

5118008 English for Software Developer

Infinitive and Gerund

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Infinitive

- An infinitive means the base form of a verb acting as an object or subject, instead of the main verb in a sentence
 - ex. *We need to talk; We must stop him.*
- Bare infinitive
 - with modal verbs or perception verbs
 - ex. *I saw him eat lunch alone.*
- Full infinitive
 - the base form of a verb, preceded by “to” (known as to-infinitive)
 - act as a noun phrase (e.g., subject, object), adjective phrase, or adverbial phrase

To-Infinitive As Subject

- A to-infinitive referring to the action of the verb, can be used as the subject of a sentence
 - ex., To know her is to love her.
- It is more common that a preparatory subject (e.g., “it”) is placed at the beginning and represents the to-infinitive
 - ex. To avoid common coding mistakes is important to ensure the greatest career success.
 - It is important to avoid common coding mistakes to ensure the greatest career success.

As Object

- A full infinitive can be used as a direct object following the main verb
 - main verb: want, wish, need, decide, fail, hope, would like
 - ex. if one self-driving car decides to turn left whereas other turn right for the same input, one of them is likely to be incorrect.
 - ex. We know that 80% of software projects fail to meet their goals.
- c.f., main verb followed by bare infinitives
 - let, make, help, watch, see, have

As Complement

- A full infinitive can be used as a subject complement or object complement to describe a subject or an object, respectively
 - together with be, seem (for subject) or require (for object)
- Examples
 - China seems to have become a “super power” in the Internet
 - The goal of globalization is to develop products that are scalable and flexible for a global audience
 - The government requires companies to have independent auditors check the technology annually for bias

As Adjective

- A full infinitive can be used to modify the preceding noun
 - usually with abstract nouns
 - e.g., ability, attempt, chance, desire, failure, need, opportunity, refusal, way, wish, etc.
 - often with indefinite pronouns
 - e.g., anything, something, no one, etc.
- Example
 - We can see that robots have the ability to interact in a social way
 - A more concrete benefit of doing research is the chance to rapidly improve your technical skills in a realistic setting outside of the classroom.
 - Netflix can infer most queries have something to do with movies or TV.

As Adverb

- After certain adjective, a full infinitive is used to give a situation, reason or opinion
 - Ex. Current watermark-based copyright schemes are unable to establish who watermarked the data first
 - Ex. We were amazed to see how the news article caused a huge spike in user traffic.
 - Ex. It's kind of you to say so.
- Placed at the beginning of a sentence, a full infinitive modifies the entire sentence
 - Ex. To understand the concerns, we conducted interviews and questionnaires with 37 persons.

Gerund

- A gerund is a verbal ending with “ing”, which functions as a noun to express action or a state of being.
 - acts as a subject, object, or complement
 - treated as singular

As Subject

- Examples

- Having backup cloud storage is like having an extra ace up your sleeve for business operations.
- Getting a bad review knocks you off course.

As Object

- Some verbs take gerunds as objects
 - Stative verbs: love, like, enjoy, mind, imagine, etc.
 - Action verbs: avoid, consider, delay, recommend, etc.
- Some verbs are followed only by gerund and not infinitives
 - Ex. admit, avoid, finish, recall, recommend, consider, involve, suggest, understand
- A gerund clause can act as the object of a preposition after a verb
 - Ex. apologize for, concentrate on, depend on, get used to, look forward to, rely on, talk about, think about

Gerund After Preposition

- With preposition
 - Heavy data users in LTE are consuming only around 65% more after having switched to 5G service.
 - Many of these algorithms work well in practice, in spite of having a poor worst-case running time.
- With noun + preposition
 - There is substantial difficulty in attempting to provide end-to-end privacy protection within a general-purpose computer.
- With adjective + preposition
 - People are afraid of appearing to be biased

Verbs Followed by A Gerund or Infinitive with A Change in Meaning

- Examples

- I forgot to meet him
- I forgot meeting him
- She remembered to visit her parents
- She remembered visiting her parents
- She quit to work here
- She quit working here
- I stopped to call you
- I stopped calling you