

Verb + -ing or verb + infinitive

The best way to learn which verbs take infinitives, gerunds, or both, is to notice them in context when you read, or to consult grammar references. Here are some of the most common verbs:

Followed by a gerund (-ing form)

admit, advise, consider, discuss, dread, enjoy, finish, mind, practise, recommend, suggest, deny, imagine, miss, keep, risk

Followed by an infinitive

help, hope, prefer, want, would like/love, offer, forget, hate, try, attempt, fail, manage, agree, forget, manage, learn, afford, arrange, decide, plan, promise, invite, agree, appear, choose, decide, hope, need, refuse, seem, wait, intend, plan, mean, remember, agree, refuse, threaten, arrange, tend.

Followed by either, usually with no change in meaning

begin, continue, hate, like, love, prefer, start

Followed by either, with a change in meaning

stop, regret, remember, forget, go on, try

Verbs Followed by Infinitives

8 = verb followed by an infinitive OR an optional noun + an infinitive

13 = verb followed by a gerund OR an infinitive with a difference in meaning

14 = verb followed by a gerund OR an infinitive with little difference in meaning

agree	Tom agreed to help me.
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appear	His health appeared to be better.
arrange	Naomi arranged to stay with her cousin in Miami.
ask [8]	She asked to leave.
begin [13]	He began to talk.
can't bear [14]	He can't bear to be alone.
can't stand [14]	Nancy can't stand to work the late shift.
care	He doesn't care to participate in the activity.
cease [14]	The government ceased to provide free healthcare.
choose [8]	I chose to help.
claim	She claimed to be a princess.
continue [14]	She continued to talk.
decide	We decided to go to Hawaii.
demand	He demanded to speak to Mr. Harris.
deserve	He deserves to go to jail.
dread [13]	I dread to think what might happen.
expect [8]	They expect to arrive early.
fail	He failed to get enough money to pay for the new project.
forget [13]	I forgot to lock the door when I left.

get (be allowed to)	Debbie gets to go to the concert next week! Why can't I?
happen	She happened to be at the bank when it was robbed.
hate [14]	He hates to clean dishes.
hesitate	She hesitated to tell me the problem.
hope	I hope to begin college this year.
intend	We intend to visit you next spring.
learn	I learned to speak Japanese when I was a kid.
like [14]	Samantha likes to read.
love [14]	We love to scuba dive.
manage	He managed to open the door without the key.
need [8,13]	I need to study.
neglect [14]	She neglected to tell me the date of the meeting.
offer	Frank offered to drive us to the supermarket.
plan	We plan to go to Europe this summer.
prefer [14]	He prefers to eat at 7 PM.
prepare [8]	They prepared to take the test.
pretend	The child pretended to be a monster.

promise [8]	She promised to stop smoking.
propose [14]	Drew proposed to pay for the trip.
refuse	The guard refused to let them enter the building.
regret [13]	I regret to inform you that your application was rejected.
remember [13]	Did you remember to lock the door when you left?
seem	Nancy seemed to be disappointed.
start [13]	Marge started to talk really fast.
swear	She swore to tell the truth.
tend	He tends to be a little shy.
threaten [8]	He threatened to leave forever.
try [13]	Mary tried to lift the table, but it was too heavy.
vow	He vowed to get revenge.
wait	She waited to buy a movie ticket.
want [8]	I want to study Spanish.
wish [8]	I wish to stay.
would like [8] (meaning "wish" or "want")	We would like to start now.
yearn	Melanie yearns to travel somewhere exotic.

Verbs Followed by Gerunds OR Infinitives (Similar Meaning)



can't bear	He can't bear being alone.	He can't bear to be alone.
can't stand	Nancy can't stand working the late shift.	Nancy can't stand to work the late shift.
cease	The government ceased providing free health care.	The government ceased to provide free health care.
continue	She continued talking.	She continued to talk.
hate	He hates cleaning dishes.	He hates to clean dishes.
like	Samantha likes reading.	Samantha likes to read.
love	We love scuba diving.	We love to scuba dive.
neglect	He neglected doing his daily chores.	He neglected to do his daily chores.
prefer	He prefers eating at 7 PM.	He prefers to eat at 7 PM.
propose	Drew proposed paying for the trip.	Drew proposed to pay for the trip.

REMEMBER

Although the difference in meaning is small with these particular verbs, and gerunds and infinitives can often be used interchangeably, there is still a meaning difference. Using a gerund suggests that you are referring to real activities or experiences. Using an infinitive suggests that you are talking about potential or possible activities or experiences. Because of this small difference in meaning, gerunds and infinitives cannot always be used interchangeably, such as in the examples below.

Examples:

- The British reporter **likes living** in New York. *He lives in New York and he likes what he experiences there.*
- The British reporter **likes to live** in New York whenever he works in the United States. *He likes the option or possibility of living in New York when he works in the United States.*
- I **like speaking** French because it's such a beautiful language. *I like the experience of speaking French, and the way it makes me feel when I speak the language.*
- I **like to speak** French when I'm in France. *I prefer the option of speaking French when I am in France.*

Verbs Followed by Nouns + Infinitives

9 = verb followed by a gerund OR a noun + an infinitive

13 = verb followed by a gerund OR an infinitive with a difference in meaning

List 1: Verb + Required Noun + Infinitive

advise <u>9</u>	I advised them to see a doctor.
allow <u>9</u>	Ireland doesn't allow people to smoke in bars.
cause	He caused her to make a mistake.
convince	Ned convinced me to quit my job.
enable	Financial aid enabled the students to pay such expensive tuition fees.

encourage [9]	He encourages his patients to eat healthy foods.
force	The commander forced the soldiers to march in the rain.
get (cause to)	Isabelle got Mike to wash her car.
hire	Mr. Donnelly hired Sarah to work as a receptionist.
invite	We invited them to join us.
order	The police ordered him to put his hands in the air.
permit [9]	California doesn't permit people to fish without a fishing license.
remind	They reminded me to pay the bills before the end of the month.
require [9]	The certificate requires students to complete two courses.
tell	He told me to shut up.
urge [9]	They urge citizens to recycle bottles and paper.
warn	She warned him not to be late.

List 2: Verb + Optional Noun + Infinitive

Notice in the examples below that the verbs can be followed by an infinitive or a noun plus an infinitive. When a noun is added, it usually changes who or what is performing the action. To understand this better, look at the first verb "ask" and its examples. In the first sentence, she is asking if she herself can leave. In the second sentence, she is requesting that a man leave. Study the examples below and consider how the optional noun changes the meaning.

ask	She asked to leave.	She asked him to leave.
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choose	I chose to help out.	I chose him to help out.
expect	They expect to arrive early.	The expect him to arrive early.
need [13]	I need to clean the house.	I need her to clean the house.
prepare	They prepared to take the test.	They prepared her to take the test.
promise	She promised to stop smoking	She promised him to stop smoking.
threaten	He threatened to leave forever.	He threatened her to leave forever.
want	I want to study Spanish.	I want my son to study Spanish.
wish	I wish to stay.	I wish him to stay. <i>rare form</i>
would like	We would like to start now.	We would like him to start now.

Verbs Followed by Gerunds OR Infinitives (Different Meaning)



begin	<p>She began singing. She began to sing.</p> <p><i>When "begin" is used in non-continuous tenses, you can either use a gerund or an infinitive.</i></p>	<p>She is beginning to sing.</p> <p><i>When "begin" is used in continuous tenses, an infinitive is used.</i></p>
dread	<p>She dreaded taking the test.</p> <p><i>Usually "dread" is followed by a gerund.</i></p>	<p>He dreaded to think of the consequences of his actions.</p> <p><i>"Dread" is sometimes used with infinitives such as "think" or</i></p>

		<i>"consider." In the sentence above, "dreaded to think" means "did not want to think."</i>
forget	<p>She forgot reading the book when she was a kid.</p> <p><i>When "forget" is used with a gerund, it means "to forget that you have done something." The sentence above means that she read the book when she was a kid, and that she has forgotten that fact.</i></p>	<p>She forgot to pay the rent this month.</p> <p><i>When forget is used with an infinitive, it means "to forget that you need to do something." The sentence above means that she forgot that she needed to pay the rent.</i></p>
keep	<p>She kept talking.</p> <p><i>"Keep" is normally used with a gerund to mean that you continue doing an action.</i></p>	<p>The attackers kept hostages to prevent the police from entering.</p> <p><i>"Keep" can also be used with an object followed by an infinitive, but then the infinitive takes on the meaning of "in order to... ." In the sentence above, the attackers kept hostages in order to prevent the police from entering.</i></p>
need	<p>The house needs cleaning.</p> <p><i>When "need" is used with a gerund, it takes on a passive meaning. The sentence above means "the house needs to be cleaned."</i></p>	<p>He needs to call his boss. He needs him to call his boss.</p> <p><i>"Need" is usually used with an infinitive or an object + an infinitive.</i></p>
regret	<p>I regretted being late to the interview.</p> <p><i>"Regret" is normally used with a gerund.</i></p>	<p>We regret to inform you that your position at the company is being eliminated.</p> <p><i>"Regret" is sometimes used with infinitives such as "to inform." In the sentence above, "We regret to inform you" means "We wish we did not have to tell you (bad news)."</i></p>
remember	<p>I remember mentioning the meeting yesterday.</p> <p><i>When "remember" is used with a gerund, it means "to</i></p>	<p>He remembered to turn off the lights before he left.</p> <p><i>When "remember" is used with an infinitive, it means "to remember</i></p>

	<p><i>remember that you have done something." The sentence above means that I mentioned the meeting, and that I remember the fact that I did that.</i></p>	<p><i>that you need to do something." The sentence above means that he remembered that he needed to turn the lights off.</i></p>
start	<p>Marge started talking really fast. Marge started to talk really fast.</p> <p><i>When "start" is used in non-continuous tenses, you can either use a gerund or an infinitive.</i></p>	<p>Marge is starting to talk really fast.</p> <p><i>When "start" is used in continuous tenses, an infinitive is used.</i></p> <p>I started to learn Russian, but it was so much work that I finally quit the class.</p> <p><i>In other situations, an infinitive means that you did not complete or continue an action.</i></p>
stop	<p>He stopped smoking for health reasons.</p> <p><i>"Stop" is normally used with a gerund.</i></p>	<p>He stopped to rest for a few minutes.</p> <p><i>When "stop" is used with an infinitive, the infinitive takes on the meaning of "in order to." In the sentence above, he stopped in order to rest for a few minutes.</i></p>
try	<p>She can't find a job. She tried looking in the paper, but there was nothing. She tried asking friends and family, but nobody knew of anything. She also tried going shop to shop, but nobody was hiring.</p> <p><i>"Try + gerund" means to try or to experiment with different methods to see if something works.</i></p> <p>She tried eating the snake soup, but she didn't like it.</p> <p><i>"Try + gerund" is often used when you experiment with something, but you do not really like it or want to do it again.</i></p>	<p>She tried to climb the tree, but she couldn't even get off the ground.</p> <p><i>When you "try to do" something, you want to do it, but you do not succeed in actually doing it. In the sentence above, an infinitive is used because she cannot successfully climb the tree.</i></p> <p>Try not to wake the baby when you get up tomorrow at 5 AM.</p> <p><i>An infinitive is also used if you are asking someone to try something they may or may not be able to accomplish.</i></p>

Verbs Followed by Gerunds OR Infinitives (Similar Meaning)



can't bear	He can't bear being alone.	He can't bear to be alone.
can't stand	Nancy can't stand working the late shift.	Nancy can't stand to work the late shift.
cease	The government ceased providing free health care.	The government ceased to provide free health care.
continue	She continued talking.	She continued to talk.
hate	He hates cleaning dishes.	He hates to clean dishes.
like	Samantha likes reading.	Samantha likes to read.
love	We love scuba diving.	We love to scuba dive.
neglect	He neglected doing his daily chores.	He neglected to do his daily chores.
prefer	He prefers eating at 7 PM.	He prefers to eat at 7 PM.
propose	Drew proposed paying for the trip.	Drew proposed to pay for the trip.

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- I **like speaking** French because it's such a beautiful language. *I like the experience of speaking French, and the way it makes me feel when I speak the language.*
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admit	He admitted cheating on the test.
advise [<u>9</u>]	The doctor generally advised drinking low-fat milk.
allow [<u>9</u>]	Ireland doesn't allow smoking in bars.
anticipate	I anticipated arriving late.
appreciate	I appreciated her helping me.
avoid	He avoided talking to her.
begin [<u>14</u>]	I began learning Chinese.

can't bear [14]	He can't bear having so much responsibility.
can't help	He can't help talking so loudly.
can't see	I can't see paying so much money for a car.
can't stand [14]	He can't stand her smoking in the office.
cease [14]	The government ceased providing free healthcare.
complete	He completed renovating the house.
consider	She considered moving to New York.
continue [14]	He continued talking.
defend	The lawyer defended her making such statements.
delay	He delayed doing his taxes.
deny	He denied committing the crime.
despise	She despises waking up early.
discuss	We discussed working at the company.
dislike	She dislikes working after 5 PM.
don't mind	I don't mind helping you.
dread [13]	She dreads getting up at 5 AM.
encourage [9]	He encourages eating healthy foods.
enjoy	We enjoy hiking.

finish [13]	He finished doing his homework.
forget [13]	I forgot giving you my book.
hate [14]	I hate cleaning the bathroom.
imagine	He imagines working there one day.
involve	The job involves traveling to Japan once a month.
keep	She kept interrupting me.
like [14]	She likes listening to music.
love [14]	I love swimming.
mention	He mentioned going to that college.
mind	Do you mind waiting here for a few minutes.
miss	She misses living near the beach.
need [13]	The aquarium needs cleaning.
neglect [14]	Sometimes she neglects doing her homework.
permit [9]	California does not permit smoking in restaurants.
postpone	He postponed returning to Paris.
practice	She practiced singing the song.
prefer [14]	He prefers sitting at the back of the movie theater.
propose [14]	I proposed having lunch at the beach.

quit [13]	She quit worrying about the problem.
recall	Tom recalled using his credit card at the store.
recollect	She recollected living in Kenya.
recommend	Tony recommended taking the train.
regret [13]	She regretted saying that.
remember [13]	I remember telling her the address yesterday.
report	He reported her stealing the money.
require [9]	The certificate requires completing two courses.
resent	Nick resented Debbie's being there.
resist	He resisted asking for help.
risk	He risked being caught.
start [14]	He started studying harder.
stop [13]	She stopped working at 5 o'clock.
suggest	They suggested staying at the hotel.
tolerate	I tolerated her talking.
try [13]	Sam tried opening the lock with a paperclip.
understand	I understand his quitting.
urge [9]	They urge recycling bottles and paper.

Verbs Followed by Either Gerunds OR Nouns + Infinitives



advise	I advised seeing a doctor.	I advised them to see a doctor.
allow	Ireland doesn't allow smoking in bars.	Ireland doesn't allow people to smoke in bars.
encourage	He encourages eating healthy foods.	He encourages his patients to eat healthy foods.
permit	California doesn't permit fishing without a fishing license.	California doesn't permit people to fish without a fishing license.
require	The certificate requires completing two courses.	The certificate requires students to complete two courses.
urge	They urge recycling bottles and paper.	They urge citizens to recycle bottles and paper.