

Date: 1st June-2026

USING GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES IN ENGLISH

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A gerund is a verb form that ends in “-ing” and is used as a noun (walking, traveling, voting); an infinitive is the base form of a verb preceded by “to” (to walk, to travel, to vote). Gerunds and infinitives can function as the subject of a sentence or the object of a verb. Words derived from verbs are known as verbals and may take modifiers, objects, and complements to form verbal phrases. A gerund phrase uses the “-ing” form of the verb to function as a noun; an infinitive phrase is formed using the infinitive and can function as a noun, adverb, or adjective.

USING VERB FORMS AS SUBJECTS When functioning as the subject of a sentence, gerunds and infinitives always use a singular verb form, for example: “Walking is good exercise.” In this sentence, the “-ing” verb form (“Walking”) is the simple subject and the verb “is” links the subject to the subject complement “good exercise,” which refers to and describes the subject. When a gerund phrase functions as a subject, the “-ing” verb form is expanded as a word group, for example: “Traveling with a friend made the trip to New York more enjoyable.” In this sentence, the gerund phrase (“Traveling with a friend”) is the subject, “made” is the verb, “the trip” is the direct object, “to New York” is the indirect object, and “more enjoyable” is the object complement. Similar to a gerund, the infinitive form of a verb can also function as the subject of a sentence, for example: “To vote is a legal obligation.” In this sentence, the subject (“To vote”) is linked to the direct object (“a legal obligation”) by the verb “is.” Likewise, an infinitive phrase can function as a subject: “To vote in the upcoming election will be an important personal statement.” In this sentence, the infinitive phrase (“To vote in the upcoming election”) is linked to the direct object of the sentence (“an important personal statement”) by the verb “will be.”

USING VERB FORMS AS OBJECTS In idiomatic English, certain verbs are followed only by a gerund, certain verbs by an infinitive, and certain verbs by either a gerund or an infinitive.

Common Verbs Followed Only by a Gerund

admit He admitted stealing the money. advise She advises waiting until tomorrow. anticipate I anticipate having a good time on vacation. appreciate I appreciate hearing from you. avoid He avoided answering my questions. complete She finally completed writing her term paper. consider I will consider going with you. delay He delayed leaving for school. deny She denied knowing anything about it. discuss They discussed opening a new business. enjoy We enjoyed visiting them. escape The team escaped losing the final game. finish She finished studying at about ten. imagine We imagined returning the next summer. keep I keep hoping she will come. mention She mentioned going to a movie. mind Would you mind helping me? miss I miss being with my family. postpone Let's postpone leaving until tomorrow. practice The athlete practiced throwing the ball. quit He quit trying to solve the



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problem. recall I don't recall meeting him before. recommend She recommended seeing that play. regret I regret telling him my secret. resist I could not resist eating dessert. risk She risked losing everything. stop She stopped going to classes. suggest She suggested going to a movie. tolerate He won't tolerate cheating during an examination Common Verbs Followed Only by an Infinitive afford I can't afford to buy it. agree They agreed to help us. appear She appears to be tired. arrange We arranged to meet at ten. ask He asked to come with us. beg He begged to come. care I don't care to see that show

claim She claims to be a descendent of Karl Marx. consent She finally consented to marry him. decide I have decided to leave on Monday. demand I demand to know who is responsible. deserve She deserves to win the prize. expect I expect to enter graduate school in the fall. fail She failed to return the book to the library. forget I forgot to mail the letter. help He wanted to help with the clean-up. hesitate Don't hesitate to ask for my help. hope Jack hopes to arrive next week. learn He learned to play the piano. manage She managed to finish her work early. mean I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. need I need to have your opinion. offer They offered to help us. plan I am planning to have a party. prepare We prepared to welcome them. pretend He pretends not to understand. promise I promise not to be late. refuse I refuse to believe his story. regret I regret to tell you that you failed