

Gerunds and infinitives

Gerunds and infinitives are both verb forms that can function as nouns in a sentence, but they are used differently and have distinct purposes:

****1. Gerunds:****

- A gerund is a verb form that ends in "-ing" and acts as a noun in a sentence.
- Gerunds are used to express actions or activities as things or concepts. They can be the subject or object of a sentence, the object of a preposition, or the complement of certain verbs.

Examples:

- ****Swimming**** is good exercise. (Subject)
- She enjoys ****dancing****. (Direct Object)
 - He is interested in ****playing**** the guitar. (Object of Preposition)
- I like ****to read****. (Complement of Certain Verbs)

****2. Infinitives:****

- An infinitive is the base form of a verb (e.g., "to swim," "to read") and can also function as a noun in a sentence.
- Infinitives are used to express the purpose or intention of an action. They are often preceded by "to."

Examples:

- I want ****to swim**** in the pool. (Expressing Purpose)
- She has the ability ****to sing**** beautifully. (Noun)
- He decided ****to study****. (Noun)

The choice between gerunds and infinitives can depend on the verb that precedes them and the meaning you want to convey.

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Some verbs can be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive with a change in meaning:

Examples:

- I like ****to dance****. (I enjoy dancing as an activity.)
- I like ****dancing****. (I enjoy the act of dancing itself.)

In summary, gerunds and infinitives are versatile verb forms that can function as nouns, and their usage often depends on the context and the specific verb they are associated with in a sentence.

There are some verbs that have specific patterns of usage with gerunds and infinitives, and they can be considered exceptions. Here are a few common cases where the choice between gerunds and infinitives can be somewhat tricky:

****1. Verbs Followed by Gerunds:****

- Verbs like **"enjoy," "like," "dislike," "hate," "prefer," "mind," and "can't stand"** are typically followed by gerunds.

Examples:

- I enjoy ****swimming****.
- She dislikes ****working**** on weekends.
- He can't stand ****cleaning****.

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****2. Verbs Followed by Infinitives:****

- Verbs like **"want," "need," "plan," "intend," "hope," and "decide"** are often followed by infinitives.

Examples:

- I want ****to travel****.
- They plan ****to visit**** the museum.
- She decided ****to study**** abroad.

****3. Verbs Followed by Both Gerunds and Infinitives with a Change in Meaning:****

- Some verbs, like **"remember," "forget," "regret," and "stop,"** can be followed by both gerunds and infinitives, but the meaning changes depending on the choice.

Examples:

- I remember ****swimming**** in that pool. (I have a memory of actually swimming.)
- I remember ****to swim**** in that pool. (I remembered to swim, implying intention.)
- He forgot ****locking**** the door. (He forgot the action of locking.)
- He forgot ****to lock**** the door. (He forgot to perform the action of locking.)

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****4. Verbs Followed by Prepositions and Gerunds:****

- Some verbs are typically followed by prepositions and gerunds, such as "insist on," "apologize for," "accuse of," and "dream of."

Examples:

- She insisted on ****seeing**** the manager.
- He apologized for ****being**** late.
- He dreams of ****traveling**** the world.

These are just a few examples of exceptions. The choice between gerunds and infinitives often depends on the specific verb and its idiomatic usage. Learning these patterns and exceptions can be challenging, but practice and exposure to the language will help you become more proficient in using gerunds and infinitives correctly.

To distinguish between gerunds and infinitives more clearly, let's delve into some additional details and rules:

****Gerunds:****

1. **Function as Nouns: Gerunds** act as nouns in sentences, meaning they can serve as subjects, objects, or objects of prepositions.

Examples:

- ****Swimming**** is her favorite activity. (Subject)
- I enjoy ****playing**** the piano. (Direct Object)
- He is passionate about ****hiking****. (Object of Preposition)

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2. Follow Prepositions: Gerunds commonly follow prepositions. Prepositions are words like "in," "on," "at," "for," and "of."

Examples:

- She is good at **singing**.
- We are interested in **learning** new skills.
- He was accused of **stealing** the money.

3. Used After Certain Expressions: Some common expressions and verbs are typically followed by gerunds, including "be used to," "be fond of," "it's worth," and "can't help."

Examples:

- I'm used to **waking up** early.
- She's fond of **dancing**.
- It's worth **trying** this new recipe.
- I can't help **laughing** at that joke.

Infinitives:

1. Function as Nouns: Infinitives also act as nouns, serving as subjects, objects, or complements of certain verbs.

Examples:

- **To swim** is his dream. (Subject)
- She wants **to bake** a cake. (Direct Object)
- My goal is **to travel** the world. (Complement of Verb)

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2. **Preceded by "to":** Infinitives are almost always preceded by the word "to."

Examples:

- He likes ****to sing**** in the shower.
- I need ****to finish**** this report.
- She decided ****to become**** a doctor.

3. **Used with Modals:** Infinitives are used with modal verbs like "can," "will," "should," "must," and "might" to express possibility, obligation, ability, and other modalities.

Examples:

- I can ****swim****.
- You should ****study**** for the exam.
- She might ****come**** to the party.

****Common Verbs with Both Gerunds and Infinitives:****

Some verbs can be followed by both gerunds and infinitives with a change in meaning, as mentioned earlier. For these verbs, understanding the intended meaning is crucial.

Examples:

- I remembered ****to buy**** milk. (I didn't forget to buy it.)
- I remembered ****buying**** milk. (I recalled the act of buying it.)

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1. Forget:

- I forgot ****to call**** him. (I forgot to do it.)
- I forgot ****calling**** him. (I forgot that I called him, implying memory loss.)

2. Remember:

- She remembered ****to bring**** her umbrella. (She didn't forget to bring it.)
- She remembered ****bringing**** her umbrella. (She recalled the act of bringing it.)

3. Regret:

- He regretted ****to inform**** them. (He didn't do it, and he regrets that.)
- He regretted ****informing**** them. (He did inform them, and he feels sorry about it.)

4. Stop:

- They stopped ****to rest**** during the hike. (They halted their activity to rest.)
- They stopped ****resting**** during the hike. (They were resting, but they ceased that activity.)

5. Try:

- I'll try ****to solve**** the puzzle. (I'll make an attempt to solve it.)
- I'll try ****solving**** the puzzle. (I'll experiment with solving it to see if it works.)

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6. Start:

- He started ****to run**** at dawn. (He began running.)
- He started ****running**** at dawn. (He began the activity of running.)

7. Begin:

- She began ****to paint**** the canvas. (She initiated the action of painting.)
- She began ****painting**** the canvas. (She started the creative process of painting.)

Remember that the choice between gerunds and infinitives with these verbs can significantly alter the meaning of your sentence. Pay attention to the context and your intended message when using these verbs.

These distinctions should help you differentiate between gerunds and infinitives and choose the correct one based on the context and meaning you want to convey in your sentences.