

Verbs with infinitives and gerunds

Verbs used with infinitives only

We use infinitives, not gerunds, after verbs such as *hope* and *offer* (1). After verbs such as *invite* and *tell*, we must include a noun or object pronoun to identify the subject before the infinitive (2). After verbs such as *ask* and *want*, we can include the subject of the infinitive or leave it out if it's the same as the subject of the verb (3).

- 1 I'm **hoping to get** a day off soon. • We **offered to pay** for the damage. (NOT ~~offered paying~~)
- 2 They **told me not to wait** for them. • David **invited us to go** with him. (NOT ~~invited to go~~)
- 3 I **asked Sam to stay**. I **wanted him to wait**, but he **wanted to leave** right away.

Verbs used with gerunds only

After verbs such as *avoid* and *enjoy*, we use gerunds, not infinitives (4). After verbs such as *imagine* and *mind*, we can include a noun or object pronoun before the gerund (5). We put gerunds after verbs with prepositions such as *concentrate on* and after phrasal verbs such as *give up* (6).

- 4 **Avoid eating** cakes and sweets. • We **enjoy travelling** by train. (NOT ~~enjoy to travel~~)
- 5 I **imagined Jenny walking** on a sunny beach. • Would you **mind us waiting** outside?
- 6 He should **concentrate on studying**, not **singing**. • Have you **given up exercising** already?

Verbs used with infinitives or gerunds

After *begin*, *continue*, *intend* and *start*, we can usually use either infinitives or gerunds with little difference in meaning.

- 7 Josh **started to drink/drinking** the soup, but it was very spicy. He **began to cough/coughing**.

We use infinitives after present participles: *Is it starting to rain?* (NOT ~~Is it starting raining?~~)

After *hate*, *like*, *love* and *prefer*, we can usually use infinitives or gerunds with little difference in meaning (8). When we are talking about an activity in general (not performed by the subject), we use a gerund (9). After *would hate/like/love/prefer* we use infinitives (10).

- 8 Katy **loves to play/playing** the piano. • Don't you **prefer to study/studying** at home?
- 9 I **hate wrestling** because it's so violent. It shouldn't be on TV. I don't **like boxing** either.
- 10 **Would you like to come** with us? • I'd **love to see** you tonight. (NOT ~~I'd love seeing you tonight.~~)

Note the use of *would rather* + bare infinitive: *I'd rather stay here.* (NOT ~~I'd rather to stay here.~~)

After *advise*, *allow*, *encourage* and *permit*, we can use a noun or object pronoun as subject of the infinitive. When there is no subject, we use the gerund for an activity in general.

- 11 They don't **allow us to smoke**. • They don't **allow smoking**. (NOT ~~They don't allow us smoking.~~)

After *feel*, *hear*, *see* and *watch*, we can use a noun or object pronoun as subject with a bare infinitive for a single or completed action and with a gerund for a repeated or continuous action.

- 12 When I rang the doorbell, I **heard a dog bark**. • Did you **hear that dog barking** last night?

When there is no subject, we use a gerund: *I also heard shouting.* (NOT ~~I also heard shout.~~)

After *forget*, *regret*, *remember* and *stop*, we use infinitives for actions which will happen later (13) and gerunds for actions which have already happened (14).

- 13 **Remember to take** an umbrella. (when you go out later) • I **regret to say** this. (I'm going to say it)
- 14 Don't you **remember taking** it? (when you left earlier) • I **regret saying** that. (I said it earlier)

After *need*, we often use an infinitive, but we can use a gerund with the same meaning as the passive infinitive (15). We can use *mean* with an infinitive (= intend) or *mean* with a gerund (= result in) (16). We can use *try* with an infinitive (= make an effort) or *try* with a gerund (= experiment with) (17).

- 15 I **need to do** some laundry. • These towels **need washing**. (= These towels **need to be washed**.)
- 16 I **meant to ask** you about your new job. Will it **mean spending** more time away from home?
- 17 I **must try to get** to work on time tomorrow. I think I'll **try setting** my alarm a bit earlier.

8 Add one pair of verbs to each sentence in this table, with the first verb in an appropriate form and the second verb as an infinitive or a gerund.

enjoy / take hope / visit imagine / make invite / stay love / be want / spend

- 1 **Verb + infinitive.** I Japan next summer.
Others include: agree, aim, apply, decide, demand, fail, offer, plan, refuse, vote
- 2 **Verb + noun/object pronoun + infinitive.** My friend Ryoko has me with her.
Others include: command, convince, force, instruct, order, persuade, remind, tell, tempt, urge
- 3 **Verb (+ noun/object pronoun) + infinitive.** She me a whole month there.
Others include: ask, beg, expect, wish
- 4 **Verb + gerund.** She says she'll me to all her favourite places.
Others include: admit, avoid, consider, deny, finish, give up, mention, practise, recommend, suggest
- 5 **Verb (+ noun/object pronoun) + gerund.** I can her plans already.
Others include: celebrate, detest, dislike, involve, keep, mind, miss, prevent, recall, resent
- 6 **Verb + infinitive or gerund.** I would able to go sooner.
Others include: begin, continue, forget, hate, like, learn, mean, regret, remember, try

9 Add appropriate forms of the verbs from each set to each sentence.

allow / take avoid / try / drive force / stop / play forget / send mean / tidy prefer / not talk

- 1 My teachers would never students the exams home.
- 2 Don't me a postcard when you go to Japan.
- 3 I'm sorry about the mess. I up before you came back.
- 4 Most people about how much money they have or earn.
- 5 We usually through the centre of town during rush hour.
- 6 Bad weather us tennis earlier today.

10 Editing. Correct the mistakes in the use of infinitives and gerunds in this text.

I have never forgotten ^{working} ~~work~~ as a hotel maid one summer when I was a teenager. My aunt was an assistant manager at the hotel and she encouraged me take the summer job. She had been a maid at one time and she advised me remember clean the bathrooms really well. Nobody likes clean bathrooms, but I didn't mind do it as part of my summer job. That's when I was first starting learn English. Some of the visitors were really nice and I could practise speak English with them. I enjoyed try improve my English and it helped me when I went to college later. I also learned that I didn't want work as a hotel maid forever, but I don't regret do it for one summer. I decided study harder at school so I could go to college and try get a better job.

Adjectives with infinitives and gerunds

Adjectives used with infinitives only

We can use infinitives, not gerunds, after some adjectives when we talk about being certain (*sure*) or willing (*eager*) to do something (1) and about our feelings or reactions (*glad*, *delighted*) (2).

1 *The children are **sure to get up** early tomorrow. They're **eager to go** to the beach.*

2 *I'm **glad to meet** you. • I was **delighted to hear** the good news about your scholarship.*

Other adjectives used like this include: disappointed, happy, pleased, sad, sorry, surprised

After some adjectives, we can use *for* with a noun phrase or pronoun to identify the subject of the infinitive (3). We can use *of* (not *for*) when we are evaluating someone's action (4).

3 *It was **good for the children to visit** their grandparents. (The children had a good experience.)*

4 *It was **good of the children to visit** their grandparents. (The children acted in a good way.)*

Other adjectives used like this include: bad, nice, silly, stupid, wrong

We often use infinitives after *too* + an adjective, or an adjective + *enough*.

5 *Is the tea still **too hot** (for you) **to drink**? • The small bags are **light enough** (for us) **to carry**.*

Adjectives used with infinitives or gerunds

After empty subject *it* + *be* and adjectives such as *nice* and *difficult*, we can use an infinitive (6) or a gerund (7), with little difference in meaning. When we make the object of the infinitive our topic as the subject of the sentence, we use an infinitive after these adjectives (8).

6 *It was really **nice to talk** to Mrs Anderson. • Was it very **difficult to learn** Arabic?*

7 *It was really **nice talking** to Mrs Anderson. • Was it very **difficult learning** Arabic?*

8 *Mrs Anderson was really **nice to talk** to. • Was Arabic very **difficult to learn**?*

Other adjectives used like this include: easy, exciting, great, hard, impossible, interesting

We can use gerunds as subjects before *be* plus adjectives such as *important* and *necessary* (9).

After empty subject *it* + *be* and these adjectives, we use infinitives (10).

9 ***Listening carefully is important**, but **writing everything down isn't necessary**.*

10 *It's **important to listen** carefully, but it isn't **necessary to write** everything down.*

Other adjectives used like this include: crucial, essential, unnecessary, vital

After an adjective such as *anxious*, we can use an infinitive or a preposition plus a gerund with different meanings (11). After many adjectives, we can only use a preposition and gerund (12).

11 *I was **anxious to leave**. (I was eager) • I was **anxious about leaving**. (I was worried)*

12 *Bill is **famous for inventing** microwave popcorn. (NOT ~~He's famous to invent it.~~) • Isn't Lucia **capable of doing** it by herself? (NOT ~~Isn't Lucia capable to do it by herself?~~)*

11 Complete each sentence, using an infinitive or gerund, in such a way that it is as similar as possible in meaning to the sentence above it.

1 Planning ahead is essential in my kind of job.

It's

2 Jessica didn't see any of her friends at the shopping centre and she was disappointed.

Jessica was disappointed

3 Christopher was so good to come to our rescue when our car broke down.

It was so good

4 It isn't easy driving those huge buses along narrow winding roads.

Those huge buses

Nouns and pronouns with infinitives and gerunds

Nouns and pronouns used with infinitives only

We can use infinitives after nouns with meanings similar to those verbs taking infinitives listed in Exercise 8 on page 143 (e.g. *agree* – *agreement*) (1). We can use these nouns as subjects with *be* before an infinitive, or after empty subject *it* + *be* before an infinitive (2). In these structures we can also use nouns such as *ambition* and *goal* with infinitives to talk about future actions (3).

- 1 We **agreed to share** the cost. • We had an **agreement to share** the cost.
- 2 The **agreement was to share** the cost. • It was our **agreement to share** the cost.
- 3 Our **goal is to save** £500 by next summer. • It's his **ambition to become** an astronomer.

Other nouns used like this include: aim, decision, desire, expectation, hope, offer, plan, wish

We can use infinitives after general nouns for people and things such as *person* or *place* (4), or after indefinite pronouns and adverbs such as *someone* and *nowhere* (5). We do this when we talk about what we can or want to do with those people and things. After nouns and indefinite pronouns, we can use *for* with a noun phrase or object pronoun to identify the subject of the infinitive (6).

- 4 Bob's the **person to ask** about graphics. • Iceland is a great **place to visit**. • I brought **a book to read**.
- 5 He needs **someone to love**. • Is there **anything to eat**? • They have **nowhere to go** at night.
- 6 It's **time for the kids to go** to bed. • There's **nothing for us to do**. • I brought **a book for you to read**.

Nouns and pronouns used with infinitives or gerunds

We don't usually use gerunds directly after nouns, except after a few phrases such as *have a problem* and *it's no use* (7). After nouns such as *interest* and *talent*, we can use a preposition plus a gerund (8). We often use a structure with *the* + noun (*the cost*) and *of* + gerund (*of living*) (9).

- 7 Did you have **a problem finding** the place? • It was **no use complaining** because no one cared.
- 8 Julia had **a talent for acting**. • I had **no interest in studying**. (NOT ~~I had no interest to study~~.)
- 9 **The cost of living** in London is very high. • **The thought of eating** eggs makes me feel queasy. • He stressed **the importance of being** on time. • I don't like **the idea of (you) going** alone.

After nouns such as *attempt* and *intention* we can use infinitives or prepositions plus gerunds with little difference in meaning (10). When we talk about the use or purpose of something, we can use a noun or indefinite pronoun with an infinitive (11) or *for* with a gerund (12). There's no difference in meaning.

- 10 His **attempt to break/at breaking** the record failed. • I have **no intention to leave/of leaving**.
- 11 They have **a machine to clean** carpets. • I need to find **something to remove** stains.
- 12 They have **a machine for cleaning** carpets. • I need to find **something for removing** stains.

12 Add one combination of noun/pronoun plus a verb as an infinitive or gerund in each space.

cost / rent	information / reserve	plan / take	someone / ask
idea / study	place / stay	problem / keep	task / call

Leila was both excited and nervous about the (1) of in Edinburgh during the summer. Her (2) was only two courses at the university because she didn't want to have a (3) up with the lectures and assignments. She had heard that the most convenient (4) was in the student halls of residence, but they hadn't sent her any (5) about a room there. So, her next (6) was and find (7) about the kind of accommodation they had and the (8) of one of their rooms during the summer months.