

Using Gerunds and Infinitives

Gerunds and infinitives are verb forms that can take the place of a noun in a sentence. The following guidelines and lists will help you figure out whether a gerund or infinitive is needed.

1. Following a verb (*gerund or infinitive*)

Both gerunds and infinitives can replace a noun as the object of a verb. Whether you use a gerund or an infinitive depends on the main verb in the sentence. Consult the lists below to find out which form to use following which verbs.

I *expect* **to have** the report done by Friday. [INFINITIVE]
I *anticipate* **having** the report done by Friday. [GERUND]

Some common verbs followed by a gerund

(note that phrasal verbs, marked here with *, always fall into this category):

<i>acknowledge</i>	She <i>acknowledged</i> receiving assistance.
* <i>accuse of</i>	He <i>was accused of</i> smuggling contraband goods.
<i>admit</i>	They <i>admitted</i> falsifying the data.
<i>advise</i>	The author <i>advises</i> undertaking further study.
<i>anticipate</i>	He <i>anticipates</i> having trouble with his supervisor.
<i>appreciate</i>	I <i>appreciated</i> having a chance to read your draft.
<i>avoid</i>	He <i>avoided</i> answering my question.
<i>complete</i>	I finally <i>completed</i> writing my thesis.
<i>consider</i>	They will <i>consider</i> granting you money.
<i>defer</i>	She <i>deferred</i> writing her report.
<i>delay</i>	We <i>delayed</i> reporting the results until we were sure.
<i>deny</i>	They <i>denied</i> copying the information.
<i>discuss</i>	They <i>discussed</i> running the experiments again.
<i>entail</i>	This review procedure <i>entails</i> repeating the test.
* <i>look after</i>	He will <i>look after</i> mailing the tickets.
* <i>insist on</i>	He <i>insisted on</i> proofreading the article again.
<i>involve</i>	This procedure <i>involves</i> testing each sample twice.
<i>justify</i>	My results <i>justify</i> taking drastic action.
<i>mention</i>	The author <i>mentions</i> seeing this event.
* <i>plan on</i>	They had <i>planned on</i> attending the conference.
<i>postpone</i>	The committee has <i>postponed</i> writing the report.
<i>recall</i>	I cannot <i>recall</i> getting those results before.
<i>resent</i>	He <i>resented</i> spending so much time on the project.
<i>recommend</i>	She <i>recommends</i> reading Marx.
<i>resist</i>	The writer <i>resists</i> giving any easy answers.
<i>risk</i>	She <i>risks</i> losing her viewing time.
<i>sanction</i>	They will not <i>sanction</i> copying without permission.
<i>suggest</i>	I <i>suggest</i> repeating the experiment.
* <i>take care of</i>	He will <i>take care of</i> sending it to you.
<i>tolerate</i>	She can't <i>tolerate</i> waiting for results.

Some common verbs followed by an infinitive:

<i>afford</i>	We cannot <i>afford</i> to hesitate .
<i>agree</i>	The professors <i>agreed</i> to disagree .
<i>appear</i>	The results <i>appear</i> to support your theory.
<i>arrange</i>	They had <i>arranged</i> to meet at noon.

beg	I beg to differ with you.
care	Would you care to respond ?
claim	She claims to have new data.
consent	Will you consent to run for office?
decide	When did he decide to withdraw ?
demand	I demand to see the results of the survey.
deserve	She deserves to have a fair hearing.
expect	The committee expects to decide by tomorrow.
fail	The trial failed to confirm his hypothesis.
hesitate	I hesitate to try the experiment again.
hope	What do you hope to accomplish ?
learn	We have learned to proceed with caution.
manage	How did she manage to find the solution?
neglect	The author neglected to provide an index.
need	Do we need to find new subjects?
offer	We could offer to change the time of the meeting.
plan	They had planned to attend the conference.
prepare	He was not prepared to give a lecture.
pretend	I do not pretend to know the answer.
promise	They promise to demonstrate the new equipment.
refuse	She refused to cooperate any longer.
seem	Something seems to be wrong with your design.
struggle	We struggled to understand her point of view.
swear	He swears to tell the truth.
threaten	The team threatened to stop their research.
volunteer	Will you volunteer to lead the group?
wait	We could not wait to hear the outcome.
want	She did not want to go first.
wish	Do you wish to participate ?

2. Following a preposition (*gerund only*)

Gerunds can follow a preposition; infinitives cannot.

Can you touch your toes *without bending* your knees?
 He was fined *for driving* over the speed limit.
 She got the money *by selling* the car.
 A corkscrew is a tool *for taking* corks out of bottles.

Note: Take care not to confuse the preposition “to” with an infinitive form, or with an auxiliary form such as *have to, used to, going to*.

He went back <i>to writing</i> his paper.	[PREPOSITION + GERUND]
I <i>used to live</i> in Mexico.	[AUXILIARY + VERB]
I <i>want to go</i> home.	[VERB + INFINITIVE]

3. Following an indirect object (*infinitive only*)

Some verbs are followed by a pronoun or noun referring to a person, and then an infinitive. Gerunds cannot be used in this position.

Some common verbs followed by an indirect object plus an infinitive:

<i>ask</i>	I must <i>ask</i> you to reconsider your statement.
<i>beg</i>	They <i>begged</i> her to stay for another term.
<i>cause</i>	His findings <i>caused</i> him to investigate further.
<i>challenge</i>	Wilkins <i>challenged</i> Watson to continue the research.
<i>convince</i>	Can we <i>convince</i> them to fund our study?
<i>encourage</i>	She <i>encouraged</i> him to look beyond the obvious.
<i>expect</i>	They did not <i>expect</i> us to win an award.
<i>forbid</i>	The author <i>forbade</i> me to change his wording.
<i>force</i>	They cannot <i>force</i> her to reveal her sources.
<i>hire</i>	Did the department <i>hire</i> him to teach the new course?
<i>instruct</i>	I will <i>instruct</i> her to prepare a handout.
<i>invite</i>	We <i>invite</i> you to attend the ceremony.
<i>need</i>	They <i>need</i> her to show the slides.
<i>order</i>	He <i>ordered</i> the group to leave the building.
<i>persuade</i>	Can we <i>persuade</i> you to contribute again?
<i>remind</i>	Please <i>remind</i> him to check the references.
<i>require</i>	They will <i>require</i> you to submit an outline.
<i>teach</i>	We should <i>teach</i> them to follow standard procedures.
<i>tell</i>	Did she <i>tell</i> him to make three copies?
<i>urge</i>	I <i>urge</i> you to read the instructions before you begin.
<i>want</i>	I do not <i>want</i> you to have an accident.
<i>warn</i>	Why didn't they <i>warn</i> me to turn down the heat?

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