

Gerunds and Infinitives: Comprehensive Guide

Gerunds and infinitives are verb forms used as subjects, objects, or complements. Understanding their usage is essential for accurate and natural English.

1. What Are Gerunds and Infinitives?

- **Gerunds:** The **-ing** form of a verb used as a noun.
Example: Swimming is fun.
 - **Infinitives:** The base form of a verb, often preceded by **to**.
Example: To swim is relaxing.
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2. When to Use Gerunds and Infinitives

A. Gerunds

Used as:

1. Subjects

:

- **Example:** Reading is my favorite hobby.

2. Objects of Verbs

:

- **Example:** I enjoy swimming.

3. Objects of Prepositions

:

- **Example:** She is good at painting.

B. Infinitives

Used as:

1. Subjects

(more formal than gerunds):

- **Example:** To learn a new language is challenging.

2. Objects of Verbs

:

- **Example:** He wants to travel.

3. To Express Purpose

:

- **Example:** She called to ask for help.
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3. Common Verbs Followed by Gerunds or Infinitives

A. Verbs Followed by Gerunds

1. **Enjoy:** I enjoy singing.
2. **Avoid:** He avoids driving at night.
3. **Admit:** She admitted stealing the money.
4. **Consider:** They are considering moving to another city.
5. **Finish:** I finished reading the book.
6. **Suggest:** He suggested going to the beach.
7. **Keep:** She keeps forgetting her keys.

B. Verbs Followed by Infinitives

1. **Want:** I want to learn French.
2. **Decide:** She decided to quit her job.
3. **Plan:** They plan to visit Japan.
4. **Hope:** I hope to meet you soon.
5. **Promise:** He promised to call me.

6. **Refuse:** She refused to help.
7. **Agree:** They agreed to work together.

C. Verbs That Can Be Followed by Either (With No Change in Meaning)

1. **Start:** He started reading/to read the book.
2. **Begin:** She began cooking/to cook dinner.
3. **Continue:** They continued working/to work on the project.

D. Verbs That Change Meaning Depending on Gerund or Infinitive

1. Stop

:

- Gerund: He stopped smoking. (**He quit the habit.**)
- Infinitive: He stopped to smoke. (**He paused to smoke.**)

2. Remember

:

- Gerund: I remember locking the door. (**A memory of the action.**)
- Infinitive: Remember to lock the door. (**A reminder for the future.**)

3. Try

:

- Gerund: Try eating less sugar. (**An experiment.**)
 - Infinitive: Try to eat less sugar. (**Make an effort.**)
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4. Special Cases

A. Verbs Followed by Object + Infinitive

- Examples

:

- a. I told him to leave.
- b. They asked me to wait.

B. Verbs Followed by Object + Gerund

- Examples

:

- a. I caught her stealing.
- b. They found him lying.

C. Verbs Followed by Infinitive Without "To"

- Examples

:

- a. Help: She helped me finish the project.
- b. Make: They made him apologize.
- c. Let: Let her explain.

D. Infinitive After Adjectives

- Examples

:

- a. She's happy to help.
- b. It's hard to believe.

E. Infinitive After Question Words

- Examples

:

- a. I don't know what to say.
 - b. Can you show me how to solve this?
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5. Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

A. Mixing Up Gerunds and Infinitives

- **Mistake:** She wants swimming.
- **Correct:** She wants to swim.

B. Using "To" Before Gerunds

- **Mistake:** She is looking forward to meet you.
- **Correct:** She is looking forward to meeting you.

C. Forgetting the Object in Object + Infinitive Structures

- **Mistake:** She told to leave.
- **Correct:** She told **him** to leave.

D. Misplacing Gerunds After Prepositions

- **Mistake:** He is afraid of to fly.
 - **Correct:** He is afraid of flying.
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6. Advanced Usage

A. Perfect Gerund

- To emphasize completed actions.
- Examples
 - :
 - a. He denied **having cheated** on the exam.
 - b. I regret **having said** that to her.

B. Perfect Infinitive

- To emphasize completed actions in hypothetical or reported speech.
- Examples
:

a. She claims **to have met** the president.

b. He seems **to have forgotten** the meeting.

C. Passive Gerund and Infinitive

- Gerund: Being + past participle.
 - **Example:** She dislikes **being interrupted**.
 - Infinitive: To be + past participle.
 - **Example:** He wants **to be included** in the team.
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7. Practice Exercises

A. Choose the Correct Form

1. I enjoy ___ (to swim/swimming) in the ocean.
2. She decided ___ (to take/taking) a break.
3. They avoided ___ (to talk/talking) about the issue.
4. He let me ___ (to drive/drive) his car.
5. We need ___ (to finish/finishing) the project on time.

B. Correct the Mistakes

1. I'm looking forward to see you.
2. She suggested to go to the park.
3. They made me to apologize.
4. He's interested in learn French.

C. Fill in the Blanks

1. He promised ___ (help) me with my homework.
 2. She can't imagine ___ (live) in another country.
 3. I caught him ___ (steal) my wallet.
 4. We plan ___ (travel) next month.
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8. Summary Chart

TYPE	USAGE	EXAMPLES
Gerund	After certain verbs	I enjoy reading .
Infinitive	After certain verbs	I want to go .
Either (no change)	Verbs like "start, begin"	She started crying/to cry .
Either (change)	Verbs like "stop, remember"	I stopped smoking (quit). / I stopped to smoke (pause).
Object + Gerund	After verbs like "catch, find"	I found him sleeping .
Object + Infinitive	After verbs like "tell, ask"	I told her to wait .
Infinitive without "to"	After "make, let, help"	She let me drive .