

Verbs followed by 'ing' or by 'to + infinitive' (change in meaning)

When one verb is followed by another, the second verb can either be an **infinitive** or an **-ing form**. Some verbs can be followed by either an **infinitive**, or an **-ing form** but with a change in meaning.

To-infinitive or gerund: **FORGET, REMEMBER, REGRET, GO ON, STOP, TRY**

After these verbs, a to-infinitive refers to the future, while a gerund expresses an earlier action, relative to the time of the verb in the main clause:

Don't **forget to meet** Mr Moriarty at 10 o'clock this morning. (You should meet Mr Moriarty at 10 o'clock this morning.)

I'll never **forget meeting** her for the first time. (I'll never forget when I met her for the first time.)

Did you **remember to buy** tea? (Did you remember that you should buy tea?)

I don't **remember** ever **visiting** this museum. (I don't remember that I have ever visited this museum.)

We **regret to inform** you that your application has been rejected. (We are sorry we have to inform you that your application has been rejected.)

I **regret spending** so much money last night. (I am sorry that I spent so much money last night.)

Whichever page you're on, **go on to read** the next chapter. (Continue with the next chapter.)

Go on reading the article. (Continue reading the article.)

We **stopped to drink** a cup of coffee. (We stopped in order to drink a cup of coffee.)

I **stopped smoking** years ago. (I gave up smoking years ago.)

Try + to + infinitive means that **something is difficult and you make an attempt to do it**.

I'm **trying to learn** Japanese but it's very difficult.

Try + 'ing' means make an **experiment**. It's not difficult – it might work, it might not.

Have you **tried using** butter instead of oil?

I **tried to reach** her at work, but the line was busy. (I made an attempt to reach her at work.)

Why didn't you **try calling** her on her mobile? (Why didn't you call her on her mobile to see if you could reach her?)

To-infinitive or gerund: **LIKE, HATE, PREFER, CAN'T BEAR**

The verbs *like* and *hate* express liking if they are followed by a gerund:

*I **like getting up** early in summer. (I enjoy getting up early in summer.)*

*I **hate dancing**, so don't ask me to. (I don't like dancing.)*

But if these verbs are followed by a to-infinitive, they express habitual preference, something that we do not necessarily like or enjoy but consider as useful, right or wise:

*I **like to be** punctual. (It's important to be punctual and I am.)*

*I **hate to lie**, but sometimes I do. (It's not right to lie but sometimes I do.)*

If *like* is in the negative, a gerund refers to an action that we do but don't enjoy doing, while a to-infinitive means that we don't do something because we don't think it right to do:

*I could tell that Sandra **didn't like being photographed** though she didn't say a word. (Sandra was photographed, which she didn't like.)*

*Sandra **didn't like to be photographed**, so she turned her back to the camera. (Sandra didn't want to be photographed, and she wasn't.)*

Remember that **'would like'** can only be followed by an **infinitive**.

I'd like to go to Japan next year, if possible.

Prefer and *can't bear* can also take a gerund or a to-infinitive:

*I **prefer walking** to taking the bus. (I like walking better than taking the bus.)*

*If you **prefer to walk**, it will take you 30 minutes to school. (If you want to walk, it will take you 30 minutes to school.)*

*I **can't bear seeing** people being humiliated. (I don't like it when I see people being humiliated.)*

*I **couldn't bear to see** those animals suffer, so I looked away. (I didn't want to see them suffer, so I looked away.)*

To-infinitive or gerund: **CONSIDER, IMAGINE**

Consider and *imagine* can be followed by either a gerund, or a noun phrase or pronoun + to-infinitive but with different meanings:

I am **considering working** abroad. (I am thinking of working abroad.)

Everybody **considers him to be** the best person for the job. (Everybody thinks that he is the best person for the job.)

Imagine living at 2,000 metres above sea level! (Imagine what it would be like to live at 2,000 metres above sea level.)

I **imagined him to be** much taller. (I expected that he would be much taller.)

To-infinitive or gerund: **MEAN, HELP**

Mean and help can be followed by either a gerund or a to-infinitive but with different meanings:

In those days, *being a student* **meant spending** long hours in the library. (In those days if you were a student, it meant that you spent long hours in the library.)

I **didn't mean to hurt** your feelings. (I didn't intend to hurt your feelings.)

I **can't help thinking** that you are hiding something. (only in the negative: I have to think that you are hiding something.)

Could you **help me (to) undo** my shoelaces? My fingers are frozen. (Could you undo my shoelaces?)

Help can be followed by a bare infinitive or a to-infinitive.

To-infinitive or gerund: **NEED, REQUIRE, WANT**

Need, require and want can be followed by the active or passive to-infinitives to express active or passive meanings, respectively:

I **need to make** a phone call.

Sometimes, people **need to be told** the truth.

My job **requires me to handle** many letters from abroad.

They **required the information to be** sent as soon as possible.

I **wanted to stay** for a few more days.

It was obvious that he **wanted to be invited**.

But active gerunds after these verbs express passive meanings:

Your hair **needs cutting**. (It should be cut.)

These photos **require careful handling**. (They should be handled carefully.)

The windows **want cleaning**. (They should be cleaned.)

<http://www.grammarly.com/verbs-followed-by-the-to-infinitive-or-gerund-with-a-difference-in-meaning>

Verbs Followed by Gerunds or Infinitives (Different Meaning)

begin	She began singing . She began to sing . WHEN "BEGIN" IS USED IN NON-CONTINUOUS TENSES, YOU CAN EITHER USE A GERUND OR AN INFINITIVE.	She is beginning to sing . WHEN "BEGIN" IS USED IN CONTINUOUS TENSES, AN INFINITIVE IS USED.
dread	She dreaded taking the test. USUALLY "DREAD" IS FOLLOWED BY A GERUND.	He dreaded to think of the consequences of his actions. "DREAD" IS SOMETIMES USED WITH INFINITIVES SUCH AS "THINK" OR "CONSIDER." IN THE SENTENCE ABOVE, "DREADED TO THINK" MEANS "DID NOT WANT TO THINK."
forget	She forgot reading the book when she was a kid. WHEN "FORGET" IS USED WITH A GERUND, IT MEANS "TO FORGET THAT YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING." THE SENTENCE ABOVE MEANS THAT SHE READ THE BOOK WHEN SHE WAS A KID, AND THAT SHE HAS FORGOTTEN THAT FACT.	She forgot to pay the rent this month. WHEN FORGET IS USED WITH AN INFINITIVE, IT MEANS "TO FORGET THAT YOU NEED TO DO SOMETHING." THE SENTENCE ABOVE MEANS THAT SHE FORGOT THAT SHE NEEDED TO PAY THE RENT.

keep	<p>She kept talking.</p> <p>"KEEP" IS NORMALLY USED WITH A GERUND TO MEAN THAT YOU CONTINUE DOING AN ACTION.</p>	<p>The attackers kept hostages to prevent the police from entering.</p> <p>"KEEP" CAN ALSO BE USED WITH AN OBJECT FOLLOWED BY AN INFINITIVE, BUT THEN THE INFINITIVE TAKES ON THE MEANING OF "IN ORDER TO... ." IN THE SENTENCE ABOVE, THE ATTACKERS KEPT HOSTAGES IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE POLICE FROM ENTERING.</p>
need	<p>The house needs cleaning.</p> <p>WHEN "NEED" IS USED WITH A GERUND, IT TAKES ON A PASSIVE MEANING. THE SENTENCE ABOVE MEANS "THE HOUSE NEEDS TO BE CLEANED."</p>	<p>He needs to call his boss.</p> <p>He needs him to call his boss.</p> <p>"NEED" IS USUALLY USED WITH AN INFINITIVE OR AN OBJECT + AN INFINITIVE.</p>
regret	<p>I regretted being late to the interview.</p> <p>"REGRET" IS NORMALLY USED WITH A GERUND.</p>	<p>We regret to inform you that your position at the company is being eliminated.</p> <p>"REGRET" IS SOMETIMES USED WITH INFINITIVES SUCH AS "TO INFORM." IN THE SENTENCE ABOVE, "WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU" MEANS "WE WISH WE DID NOT HAVE TO TELL YOU (BAD NEWS)."</p>
remember	<p>I remember mentioning the meeting yesterday.</p> <p>WHEN "REMEMBER" IS USED WITH A GERUND, IT MEANS "TO REMEMBER THAT YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING." THE SENTENCE ABOVE MEANS THAT I MENTIONED THE MEETING, AND THAT I REMEMBER THE FACT THAT I DID THAT.</p>	<p>He remembered to turn off the lights before he left.</p> <p>WHEN "REMEMBER" IS USED WITH AN INFINITIVE, IT MEANS "TO REMEMBER THAT YOU NEED TO DO SOMETHING." THE SENTENCE ABOVE MEANS THAT HE REMEMBERED THAT HE NEEDED TO TURN THE LIGHTS OFF.</p>
start	<p>Marge started talking really fast.</p> <p>Marge started to talk really fast.</p> <p>WHEN "START" IS USED IN NON-CONTINUOUS TENSES, YOU CAN EITHER USE A GERUND OR AN INFINITIVE.</p>	<p>Marge is starting to talk really fast.</p> <p>WHEN "START" IS USED IN CONTINUOUS TENSES, AN INFINITIVE IS USED.</p> <p>I started to learn Russian, but it was so much work that I finally quit the class.</p> <p>IN OTHER SITUATIONS, AN INFINITIVE MEANS THAT YOU DID NOT COMPLETE OR CONTINUE AN ACTION.</p>
stop	<p>He stopped smoking for health reasons.</p> <p>"STOP" IS NORMALLY USED WITH A GERUND.</p>	<p>He stopped to rest for a few minutes.</p> <p>WHEN "STOP" IS USED WITH AN INFINITIVE, THE INFINITIVE TAKES ON THE MEANING OF "IN ORDER TO." IN THE SENTENCE ABOVE, HE STOPPED IN ORDER TO REST FOR A FEW MINUTES.</p>
try	<p>She can't find a job. She tried looking in the paper, but there was nothing. She tried asking friends and family, but nobody knew of anything. She also tried going shop to shop, but nobody was hiring.</p> <p>"TRY + GERUND" MEANS TO TRY OR TO EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT METHODS TO SEE IF SOMETHING WORKS.</p> <p>She tried eating the snake soup, but she didn't like it.</p> <p>"TRY + GERUND" IS OFTEN USED WHEN YOU EXPERIMENT WITH SOMETHING, BUT YOU DO NOT REALLY LIKE IT OR WANT TO DO IT AGAIN.</p>	<p>She tried to climb the tree, but she couldn't even get off the ground.</p> <p>WHEN YOU "TRY TO DO" SOMETHING, YOU WANT TO DO IT, BUT YOU DO NOT SUCCEED IN ACTUALLY DOING IT. IN THE SENTENCE ABOVE, AN INFINITIVE IS USED BECAUSE SHE CANNOT SUCCESSFULLY CLIMB THE TREE.</p> <p>Try not to wake the baby when you get up tomorrow at 5 AM.</p> <p>AN INFINITIVE IS ALSO USED IF YOU ARE ASKING SOMEONE TO TRY SOMETHING THEY MAY OR MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH.</p>

Put the verb into the correct form, ing or to.

1) I was very tired. I tried _____ my eyes open but I couldn't.

[]keeping []to keep []o

2) I rang the doorbell but there was no answer. Then I tried _____ on the door, but there was still no answer.

[]knocking []to knock []o

3) We tried _____ the fire out but we were unsuccessful.

[]putting []to put []o

4) Sue needed to borrow some money. She tried _____ Gerry but he was short of money too.

[]to ask []o []asking

5) I tried _____ the shelf but I wasn't tall enough.

[]reaching []to reach []o

6) Please leave me alone. I'm trying _____ .

[]concentrating []o []to concentrate

7) I need a change. I need _____ away for a while.

[]o []to go []going

8) She isn't able to look after herself. She needs _____ after.

[]o []looking []to look

9) The windows are dirty. They need _____ .

[]o []to clean []cleaning

10) Why are you leaving now. You don't need _____ yet, do you?

[]o []going []to go

11) They were talking very loudly. I couldn't help _____ them.

[]overhearing []o []to overhear

12) Can you help me _____ the dinner ready.

[]to get []getting []o

13) He looks so funny. Whenever I see him, I can't help _____ .

[]smiling []to smile []o

14) The fine weather helped _____ it a very enjoyable holiday.

[]to make []o []making

Put the verb into the gerund or the infinitive:

- 1) I couldn't sleep so I tried (drink) some hot milk.
- 2) She tried (reach) the book on the high shelf but she was too small.
- 3) They tried (get) to the party on time but the bus was delayed.
- 4) We tried (open) the window, but it was so hot outside it didn't help.
- 5) He tried (get) a job in a newspaper firm but they wouldn't hire him.
- 6) He tried (get) a job in a newspaper firm but he still wasn't satisfied.
- 7) You should stop (smoke), it's not good for your health.
- 8) We stopped (study) because we were tired.
- 9) They will stop (have) lunch at twelve.
- 10) We stopped (have) a rest because we were really sleepy.
- 11) Oh no! I forgot (buy) milk.
- 12) Please don't forget (pick up) some juice on your way home.
- 13) I forgot (lock) the door, but I'm sure I must have locked it.
- 14) Have we studied this before? I've forgotten (learn) it.
- 15) Please remember (bring) your homework.
- 16) I remember (go) to the beach as a child.
- 17) Finally I remembered (bring) your book! Here it is.
- 18) Do you remember (eat) steak in that little restaurant in Rome?
- 19) I regret (tell) you the train has been delayed.
- 20) I regret (tell) Julie my secret; now she has told everyone.