

Gerunds and Infinitives – Doing What Noun Phrases Do

Here is a brief review of the differences between gerunds and infinitives.

- ➔ **Gerunds** are formed with **ING**: **walking, talking, thinking, listening**
- ➔ **Infinitives** are formed with **TO**: **to walk, to talk, to think, to listen**

Gerunds and infinitives can do several jobs:

- ➔ **Both gerunds and infinitives** can be the **subject of a sentence**:

- ➔ **Writing in English is difficult.**
- ➔ **To write in English is difficult.**

- ➔ **Both gerunds and infinitives** can be the **object of a verb**:

- ➔ **I like writing in English.**
- ➔ **I like to write in English.**

But...

- ➔ **Only gerunds** can be the **object of a preposition**:

- ➔ **We are talking about writing in English.**

It is often difficult to know when to use a gerund and when to use an infinitive. These guidelines may help you:

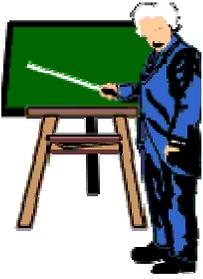
- ➔ **Gerunds** are often used when actions are **real, concrete or completed**:

- ➔ **I stopped smoking.**
- ➔ (The smoking was real and happened until I stopped.)

- ➔ **Infinitives** are often used when actions are **unreal, abstract, or future**:

- ➔ **I stopped to smoke.**
- ➔ (I was doing something else, and I stopped; the smoking had not happened yet.)

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Cloze Exercise: Gerunds and Infinitives

Yuri was in his first year at university, studying History. He was rather a lazy student, and he tended to avoid **(work)** whenever he could. In the middle of the semester, his history professor gave out an assignment, due in two weeks. Yuri intended **(do)** the assignment, but he postponed **(write)** it for a week. The following week, he forgot **(do)** it. The night before the assignment was due, he suddenly remembered it, and rushed to the library. He tried **(read)** as much as possible on the topic, but there wasn't enough time. Yuri considered **(ask)** for more time to do his paper, but the History professor was known to be very tough on students, so finally he decided **(cheat)** and copy his paper from somewhere else. He found an old article on the same topic, and quickly typed it out. The next day, he submitted the paper, **(think)** he could really get away with it. .

The following week, he was alarmed **(see)** the professor approaching him, looking angry. "Is this your own work, or did you copy it?" asked the professor. Yuri denied **(copy)** the paper. "If you expect me **(believe)** that, you must be very stupid," said the professor. "Every word is taken from an article I wrote myself five years ago. Did you really think I would forget **(write)** it?"

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Using these six sentences, write a paragraph using either a gerund or an infinitive where appropriate.

1. Yoko want/go/abroad.
2. Her mother/suggest/go/to Canada.
3. She decide/visit/ British Columbia.
4. She consider/study/in Vancouver.
5. However, she/hate/live/in big cities.
6. Finally, she choose/live/in Victoria.