Infinitive or -ing forms?

INFINITIVE AND *-ING* FORMS

-ing forms as nouns

When we want to use a verb as a subject or object of a sentence, we use an *-ing* form.

Having *something like that on your travels has to be good.*
We didn't do ***programming*** *in our IT classes at school.*

-ing forms after prepositions

When a verb follows a preposition, we use an *-ing* form.

What's wrong ***with using*** *your own voice?*
We were all involved ***in organising*** *the event.*
I'm really looking forward ***to going*** *to the gadget fair in San Francisco.*

-ing forms as adjectives

We can use some *-ing* forms as adjectives.

What's more ***embarrassing*** *...*
It's a very ***exciting*** *development.*

-ing forms and continuous tenses

Remember we also use an *-ing* form to make continuous tenses.

Someone ***'s following*** *you.* (present continuous)
I was talking *to him the other day and he said he'd bought a new car.* (past continuous)
Have a rest. You ***'ve been playing*** *that game for three hours!* (present perfect continuous)

Infinitive with *to* for purpose

We use an infinitive with *to* to explain the reason or purpose for doing something.

You can use your phone ***to lock*** *or unlock it from anywhere.*
I need to go to the bank ***to sort out*** *a problem.*
I made a recording of my own music ***to give*** *to friends.*

-ing form or infinitive with *to*?

Both *-ing* forms and infinitive with *to* can follow verbs with no preposition. There are no rules for which form goes after which verbs. It's just the way it is.

Imagine walking *at night.* (*imagine* + *-ing* form)
It's an app that ***allows*** *you* ***to speak*** *in a foreign language.* (*allow* + object + infinitive with *to*)

Other verbs followed by an *-ing* form:

be caught	can't stand	fancy	feel like
keep	involve	mind	miss
recommend	risk	spend	suggest

Other verbs followed by an infinitive with *to*:

agree	arrange	ask	decide
deserve	fail	hope	intend
learn	manage	persuade	plan
promise	refuse	threaten	want

Watch the video:

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7 Look at these extracts from the podcast. Complete rules 1–6 with a–f below.

1 We use the *-ing* form in these extracts because ...
Having *something like that on your travels has to be good.*
... what's more embarrassing – the translation or ***saying*** *your mate's mum is 'nice'?*

2 We use the *-ing* form in these extracts because ...
Good for ***scaring*** *your little brother ...*
What's wrong with ***using*** *your own voice?*

3 We use the *-ing* form in this extract because ...
... what's more ***embarrassing*** *...?*

4 We use the *-ing* form in these extracts because ...
Someone's ***following*** *you – a robber or worse.*
... some creep's ***considering*** *robbing me ...*

5 We use the infinitive with *to* in this extract because ...
You can use the app on your phone ***to lock*** *or unlock it from anywhere.*

6 We use the *-ing* form and the infinitive with *to* in these extracts because ...
You don't think he might be more tempted ***to rob*** *me?*
Imagine ***walking*** *home at night ...*
It's an app that allows you ***to speak*** *in a foreign language you don't know.*
... some creep's considering ***robbing*** *me ...*

a it's part of a continuous tense.

b some *-ing* forms are adjectives.

c we want to use a verb as a subject or object of a sentence. (It's like a noun.)

d we always use an *-ing* form of the verb after a preposition. (It's like a noun.)

e some verbs are always followed by an *-ing* form and others are always followed by an infinitive with *to* – that's just the way it is!

f we want to explain the purpose or reason for something.



8 Decide if the sentences below are correct or incorrect. If there is a mistake, correct it.

1 I should get a new computer because it keeps to crash.

2 They should bring out an app to do my school assignments automatically.

3 To make your own films is much easier with this new software because the user interface is really clear.

4 I saved so much money after buying this gadget that measures how much electricity is being used in the house.

5 I never turn down the heating for to save energy.

6 We're all guilty of to damage the planet in some way.

7 People need to get used to not drive everywhere. They should walk more.

8 I took the laptop back to the shop and luckily they agreed to exchange it.

9 Complete the sentences so they are true for you. Use an *-ing* form or an infinitive with *to*. Then work in pairs and compare your ideas.

1 They should invent a machine ...

2 I think ... is OK for women, but not for men.

3 I'm hoping ... sometime in the future.

4 I keep ...

5 I think ... is better for you than ...

6 I spend most of my weekends ...

7 I've arranged ... at the weekend.

Exercise 1

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs.

1 _____ computer games can be very educational. (play)
2 I was involved in _____ the website at work. (develop)
3 They should invent a robot _____ your pets while you're away. (look after)
4 The company finally agreed _____ me a refund for the faulty gadget. (give)
5 The app allows you _____ if any of your friends are nearby. (find out)
6 I can't stand people _____ with their smartphones while they're _____ to me. (mess around, talk)
7 I was thinking of _____ Computer Engineering there, but I failed _____ the grades I needed. (study, get)
8 You should get a cover for your phone _____ it _____ damaged. (prevent, get)

Exercise 2

Choose the correct option.

1 My job involves *travelling / to travel* a lot.
2 Do you fancy *going / to go* out somewhere this evening?
3 Sorry. I've arranged *meeting / to meet* a friend.
4 I'd rather stay in. I don't feel like *going / to go* out.
5 He played well. He didn't deserve *losing / to lose*.
6 I asked her very politely *emailing / to email* me a response, but I still haven't heard back from her.
7 I avoid *talking / to talk* to him as much as I can.
8 Unless you want to risk *losing / to lose* your work, you should set your computer to save automatically.

Exercise 3

With your group, talk about gadgets or apps that you think are rubbish. Explain why. Don't forget to use infinitive or -ing forms while speaking.

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