



GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

Using Gerunds and Infinitives

A gerund is a verb form that ends in “-ing” and is used as a noun (walking, traveling, voting); an infinitive is the base form of a verb preceded by “to” (to walk, to travel, to vote). Gerunds and infinitives can function as the subject of a sentence or the object of a verb. Words derived from verbs are known as verbals and may take modifiers, objects, and complements to form verbal phrases. A gerund phrase uses the “-ing” form of the verb to function as a noun; an infinitive phrase is formed using the infinitive and can function as a noun, adverb, or adjective.

USING VERB FORMS AS SUBJECTS

When functioning as the subject of a sentence, gerunds and infinitives always use a singular verb form, for example: “Walking is good exercise.” In this sentence, the “-ing” verb form (“Walking”) is the simple subject and the verb “is” links the subject to the subject complement “good exercise,” which refers to and describes the subject. When a gerund phrase functions as a subject, the “-ing” verb form is expanded as a word group, for example: “Traveling with a friend made the trip to New York more enjoyable.” In this sentence, the gerund phrase (“Traveling with a friend”) is the subject, “made” is the verb, “the trip” is the direct object, “to New York” is the indirect object, and “more enjoyable” is the object complement.

Similar to a gerund, the infinitive form of a verb can also function as the subject of a sentence, for example: “To vote is a legal obligation.” In this sentence, the subject (“To vote”) is linked to the direct object (“a legal obligation”) by the verb “is.” Likewise, an infinitive phrase can function as a subject: “To vote in the upcoming election will be an important personal statement.” In this sentence, the infinitive phrase (“To vote in the upcoming election”) is linked to the direct object of the sentence (“an important personal statement”) by the verb “will be.”

USING VERB FORMS AS OBJECTS

In idiomatic English, certain verbs are followed only by a gerund, certain verbs by an infinitive, and certain verbs by either a gerund or an infinitive.

Common Verbs Followed Only by a Gerund

admit	He admitted stealing the money.
advise	She advises waiting until tomorrow.
anticipate	I anticipate having a good time on vacation.
appreciate	I appreciate hearing from you.

avoid	He avoided answering my questions.
complete	She finally completed writing her term paper.
consider	I will consider going with you.
delay	He delayed leaving for school.
deny	She denied knowing anything about it.
discuss	They discussed opening a new business.
enjoy	We enjoyed visiting them.
escape	The team escaped losing the final game.
finish	She finished studying at about ten.
imagine	We imagined returning the next summer.
keep	I keep hoping she will come.
mention	She mentioned going to a movie.
mind	Would you mind helping me?
miss	I miss being with my family.
postpone	Let's postpone leaving until tomorrow.
practice	The athlete practiced throwing the ball.
quit	He quit trying to solve the problem.
recall	I don't recall meeting him before.
recommend	She recommended seeing that play.
regret	I regret telling him my secret.
resist	I could not resist eating dessert.
risk	She risked losing everything.
stop	She stopped going to classes.
suggest	She suggested going to a movie.
tolerate	He won't tolerate cheating during an examination.

Common Verbs Followed Only by an Infinitive

afford	I can't afford to buy it.
agree	They agreed to help us.
appear	She appears to be tired.
arrange	We arranged to meet at ten.
ask	He asked to come with us.
beg	He begged to come .
care	I don't care to see that show.

claim	She claims to be a descendent of Karl Marx.
consent	She finally consented to marry him.
decide	I have decided to leave on Monday.
demand	I demand to know who is responsible.
deserve	She deserves to win the prize.
expect	I expect to enter graduate school in the fall.
fail	She failed to return the book to the library.
forget	I forgot to mail the letter.
help	He wanted to help with the clean-up.
hesitate	Don't hesitate to ask for my help.
hope	Jack hopes to arrive next week.
learn	He learned to play the piano.
manage	She managed to finish her work early.
mean	I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.
need	I need to have your opinion.
offer	They offered to help us.
plan	I am planning to have a party.
prepare	We prepared to welcome them.
pretend	He pretends not to understand .
promise	I promise not to be late.
refuse	I refuse to believe his story.
regret	I regret to tell you that you failed.
seem	That cat seems to be friendly.
struggle	I struggled to stay awake.
swear	She swore to tell the truth.
threaten	She threatened to tell my parents.
volunteer	He volunteered to help us.
wait	I will wait to hear from you.
want	I want to tell you something.
wish	She wishes to come with us.

Common Verbs Followed by a Gerund or an Infinitive: Either with Little or No Difference in Meaning or with a Significant Change in Meaning (see “forget,” “remember,” and “stop”)

begin	He begins working at ten a.m. He begins to work as soon as he arrives.
continue	He continues studying . He continues to study .
forget	She forgot calling her friend. She forgot to call her friend.
hate	I hate arguing about politics. I hate to argue with you.
like	They like skiing . They like to ski .
love	Children love playing with their friends. Children love to play .
neglect	She neglected telling her about the fire. She neglected to tell her the whole story.
prefer	She prefers eating a light dinner. She prefers to eat a light dinner.
remember	I remember locking the door. I remembered to lock the door.
start	He started running . He started to run .

stop

They stopped **buying** groceries at the market.

They stopped **to buy** groceries at the market.

try

The instructor tried **rereading** the papers.

The instructor tried **to reread** the papers.