

Gerunds

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What is a Gerund?

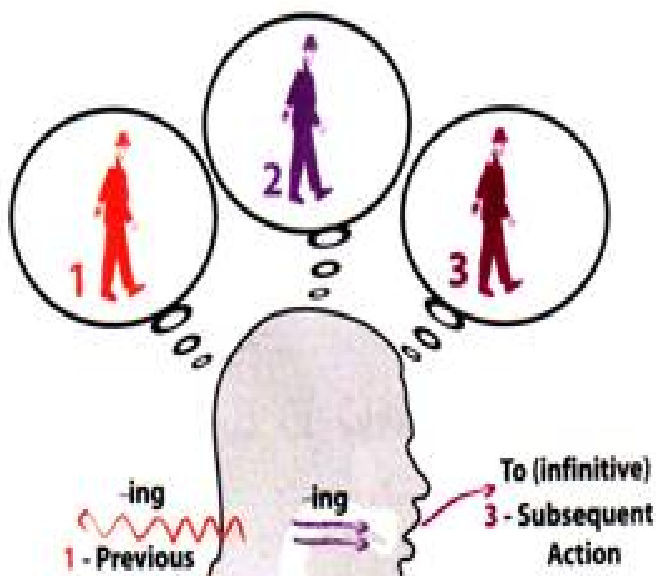
A gerund is a noun made from a verb by adding **-ing**. When a verb ends in a **ing**, it may be a gerund or a present participle. But it should be noted that they are not the same. When we use a verb like a noun, it is usually a gerund and when it is used as an adjective or verb it is [a present participle](#). Gerunds are sometimes called [verbal nouns](#). They are forms of verbs that act as nouns. It is not easy to identify a gerund.

To play
Play
Playing

Example:

- **Reading** is my hobby.
- **Cycling** is his first love.

Functions of a Gerund



A gerund has several functions.

1. They are used as objects following [preposition](#) and [prepositional expressions](#).

Example:

- Thanks for **buying** the books.
- He is into **selling** antiques.

2. They are used as subjects and complements.

Example:

- **Cooking** can be therapeutic.
- **Skiing** is enjoyable.

3. They can be used as subjects following certain verbs.

Example:

- The girls got tired of **watching** tennis.
- The children enjoyed **playing** soccer.

4. Gerunds can sometimes take objects of their own.

Example:

- Preeti is **thinking** of joining college.
- Ram is afraid of **taking** decisions.

Certain verbs are followed by gerunds.

These are: enjoy, imagine, resent, quit, avoid, deny, start, regret, understand, hesitate, admit, dislike, stop, begin etc.

Examples of Gerunds

- **Eating** mangoes in summer is fun.
- **Treating** patients is his passion.
- **Painting** landscapes is her favorite pastime.
- **Running** to class is his habit.
- **Tripping** a player is a foul.

List of Gerunds

Playing, singing, driving, cooking, baking, watching, reading, enjoying, living, preparing, eating, diving etc.

Go boating, go sailing, go shopping, go skating, go sailing, go hiking, go camping, go shopping, go fishing. etc.



Gerunds and infinitives

Infinitives are 'to' form of the verb. The infinitive of learn is 'to learn'. An infinitive can be used as a [subject](#), object or [complement](#) of a sentence.

Example:

- **To learn** music he travels far.
- He wants **to play** the guitar.

Infinitives can be made by adding **not**.

- She decided **not to** sing.

Both gerunds and infinitives can be used as subject or the complement of a sentence. Gerunds however sound better in spoken English as subject or complement. Infinitives sound unreal or abstract. Gerunds are used only when actions are real, concrete or complete. Infinitives sound philosophical and stress on the potential for something. Gerunds are natural.

As objects of a sentence it is difficult to decide between a gerund and an infinitive. They are not normally interchangeable. The main verb in the sentence determines whether a gerund or infinitive should be used. Some verbs are followed by gerunds as objects while some are followed by infinitives

Example:

- She advised **reading** for the Literature classes.
- She wanted **to read** for the Literature classes.

Only gerunds can be the object of prepositions.

Example:

- We are **thinking** of speaking in Tamil.

When a verb follows a verb, it takes either a gerund or an infinitive.

Some verbs can take the gerund or infinitive without the loss of meaning.

Example:

- I started **to play**.
- I started **playing**.

What is the difference between gerunds and infinitives?

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Reference Links:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Determiner_%28linguistics%29
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T4xw5C74Ps>
- http://www.englishpage.com/gerunds/part_1.htm
- <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/gerunds.htm>

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