) ...buying sprays can get expensive if you need to use a lot of them
- c) ...the sprays take too much time to work
- d) ...it can be dangerous to use them in your kitchen
- (4) Based on the information in the penultimate (next-to-last) paragraph, we can understand that the author thinks that.
 - a) ... some people do not mind having fruit flies in their house
 - b) ...some people do not like killing insects
 - c) ...fruit flies do not like vinegar
 - d) ...making a fruit fly trap can be difficult

Unlike many verbs, suggest and recommend are not followed by an object + infinitive. In general, use either a gerund (Verb+ING) or a clause with **that**. The pattern would be **that + subject + base verb**:

- Jack's wife recommended drinking tea.
- The personal trainer **suggested using** the treadmill for cardio training.
- The doctor suggested that Jack stop drinking coffee. Not: ...suggested him to stop
- The teacher **recommended that we study** this list of vocabulary for the exam.

When pronouns are used in the **that clause**, always use the subject pronoun before the base verb. The base verb is generally used regardless of the subject of the **that clause** (even with he, she, or it):

- She **suggested that I go** to that store.
- I **suggested that she go** to that store. Not: I suggested that she goes...
- Jack **recommended that he go** to that store. Not: Isuagested that he goes...
- The sofa? The decorator recommended that it go in front of the window. Not: ...recommended that it goes...

The word **that** can often be omitted after **suggest** and **recommend**, but mainly in spoken English:

- The doctor **suggested Jack stop** drinking coffee.
- The teacher **recommended we study** this list of vocabulary for the exam.
- Jack recommended he go to that store.

When making suggestions, it is generally NOT necessary to use the word should:

- I **suggest you stop** drinking so much coffee. Not: I suggest you should stop...
- The doctor **suggested that Jack stop** drinking coffee. Not: ...suggested that Jack should stop...
- I **recommend you go** to that store. Not: I recommend you should go...
- The teacher **recommended that we study** this list of vocabulary for the exam.

Not: ...recommended that we should study...

SUPPLEMENT: ALLOW [Page 13]

There are different syntactic constructions for the verb ALLOW...

- 1) With a gerund complement indicating what is (or is not) allowed:
- · Smoking is not allowed in this restaurant.
- · Discrimination against women is not allowed.
- · Naked bathing is not allowed on this beach.

NOTE: This construction does not accept an object (the person/thing being allowed to do something).

- 2) With a noun phrase object indicating what is (or is not) allowed:
- · Some states do not allow abortion.
- This school allows the use of computers during exams.
- 3) With a "that" phrase, meaning you allow "that" something is true (you admit or agree that it is true).
- Warren allows that capitalist development may result in increased social inequality.
- 4) With a noun phrase patient/object and an infinitive complement (what they're being allowed to do):
- He won't allow me to leave
- Some states <u>allow</u> automatic weapons <u>to</u> be kept at home
- We showed our tickets and were <u>allowed to</u> enter.
- Sheep and cows are <u>allowed to</u> roam freely on this land.

It's worth noting that example #2, shows that the "patient" / direct object (who/what is being allowed to do something) doesn't need to be a person (in this case, it is "automatic weapons").

It's also worth noting that you may see things like:

• "The iPad allows to surf the Internet on the move", with no "patient" object.

These are not considered grammatical (they are usually from non-native speakers).

EXAMPLES of Student Errors...

- · "It is a technology that allows to print various inks on many substrates such as glass, PET or kapton."
- "The asynchronous architecture allows low power operation..."
- "It allows using a single-ended signal from a pixel with fully differential SAR ADC."
- "This mechanism also allows to increase the fracture toughness, but without a decrease in..."

- SYNONYMS: enable (sb to do) sth
- make sth possible (for)
- clear the way for sth

facilitate

- permit sth (to happen)
- let sb do sth

EXAMPLES:

It <u>allows</u> nicotine to diffuse slowly and steadily into the bloodstream.

It <u>allows</u> the train to maintain a constant speed through the twists and turns of existing track.

It <u>allows</u> organisms to protect their essential dynamical properties in the face of environmental changes by varying less essential dynamical properties.

Instead, it allows the analogue and digital information to co-exist.

Significantly, it allows us to utilise our extensive content and brands in an already established digital business.

It <u>allows</u> speakers <u>to</u> adjust their messages to their receivers' response.

It <u>allows</u> programs, DOS commands and batch files to run without changes.

Its advantage is that it allows a far deeper and richer assessment to be made than the pen and paper exercise.

It allows learners to be creative within a carefully controlled language framework.