

GERUNDS AND VERB PATTERNS

It is a characteristic of gerunds that they end in 'ing'. The same is true of present participles, and the verb tense that we call 'Present Continuous'. There is a connection between them. If you take a present continuous sentence, for example: 'She is running uphill', and you change 'is' to 'likes', the result is a gerund: 'She likes running uphill'.

You can also now replace 'running uphill' with a noun, such as 'chocolates'.

Many common verbs are followed or not followed by another verb in the 'ing' form.

Concentrate on the second verb after looking at the first one. There is no rule apart from learning the pattern. 'Like' is one of the few verbs where you have a choice. You can both like *to do* something and like *doing* something.

There are two other important things to remember. First, it is very common in English to start a sentence with a gerund. It's much better to say: 'Living here is great' than to say 'To live ...!' Secondly, prepositions are followed by 'ing'. We can say that 'to' is an exception, but even that is not always true: 'I called to see how you are' / I look forward to seeing you again'.

GERUNDS / 'ING' FORMS

The subject of a sentence:

Playing an instrument well takes hours of practice.

The object of a verb:

*He wants to avoid **paying** too much tax.*

After prepositions:

*Sara's interested in **coming** with us.*

Verbs and prepositions often combine so that a following verb form will be 'ing':

*I dream of **having** a house in the country.*

Present participles have the same form, but they are different:

***Walking** around so much, we became very tired.*

Words such as 'worth' are often followed by 'ing':

*The offer is worth **thinking** about.*

VERB PATTERNS: SOME EXAMPLE VERBS

VERB + 'ING'

admit

avoid

can't stand

deny

dislike

enjoy

feel like

finish

(not) mind

suggest

VERB + 'TO' + BASE FORM

afford
expect
forget
hope
intend
manage
would like

VERB + 'ING' OR + 'TO' + BASE FORM

go on*
hate
like
love
remember*
start
stop*
try*

*significant differences in the meaning (see below)

VERB + BASE FORM WITHOUT 'TO'

would rather
had better
let (someone do something)
make (someone do something)
have (someone do something)

SPECIAL PROBLEMS

look forward to + 'ing'

be used to + 'ing' (do not confuse this with 'used to do' etc. for *past* states and habits)

differences in meaning:

He went on *talking* about the same old subject.

After the budget review we went on *to discuss* the new project.

I remember *spending* a few days there years ago.

Don't worry, I'll remember *to call* you.

I'm going to stop *smoking* .

It was hot, so we stopped *to have* a drink.

The meat's a bit undercooked. Try *leaving* it in the oven ten more minutes.

I've tried *to repair* it for you, but I just couldn't make it work.

Exercise 1

Match the beginning of each sentence with the correct conclusion.

1. I can't afford	a) visiting you.
2. She agreed	b) her to win.
3. We'll manage	c) hearing that noise.
4. I've enjoyed	d) explain.
5. I'm used	e) go home now.
6. I can't stand	f) to live here
7. He'd rather	g) to see me tomorrow.
8. They permitted	h) to survive.
9. I heard	i) to buy a new car.
10. You can avoid	j) to getting up early.
11. I used	k) seeing him.
12. Just let me	l) them running.

Exercise 2

How should the sentences below be completed?

1. The department easily managed the project on time.

- a) to complete
- b) completing

2. We'd better , or we'll be late for the show.

- a) hurry
- b) to hurry

3. I've considered for a job abroad.

- a) to apply
- b) applying

4. Only authorized personnel are allowed the restricted area.

- a) to enter
- b) entering

5. Despite some initial problems, the event turned out a great success.

- a) to be
- b) being

6. Researchers have tried what makes people addicted to their smartphones.

- a) to understand
- b) understanding

7. Being a professional sportsperson involves a number of sacrifices.

- a) to make
- b) making

8.

- a) The chilly weather conditions have favored indoors with the heating on.
- b) to stay
- b) staying

9. Last year's setback has not stopped the company to strong growth.

- a) to return
- b) returning

10. We hope the essential repairs by the end of the week.

- a) to finish
- b) finishing

11. The survey has helped us the key to consumers' preferences.

- a) find
- b) finding

12. We definitely need a plan B if plan A fails.

- a) to have
- b) having

13. I admit to not much about machine learning.

- a) know
- b) knowing

14. You can't leave the city without its famous art gallery.

- a) to visit
- b) visiting

15. I look forward to to you again when I come back next month.

- a) talk
- b) talking

16. The president denied anything wrong, that he had upheld the rules.

- a) to have done / to say
- b) having done / saying

17. The availability of fresh local produce has enabled the restaurant a great menu.

- a) to offer
- b) offering

18. We had trouble the correct address..

- a) to find
- b) finding

19. After the question of the budget, the chairman went on about future plans.

- a) to address / speaking
- b) addressing / to speak

20. John was very boring, and just went on about himself all night.

- a) to speak
- b) speaking

Exercise 3

Why is the 'ing' form used in these sentences?

1. Most crops need *weeding* regularly.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

2. Green roofs are useful for *collecting* rainwater.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

3. We have cut down on electricity use, *lowering* our overheads.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

4. I've considered *setting up* my own company.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

5. *Obtaining* the necessary financial backing might be difficult.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

6. Would you mind *giving* me a hand when you have a minute?.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

7. The president spoke to journalists briefly, before *being* taken to his hotel.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

8. The dance company has existed for 30 years, *entertaining* audiences with its productions.
 - a) subject of the sentence
 - b) after a verb + ing
 - c) determined by a preposition
 - d) present participle

9. He spent the early part of his career *working* in the family business.

- a) subject of the sentence
- b) after a verb + ing
- c) determined by a preposition
- d) present participle

10. *Cooking* over an open fire is an enjoyable experience.

- a) subject of the sentence
- b) after a verb + ing
- c) determined by a preposition
- d) present participle

chilly – quite cold

setback – temporary obstacle

a survey – an examination of something, often in the form of a questionnaire

to uphold – to support

produce (uncountable noun, stressed on the first syllable) – fresh food from a farm

a crop – a plant grown for consumption

to weed – to remove unwanted wild plants

overheads – a company's fixed costs, for example lighting, rent, insurance