

## Gerunds and Infinitives

### Some Important Rules

The form of the verb that ends in -ing is called a **Gerund** when used as a noun. Because their function is that of a noun, gerunds may be used as the subject of a sentence:

Running regularly will make you feel better.  
Studying requires most of my time during the day.

The -ing form can also be called a present participle; however, the function is that of a verb when used in the present or past progressive:

The teacher is speaking to her students.

If a gerund is combined with a preposition, it is called a **Gerund phrase**:

Our daughter's life ambition is studying to be a doctor.

Possessive adjectives precede a gerund:

**Her** working late is making her sick.      I don't mind **him** being here.

There are some verbs that **must** be followed by a gerund. Example:

I **enjoy** studying.      Would you **mind** being quiet?

The following verbs **MUST** be followed by a gerund:

admit	discuss	finish	miss	quit
give up	postpone	stop (=quit)	avoid	resist
consider	dislike	keep on	practice	think about
recommend	put off	enjoy	mind	
suggest	go + activities			

The choice of a gerund or an infinitive, in some instances, does not affect the meaning of a verb.

- a) I prefer to go to the mall.
- b) I prefer going to the mall.

Verbs that show emotion and the fulfillment of unfulfillment of an activity may affect the meaning depending on the choice of an infinitive or a gerund. Gerunds are used to describe actions that are factual, whereas infinitives are used to describe actions that may take place in the time to come or that are possible.

Verbs of Emotion:

Factual: Did you like dancing last night?

Possible: Do you like to dance?

Verbs of fulfillment/unfulfillment:

Factual: I started doing my homework and question #1 is really hard.

Possible: Did you start to do your homework?

A Gerund will follow a preposition:

Thank you **for** helping me.

The negation **NOT** is always placed in front of the **gerund or the infinitive**.

I enjoy not having to do study today.

Gerunds are used after the following expressions:

**-worth,**

**-rather than,**

**-instead of**

-This situation is worth looking into

-Rather than studying Chemistry we decided to study Anatomy

-Instead of talking to her boss directly, she sent a message with her secretary.

Verbs of perception- feel, hear, notice, observe, see, smell, watch- may be followed by gerunds, however, never infinitives. (These may also be followed by the base form of the verb.)

-Have you ever seen an ice skater doing a high jump?

-Do you hear the phone ringing?

When there is only one object complement, some verbs are followed by a gerund complements.

-Doctors advise reducing fats in one's diet.

-They urge giving up fried foods.

-They encourage steaming or boiling food but forbid frying things in oil.

-Changing food habits requires changing old habits.

## **Infinitives**

However, if there is a second object complement, an infinitive is used. (\*see another example)

- The doctor advised **me** to reduce **my fat** intake.
- He urged **me** to give up **fried food**.
- He encouraged **me** to steam and boil **my food** but forbade **me** to fry **things** in oil.
- This has required **me** to change **a lot of old habits**.

These are some verbs that follow the preceding pattern:

advise	force	allow	tell
persuade	require	permit	remind
urge	forbid	invite	warn
encourage	command	trust	teach
convince	order	cause	hire

More examples:      I trust my doctor to do the job right.  
                                  They hired him to solve the problems here.

**Infinitives as subjects:**      **To be** on time is important in this culture.

**Infinitives as objects:**      \*The asked her **to check** the letter before it was sent.

**Infinitives used in passive construction:**

I was told to go very quickly and quietly.

**The following verbs may be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive:**

attempt	continue	intend	plan
begin	dread	like	prefer
hate	love	start	stop
try	cannot stand		

**The following verbs are followed by infinitives:**

want	need	would like	hope	expect	agree	seem
appear	learn	mean	try	forget	offer	agree

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