

Some verbs must be followed by *to-infinitive*.

Others are followed by the *gerund (base verb+ing)*.

You need to learn what different verbs do.

## The infinitive after a verb

Some verbs are followed by **to-infinitive**.

\* *appear - They appeared to enjoy the movie.*

Here is a list of other verbs that do this:

\* *decide (not to) - I decided not to visit the snake pits.*

\* *expect (don't expect to) - He expected to find lots of snakes. / He didn't expect to stand on a snake!*

\* *forget (don't forget to) - I forgot to bring my camera. / Don't forget to send me a postcard of the snakes.*

\* *learn (learn not to) - We must learn not to cut down so many trees.*

\* *manage (manage not to) - He managed to escape from the flooding river.*

\* *pretend (not to) - I pretended to like his snakes, but really I dislike any reptile!*

\* *promise (not to) - She promised to come back next year. / He promised not to go there alone. (i.e. 'that he wouldn't')*

\* *refuse - She refused to listen to me.*

## The gerund after a verb

Some verbs are followed by the **gerund**.

\* *enjoy - I enjoy working for WWF because I know I am helping animals in different countries.*

Here is a list of other verbs that do this:

\* *admit - I admit cutting down the trees. I had to do it.*

\* *avoid - I avoid meeting her whenever I can.*

\* *can't help - I can't help worrying about Andrew. The weather is really awful and he is out in his boat.*

\* *escape - I escape talking to boring people at parties by telling them that I collect spiders.*

\* *face - Can you face tidying your room?*

\* *imagine - I can't imagine working in a rainforest. There'd be no shops!*

\* *mind - Would you mind waiting here while I get my phone?*

\* *mention - She mentioned going to Madagascar five times. She wants everyone to know about it!*

\* *suggest - I suggested taking a taxi, but they disagreed.*

## The gerund after prepositions

A gerund often comes after a **verb + preposition**, an **adjective + preposition** or a **noun + a preposition**.

\* *I believe in saving rainforests!*

\* *I apologize for being late.*

\* *I'm interested in learning more about snakes.*

\* *I'm worried about going to Africa next year.*

\* *I'm not very good at using computers.*

\* *I think it's a matter of plugging the computer in.*



## Verb + object + gerund

\* *I hate people thinking I'm stupid!*

Here are some verbs that take an object + gerund.

\* *avoid, can't help, love, miss, stop, tolerate, understand*

\* *I can't help women admiring me!*

\* *Please stop her waving that gun around!*

## Verbs that take either the to-infinitive or the gerund with no difference in meaning.

*the verb, start.*

\* *They have started replanting trees in Madagascar.*

\* *They have started to replant trees in Madagascar.*

Other verbs that are like this:

\* *begin, bother, cease, continue, intend, like\*, love, prefer*

\* Sometimes with verbs of liking and hating, the gerund helps suggest the action is really happening.

\* *I hate cutting down more trees but I must clear land for my family.*

The to-infinitive can suggest something more hypothetical.

\* *I'd hate to cut down more trees. Luckily, I don't have to.*

The verb like takes a to-infinitive when something is a good or sensible idea, rather than something you really enjoy.

\* *I like to eat healthy food.*

When we are talking about future preferences or wishes, we use would + like + to-infinitive.

\* *I would like to visit Madagascar.*

\* *I would love to have a lemur as a pet.*

## Some verbs that take an infinitive or a gerund, but with different meanings:

**try + infinitive** has the ordinary meaning of make an effort or attempt to do something:

\* *Try to help me think of an answer, please!*

**try + gerund** has an experimental sense:

\* *I'm worried about erosion near the river. Try planting more trees. (It may work. It might solve the problem.)*

**remember** and **forget + infinitive** is used when we talk about a necessary action and whether we do them.

\* *Did he remember to post that check?*

\* *Don't forget to phone your brother.*

**remember** and **forget + gerund** is used when we talk about memories.

\* *I remember going to Madagascar in 1997. I loved seeing the lemurs.*

\* *She never forgot visiting Madagascar. It was a special vacation for her.*

**regret + infinitive** used for a present action when we give bad news.

\* *I regret to inform you that your application has been unsuccessful.*

**regret + gerund** used when we want to say we regret something in the past.

\* *I regret staying at home instead of traveling when I was younger. Now I am too old to go anywhere!*

**stop + infinitive** is often the infinitive of purpose.

\* *I stopped to take some photos. (The reason I stopped was to take photos.)*

**stop + gerund** is used when we mean to end an action.

\* *Stop daydreaming and start working!*



Exercise 1:

Complete the sentences below with the correct form:

1. Amy, **stop to watch/watching** TV and come here now!
2. She **stopped to breathe/breathing** in the clean fresh air and listen to the birds.
3. After walking through the trees for some time, we **stopped to look/looking** at a kiwi. It was very exciting!
4. I remember **to tell/telling** the conference delegates that we needed to plant trees. They didn't listen to me!
5. Have a good trip. Please remember **to send/sending** me a postcard.
6. We remembered **to stay/staying** on the paths and not touch anything.
7. Try **to think/thinking** before you answer next time. You should think first and then speak!
8. I don't know if this will help me lose weight but I will **try to drink/drinking** a glass of water before eating.

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Answer Key:

Exercise 1:

1. watching, 2. to breathe, 3. to look, 4. telling, 5. to send, 6. to stay, 7. to think, 8. drinking.

