

WHEN TO USE THE GERUND AND WHEN TO USE THE INFINITIVE

WHAT IS A GERUND?

A gerund is the -ING form of the verb that functions as a noun.

Ex. talking, eating, driving, paying, singing, reading, cooking, etc.

1) A gerund acts as a noun, either as the subject or an object, in a sentence

Examples:

- o Cooking is my passion. (cooking = the subject of the sentence)
- o Swimming is my favorite form of exercise. (swimming = the subject of the sentence)
- o The children really enjoy playing video games (playing = object of the sentence)

2) A gerund is often used after a preposition

Examples:

- o I learned English by playing video games. ("by" is a preposition followed by the gerund "playing")
- o Thank you for lending me your car. ("for" is a preposition followed by the gerund "lending")
- o I got tired of waiting, so I left. ("of" is a preposition followed by the gerund "waiting")
- o We all got sick from drinking contaminated water. ("from" is a preposition followed by the gerund "drinking")

VERBS THAT ARE FOLLOWED BY THE GERUND (OR A NOUN):

There are certain verbs that are usually followed by the gerund form (not the infinitive). These verbs typically describe actions that are real or completed.

enjoy
finish
quit
mind

postpone
keep
consider
discuss

EXAMPLES

1. I enjoy studying languages.
2. We finished building our house.
3. Sam quit smoking.
4. We will keep working until the project is completed.

Phrasal verbs end in prepositions - Use the gerund or another noun after phrasal verbs

Examples:

1. We looked into getting another puppy.
2. Tom ended up quitting his job.

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WHAT IS THE INFINITIVE?

The infinitive is the basic form of the verb: “TO VERB”

EX: to be, to go, to do, to drive, to study, to live, to learn, to talk, to cook, etc.

VERBS THAT ARE FOLLOWED BY THE INFINITIVE:

The infinitive is usually used after verbs that describe actions that are general, not real, and future actions

want
need
hope
expect
plan
intend

mean
decide
promise
offer
agree
refuse

seem
appear
pretend
learn
try
can/can't afford
wait

Examples:

1. I want to travel to Europe.
2. He needs to get a new job.
3. We didn't expect to see each other at the airport.
4. I didn't mean to offend you.

NOTE: Do NOT use the infinitive form after prepositions, even if the preposition is “TO”

Examples:

“Look forward to”

“TO” is part of the phrasal verb and serves as a preposition

- I look forward to seeing you.
- The children are looking forward to starting school again.
- Are you looking forward to meeting the president?

“Used to” - to refer to things that we did in the past that we don't do anymore. “TO” is not a preposition in this case and you need to use the root form of the verb.

- I used to live...
- I used to work...
- I used to go...
- I used to watch...

However, when we talk about “BE USED TO” and “GET USED TO,” “TO” is a preposition, so we need to use the gerund or another noun.

- I am used to working a lot.
- We are getting used to driving in the snow.

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VERBS THAT CAN BE FOLLOWED BY THE GERUND OR THE INFINITIVE:

Some verbs can be followed by the GERUND or the INFINITIVE and the meaning is usually THE SAME:

begin
start
continue
like
love
hate

Examples:

1. The child started to cry. = The child started crying.
2. I love to read. = I love reading.
3. They began to fight. = They began fighting.
4. I like to dance. = I like dancing.

Some verbs can also be followed by the GERUND or the INFINITIVE, but the meaning CHANGES:

stop
forget
remember
regret

Check out the next video for an explanation of these verbs!

REVIEW:

- We use the GERUND as a noun, either as a subject or an object.
- Some verbs are only followed by the GERUND or a noun, NOT the infinitive. (ex. enjoy, finish, quit, mind, keep, postpone, etc.)
- If there is a PREPOSITION, it should be followed by the GERUND or a noun, not the infinitive.
- Some verbs can only be followed by the INFINITIVE, not the gerund. (ex. agree, seem, promise, decide, offer, etc.)
- With some verbs, we can use both the GERUND or the INFINITIVE, and the meaning stays the SAME. (ex. start, begin, continue, like, love, hate, etc.)
- With other verbs, you can use the GERUND or the INFINITIVE, but the meaning CHANGES. (ex. stop, forget, remember, regret). You'll learn about these in the next video!!