

Gerund or Infinitive

One of the difficulties of the English language is that some verbs are followed by the *gerund* (ex : doing) and others are followed by the *infinitive* (ex : to do). Other verbs, however, can be followed by both.

Generally speaking we can use the following rules:

Examples		Rules	Explanations
Verb + gerund	1. I enjoy playing 2. I denied stealing	Often we use the gerund for an action that happens before or at the same time as the action of the main verb.	1. I enjoy myself at the time of playing. 2. I deny having stolen anything before.
Verb + infinitive	1. I decided to visit my uncle 2. I want to go out	Often we use the infinitive for actions that follow the action of the main verb.	1. Visiting my uncle was an action of my decision. It comes after. 2. What I want (now) is to go out (after/later)

These rules are helpful but DO NOT always explain all uses of gerunds and infinitives.

Verbs that can be followed by a gerund (ex: doing)

1- After verbs that express likes/dislikes :

- like
- love
- enjoy
- dislike
- hate
- don't mind
- can't stand
- can't bear

Example:

" I like playing soccer but I hate boxing."

2- After certain other verbs, such as :

- admit
- appreciate
- allow
- avoid
- advise
- consider
- deny
- delay
- understand
- finish
- fancy
- go (in *go swimming*)
- involve
- keep
- mention
- mind
- stop
- waste time/money
- imagine
- involve
- keep (on)
- mention
- miss
- postpone
- permit
- practice
- suggest
- resist
- reject
- risk
- can't help
- can't stand

Example:

" I suggest going to the theater."

3- After prepositions :

interested in ...

instead of ...

good at ...

before ...

after ...

Example:

"I am interested **in** collecting stamps."

"**After** playing football I drank an orange juice".

4- After certain expressions :

it's no use ...
it's no good ...
there's no point in ...
I can't help...
I don't mind...
I can't stand/bear...

Example:

" It's no use convincing him to revise his lessons. He's so stubborn."

Verbs that can be followed by an infinitive (ex : to do)

1- After verbs that refer to a future event:

- want
- hope
- aim
- intend
- arrange
- attempt
- promise
- be determined
- plan
- consent
- decide
- demand
- deserve
- determine
- endeavor
- expect
- offer
- proceed
- promise
- threaten
- swear
- volunteer
- want
- would like
- would hate
- would love

Example:

" I want to finish my work early."

2- After certain other verbs, such as:

- afford

- agree
- help
- choose
- fail
- happen
- refuse
- manage
- need
- seem
- learn
- choose
- pretend

Example:

"She refused to forgive him."

3- After adjectives :

- glad
- pleased
- disappointed

Example:

"I'm glad to know that you passed the exam."

"I'm pleased to meet you."

"I'm disappointed to hear that you flunked maths."

4- After "too" & "enough":

too difficult

easy enough

Example:

"It's too difficult to convince him to be helpful."

" But it's easy enough to fool him to get what you want."

Verbs that can be followed by both an infinitive and a gerund:

Some verbs can be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive. Here are some examples:

- start
- begin
- stop
- remember...

Example:

"I started smoking when I was young."

"I started to smoke when I left the office."

EXERCISE

CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORM OF THE VERB

1. I am keen on *work/to work/working* in the computer industry.
2. Amy decided *see/to see/ seeing* a doctor.
3. Leila enjoys *read/to read/reading* love stories.
4. Do you intend *learn/to learn/learning* Italian or English?
5. Do you mind *help/to help/helping* me wash the dishes?
6. Alan asked *talk/to talk/talking* to the boss.
7. I can't help *laugh/to laugh/laughing* when I watch Mr Been.
8. If Sara keeps *come/to come/coming* to work late, she'll have problems with the boss.
9. Liza hates *study/o study/studying* Maths.
10. Are you interested in *live/to live/living* in Africa ?