

Gerunds: gerund and common verbs



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Verb Form: Gerund or Infinitive The gerund is the -ing form of a verb. The infinitive is the to form of a verb. Compare these lists. • • Gerunds: sketching, painting, weaving, planning Infinitives: to sketch, to paint, to weave, to plan One of the most common ways to use gerunds and infinitives is as the direct object of a verb; for example, in the sentence She loves painting, the gerund painting is the direct object. Some verbs can only be followed by gerunds; others can only be followed by infinitives. There are no clear rules for which verbs take each verb form, so you may want to consult a good dictionary.

You will also find that you memorize the verbs that you use the most.

Common verbs that take only infinitives (to forms) as verbal direct objects agree decide expect hesitate learn need promise neglect hope want plan attempt propose intend pretend I hope to go on a museum tour soon. (NOT: I hope going on a museum tour soon.) He promised to go on a photography trip. (NOT: He promised going on a photography trip.) She was nervous, so she hesitated to speak. (NOT: She was nervous, so she hesitated speaking.

Common verbs that take only gerunds (-ing forms) as verbal direct objects admit appreciate avoid burst out (crying) consider contemplate delay deny detest dislike endure enjoy escape excuse face feel like finish forgive give up (can't) help imagine involve keep (on) leave off mention mind miss postpone practice put off resent resist risk (can't) stand suggest understand They always avoid drinking before welding. (NOT: They always avoid to drink before welding.) I recall asking her which aperture to use. (NOT: I recall to ask her which aperture to use.) She put off buying a new painting. (NOT: She put off to buy a new painting. Common verbs that can take gerunds or

infinitives as verbal direct objects with no change in their meaning advise
 allow can't bear begin continue feel* forbid go hate hear* intend like love
 notice* observe* permit prefer propose see* smell* start watch* She
 continues to work at the art supply store. She continues working at the art
 supply store. *See the section on sense verbs on the next page. Brent
 started to blow glass. Brent started blowing glass. (over) Common verbs that
 take either gerunds or infinitives as verbal direct objects, resulting in
 changed meaning Go on She went on sewing as her assistants cleaned the
 studio. She continued sewing.) She went on to win a Coty award for her
 designs. (She won the award after she made her designs.) Forget and
 Remember Jack forgets to take out the turpentine. (He regularly forgets.)
 Jack forgets taking out the turpentine. (He did it, but he doesn't remember
 doing it now.) Jack forgot to take out the turpentine. (He never did it.) Jack
 forgot taking out the turpentine. (He did it, but he didn't remember doing it
 sometime later.) Jack remembers to take out the turpentine. (He regularly
 remembers.) Jack remembers taking out the turpentine. (He did it, and he
 remembers doing it now. Jack remembered to take out the turpentine. (He
 did it.) Jack remembered taking out the turpentine. (He did it, and he
 remembered doing it sometime later.) Note: In the second of each pair of
 example sentences above, the past progressive gerund form having taken
 can be used in place of taking to avoid any possible confusion. Regret He
 regrets skipping the art history review session. (He is thinking about a past
 action and is sorry.) We regret to inform you that the museum store is
 closed today. (an official announcement) Stop I stopped asking my
 roommate to help me with my assignment. I don't ask her to help anymore.)
 I stopped to ask my roommate to help me with my assignment. (I paused in

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order to ask her to help me.) Try They tried painting over the graffiti, but it didn't work. (They performed an experiment to see what would happen.) The police tried to find the art thieves for 20 years, with no success. (They made an effort to do something difficult.) Sense verbs that take an object plus a gerund or a simple verb Certain sense (or perception) verbs take an object followed by either a gerund or a simple verb (infinitive form minus the word to).

With many of the verbs that follow the object, the use of the gerund shows continuous action while the use of the simple verb shows a one-time action. feel hear smell see watch notice observe Tom heard the gallery director shouting for help. (Tom heard him shout again and again.) Tom heard the gallery director shout for help. (Tom heard him shout once.) We watched him playing the violin. (continuous action) We watched him play the violin. (continuous action) RISD Writing Center/Robin Longshaw, October 2010; sources: Practical English Usage, Michael Swan (Oxford: 2005); <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/627/04/>