

Gerunds and Infinitives

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Gerunds

A **gerund** is a verb in “-ing” form that is used as a noun. It becomes the subject or object of a sentence.

Examples:

I enjoy **baking** on the weekend.
(The gerund, “baking,” is the object.)

Studying is important.
(“Studying” is the subject.)

We discussed not **attending** the concert. (Negative form = “not”+ gerund)

Below is a list of verbs that are commonly followed by gerunds:

<i>enjoy</i>	<i>suggest</i>
<i>quit</i>	<i>finish</i>
<i>discuss</i>	<i>stop</i>
<i>think/talk about</i>	<i>recommend</i>
<i>mind</i>	<i>put off</i>

Examples:

Let’s consider **spending** more time on this paper.

She quit **worrying** about punctuation.

It is incorrect to follow these verbs with infinitives:

We considered to stay up late and study.

Our teacher enjoys to read our essays.

Infinitives

An **infinitive** is made up of “to + verb” and is also used as a subject or object in a sentence, though much less commonly as a subject.

Examples:

We all want to **watch** a movie this weekend.
(The infinitive, “to watch,” is the object.)

To write her novel in peace and quiet was all she wanted.
(The infinitive, “to write,” is the subject.)

Here is a list of verbs that are commonly followed by infinitives:

<i>offer</i>	<i>wish</i>
<i>promise</i>	<i>intend</i>
<i>hope</i>	<i>learn</i>
<i>decide</i>	<i>tend</i>
<i>prepare</i>	<i>wish</i>

Examples:

We offered to **give** them a ride home.

I intend to **finish** my paper early.

It is incorrect to follow these verbs with gerunds:

I promise helping you revise your essay.

Let’s prepare researching the topic at the library.

Some verbs can be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive, but the meaning changes depending on which is used.

Examples:

She forgot closing the door behind her. (She closed the door but forgot that she did so.)

She forgot to close the door. (She did not close the door.)

He stopped eating. (He was eating, and now he is not.)

He stopped to eat. (He was doing some activity and stopped in order to eat.)

Finally, some verbs can be followed by a gerund or an infinitive with no change in meaning.

Examples:

The family likes swimming.

The family likes to swim.

I prefer sitting in the front row.

I prefer to sit in the front row.

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