

Gerunds and Infinitives

A **gerund** is a verb-based word that functions as a noun. Gerunds are formed with a verb + ing, without a helping verb. Gerunds may function in a number of ways, including as the subject of a sentence.

Example: **Working** at home is a good option for stay-at-home mothers and fathers.

An **infinitive** is the basic form of a verb plus “to.” Infinitives can function as subjects of sentences.

Example: **To work** at home is a good option for stay-at-home mothers and fathers.

Infinitives can also be combined with other verbs.

Example: Joe wants **to be** a rock star.

Gerunds

Gerunds are used in several ways:

1. *As objects of prepositions*

Example 1: John went to see the coach **about playing** basketball for IRSC.

Example 2: I am in charge **of monitoring** student progress on standardized tests.

2. *In combination with prepositions*

Example 1: Elaine **is tired of walking** to school.

Example 2: We are **prohibited from doing** our homework in class.

Examples of other combinations followed by gerunds:

be accused of	in addition to	apologize for
be capable of	forgive for	be guilty of
be interested in	be opposed to	be scared of
be terrified of	thank for	be worried about

3. *In combination with certain verbs*

Example: The tour guide **suggested going** to the museum.

Examples of other verbs that take gerunds:

admit	anticipate	avoid
consider	deny	forget

4. *In expressions with the verb “go”*

Example: We decided to **go bowling**.

Other expressions using “go + gerund” are:

go dancing	go shopping	go boating
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5. *Following specific idiomatic expressions*

Example: We **had a hard time finding** our car in the enormous parking lot.

Other expressions with gerunds after idiomatic expressions:

to have trouble
to spend time
to sit + expression of place + ing: to sit at my desk studying
to catch + pronoun/noun + ing: to catch her dancing

Infinitives

Some verbs are followed only by *infinitives*:

Example 1: I **told** Duane **to go** to Home Depot for his building supplies.

Example 2: **Do** you **expect to pass** this class?

Other verbs that are followed only by infinitives are:

hope to decide to encourage someone to
pretend to ask someone to force someone to

Gerunds or Infinitives

Still other verbs may be followed by either a *gerund* or an *infinitive*, sometimes with a difference in meaning.

Example 1: (no meaning change) Jay **loves going** to the gym.

Jay **loves to go** to the gym.

Example 2: (meaning change) I am **trying to lose** weight. (making an effort)

I am **trying losing** weight. (as an experiment)

Other verbs that may be used with either a *gerund* or *infinitive* include:

remember regret begin
start forget hope

Some adjectives are sometimes followed immediately by *infinitives*. Many of these relate to people's emotions.

Example 1: I **am proud to call** Florida my home.

Example 2: My coworker **was shocked to hear** of yet another political scandal.

Examples of other adjectives that are sometimes followed by infinitives:

be happy to be sorry to
be careful to be surprised to