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Using gerunds and infinitives with other verbs in English is a tricky thing, because some verbs are followed *only* by [infinitives](#) and other verbs — *only* by [gerunds](#), while certain verbs may be followed by *either one*.



via

https://www.test-english.com/web18/wp-content/uploads/B2_Verb-object-infinitive-gerund.png

Furthermore, use of infinitive or gerund after a certain verb may totally change the meaning of a sentence.

Verb + to-infinitive

Some verbs can be followed only by a [‘to’-infinitive](#):

Some verbs with this pattern:

1. verbs of thinking and feeling: *decide, expect, hope, learn, seem, want, plan, intend, plan*
2. verbs of saying: *agree, promise, refuse*
3. other common verbs: *afford, appear, choose, fail, manage, wait*

- We **agreed to go** to the cinema together with Ann.
- Steffany **decided to take** a taxi, because it was late.
- I **promise to follow** your piece of advice.
- Last year Jack **learned to play** table tennis.
- She feels offended and she doesn't **want to see** him.

Verb + object + to-infinitive

Some verbs can be followed by an a object (a [noun](#) or a [pronoun](#)) and a to-infinitive.

Common verbs with this pattern:

1. verbs of wanting or liking: *expect, intend, would prefer, want, would like*
2. verbs of saying: *advise, ask, encourage, invite, order, persuade, remind, tell, warn*
3. other common verbs: *allow, enable, force, get, teach*

Verb + gerund

Some verbs can be followed only by a [gerund](#):

Some verbs with this pattern:

1. verbs of liking and disliking: *enjoy, like, love, hate, dislike, fancy*
2. phrases with 'mind' - like 'I don't mind'
3. verbs of saying and thinking: *admit, consider, deny, imagine, remember, suggest, recommend*
4. other common verbs: *avoid, begin, finish, keep, miss, practise, risk, start, stop*

- *I **enjoy drinking** my coffee in the morning.*
- *Yesterday we **discussed going** to Italy on vacation.*
- *Your drawings are quite good, **keep on practicing**.*
- *Peter tried to **avoid answering** his father's questions.*
- *Have you ever **considered crossing** that beautiful lake on a raft?*

Some verbs (e.g. *mind, imagine, can't stand, dislike, involve, miss, put off* and *risk*) can be used with an **subject** before the gerund. If the subject is a pronoun, it is in the object form (*me, him, her, us, them*):

- *We just couldn't imagine Robert **making** a speech.*
- *Do you mind me **sitting** here while you're working?*
- *I don't want to risk her **losing** her job.*

Tips to use verbs with infinitive and gerund

Here are some tips to remember.

1. *Gerunds* are mostly used when actions are *real, fixed, or completed*. *Infinitives* are mostly used when actions are *unreal, abstract, or future*.

- I enjoy **cooking**.
- He wants **to swim**.

2. After a [preposition](#), you almost always will find a *gerund*.

- She is **afraid of flying**.

3. When you are talking about an *activity*, you usually use a *gerund*.

- I quit **smoking**.
- Let's go **shopping**.

Verb + infinitive or gerund with no change in meaning

Some verbs can be followed *either* by the infinitive or the gerund *without any change in meaning*:

begin, bother, continue, hate, intend, like, love, prefer, start

- Suddenly it started **raining**. = Suddenly it started **to rain**.
- Michael intends **buying** a bicycle. = Michael intends **to buy** a bicycle.
- The boy continued **playing** with his dog. = The boy continued **to play** with his dog.
- Margaret prefers **meeting** with her friends in a mall. = Margaret prefers **to meet** with her friends in a mall.

The verbs 'hate', 'like', 'love' and 'prefer' can be followed *either* by '-ing' or a 'to'-infinitive. The difference in meaning is often small. The '-ing' form emphasizes *the verb itself*. The 'to'-infinitive puts the emphasis more on the *preference* for or the *result* of the action.

Compare:

Gerund

I love cooking Italian food. (emphasis on the process itself and enjoyment of it)

Infinitive

I like to drink coffee in the morning, and tea in the evening. (emphasis more on the preference or habit)

She **hates washing** the dishes. (emphasis on the process and no enjoyment of it)

I **hate to be** the only person to attend. (emphasis on the result: I would prefer not to be in that situation)

Note: When 'hate', 'like', 'love' and 'prefer' are used with would or should, only the 'to'-infinitive is used:

- He'd love to find some quiet place to live. NOT: ~~He'd love finding some quiet place to live.~~
- Would you like to go to the party on Saturday?

Verb + infinitive or gerund with change in meaning

But some verbs can be followed either by the infinitive or the gerund *with a certain change in meaning*:

forget, regret, remember, stop, try, need, go on

Compare:

Gerund

Mike **regrets saying** what he said to his teacher. (he did that and now he's sorry about it)

I know Jane, I **remember talking** to her yesterday. (I talked to Jane and now I remember that fact)

Infinitive

We **regret to inform** you that the train will be 2 hours late. (we are sorry that we have to say that)

Yesterday I met Jane and I **remembered to talk** to her. (I'd planned to talk to Jane, so I did not forget to do that when I met her)

— Some verbs connected with *feeling, hearing* and *seeing* can be used with gerund or with an infinitive without to:

feel, notice, see, hear, watch

— When used with *gerund*, these verbs emphasize the *action in progress*. When they are used with an *infinitive* without to, they emphasize the *action as a whole, or as completed*.

Compare:

Gerund

Infinitive

She **heard** people **shouting** in the street.
(emphasizes the continued or repeated action)

I **heard** someone **shout** 'Help!', so I ran outside.
(emphasizes the whole event happened once)

I **saw** her **crossing** the street.
(emphasizes the crossing as it was happening)

I **saw** Philip **cross** the street.
(emphasizes the whole event from start to finish)

Here's a good video from mmmEnglish showing how verb patterns can affect the meaning of a sentence:

Read more on the topic:

[Verb Patterns: Used to Be / Used to / Get Used to / Would](#)

[Gerund: Overview](#)

[Verbs: The Infinitive](#)