

6A GRAMMAR

gerunds and infinitives

verbs followed by the gerund and verbs followed by the infinitive

- 1 I enjoy listening to music. I couldn't help laughing. (3 37))
- 2 I want to speak to you. They can't afford to buy a new car.
- 3 It might rain tonight. I'd rather eat in than go out tonight.

When one verb follows another, the first verb determines the form of the second. This can be the gerund (verb + -ing) or the infinitive (with or without *to*).

- 1 Use the **gerund** after certain verbs and expressions, e.g. *enjoy*, *can't help*.
 - When a phrasal verb is followed by another verb, the verb is the **gerund**, e.g. *carry on*, *keep on*, *give up*, *look forward to*, etc.
- 2 Use the **infinitive (with to)** after certain verbs and expressions, e.g. *want*, *afford*.
- 3 Use the **infinitive (without to)** after modal verbs and some expressions, e.g. *might*, *would rather*, and after the verbs *make* and *let*.
 - In the passive, *make* is followed by the infinitive with *to*. Compare *My boss makes us work hard*. *At school we were made to wear a uniform*.

► p.164 Appendix Verb patterns: verbs followed by the gerund or infinitive

like, love, hate, and prefer

like, *love*, *hate*, and *prefer* are usually used with the gerund in British English but can also be used with the infinitive.

We tend to use the gerund when we talk generally and the infinitive when we talk specifically e.g.

I like swimming (general)

I like to swim first thing in the morning when there aren't many people there (specific)

I prefer cycling to driving (general)

You don't need to give me a lift to the station. *I prefer to walk* (specific)

When *like*, *love*, *hate*, and *prefer* are used with *would*, they are always followed by *to + infinitive*, e.g. *I'd prefer to stay at home tonight*, *I'd love to come with you*.

verbs that can be followed by either gerund or infinitive with *to*

- 1 It started to rain. It started raining. (3 38))
- 2 Remember to lock the door.
I remember going to Venice as a child.
Sorry, I forgot to do it.
I'll never forget seeing the Taj Mahal.
I tried to open the window.
Try calling Miriam on her mobile.
You need to clean the car.
The car needs cleaning.

- 1 Some verbs can be followed by the gerund or infinitive (with *to*) **with no difference in meaning**. The most common verbs like this are *start*, *begin*, and *continue*.
- 2 Some verbs can be followed by the gerund or infinitive (with *to*) **with a change of meaning**.
 - *remember + infinitive* = you remember first, then you do something. *Remember + gerund* = you do something then you remember it.
 - *forget + infinitive* = you didn't remember to do something.
forget + gerund = You did something and you won't forget it. It is more common in the negative.
 - *try + infinitive* = make an effort to do something.
try + gerund = experiment to see if something works.
 - *need + gerund* is a passive construction, e.g. *needs cleaning* = needs to be cleaned NOT *needs to clean*.

a Complete with a gerund or infinitive with *to* of a verb from the list.

carry call come do drive eat out go out take
tidy wait work

I'm exhausted! I don't fancy *going out* tonight.

- 1 I suggest _____ a taxi to the airport tomorrow. It'll be much quicker.
- 2 Even though the snow was really deep, we managed _____ to the local shop and back.
- 3 We'd better _____ some shopping – there isn't much food for the weekend.
- 4 I'm very impatient. I can't stand _____ in queues.
- 5 I wasn't well and a young man offered _____ my bags.
- 6 My parents used to make me _____ my room.
- 7 We threatened _____ the police if the boys didn't stop throwing stones.
- 8 Do you feel like _____ to the gym with me?
- 9 I'd prefer _____ instead of getting a takeaway.
- 10 I don't mind _____ late tonight if you want me to.

b Circle the correct form.

Your hair needs *cutting* / *to cut*. It's really long!

- 1 I'll never forget *to see* / *seeing* the Grand Canyon for the first time.
- 2 I need *to call* / *calling* the helpline. My computer has crashed.
- 3 Have you tried *to take* / *taking* a tablet to help you sleep?
- 4 I must have my keys somewhere. I can remember *to lock* / *locking* the door this morning.
- 5 I had to run home because I had forgotten *to turn* / *turning* the oven off.
- 6 Our house needs *to paint* / *painting*. Do you know any good house painters?
- 7 Did you remember *to send* / *sending* your sister a card? It's her birthday today.
- 8 We tried *to learn* / *learning* to ski last winter, but we weren't very good at it.

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