

# Gerunds and infinitives

Hello and welcome back, in this lesson we will be exploring the use of **gerunds** and **infinitives**. We will find out what they are.

**What is a gerund?** Gerunds are words that are formed with **verbs** but act as **nouns**.



# Recap

What is a **verb** again?

A verb shows an action or a state of being.



**Run**



**Sleep**



**Smell**



**Feel**



**Play**



**Watch**

**Let's use these in a sentence:**

I **run** to school.

I **sleep** at night.

I **smell** flowers.

I **feel** good.

I **play** football.

I **watch** television.

These are all the actions within the sentence.

## What are **nouns**?

**Nouns** are words that are the names of people or objects.

These can be singular or plural.

For most nouns if they are plural an extra 'S' at the end of the noun is needed.

Singular - Plural Noun - Noun+(s)

Hat – Hats



Cow – Cows



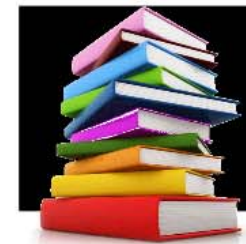
Boy – Boys



Car – Cars



Book – Books



## How do we spot a gerund?

They're very easy to spot, since every gerund is a verb with **ing**.  
Remember: On most verbs we double the last letter before adding (ing).

**Verb + ing = verb(ing)**



Read \_\_\_\_\_



Run \_\_\_\_\_



Fly \_\_\_\_\_



Swim \_\_\_\_\_



Play \_\_\_\_\_

**Note!**



This has nothing to do with the continuous tense, or the perfect continuous tenses.

Gerunds are just the verbs '**acting**' as nouns.

So the tense doesn't apply here

## How to use gerunds



You can use a gerund as the subject, the complement, or the object of a sentence.

### Examples:



**Reading** helps you learn English.  
(Subject of sentence)



His favourite hobby is **reading**.  
(Complement of sentence)



I enjoy **reading**.  
(Object of sentence)

## Negative gerunds

Gerunds can be made negative by adding "not."

**Examples:**



He enjoys **not working**.



The best thing for your health is **not smoking**.



## What are Infinitives?

Infinitives are the **"to"** form of the verb. The infinitive form of **"learn"** is **"to learn."** You can also use an infinitive as the subject, the complement, or the object of a sentence.

### Examples:



**To learn** is important.  
(subject of sentence)



The most important thing is **to learn**.  
(complement of sentence)



He wants **to learn**.  
(object of sentence)

## Negative infinitives

Infinitives can be made negative by adding "not."

**Examples:**



I decided **not to go**.



The most important thing is **not to give up**.

## Which is the best to use?

Both gerunds and infinitives can be used as the subject or the complement of a sentence.

However, gerunds usually sound more natural. Infinitives tend to sound more abstract.

### Examples:

**Learning** is important.  
(normal subject)



**To learn** is important.  
(abstract subject - less common)

## Examples:



The most important thing is **learning**.  
(normal complement)

The most important thing is **to learn**.  
(abstract complement - less common)

## **The Object?**

When using both for the object of the sentence it can be hard to choose between a gerund and an infinitive. It is usually, the main verb in the sentence that determines what to use.



## Examples:



He enjoys **swimming**.  
"**Enjoy**" requires a gerund.

He wants **to swim**.  
"**Want**" requires an infinitive.