

CHAPTER-04

GERUND

The gerund looks exactly the same as a present participle, but it is useful to understand the difference between the two. The gerund always has the same function as a noun (although it looks like a verb). Some uses of the gerund are covered on this page. A separate page deals with **verbs that are followed by the gerund**.

The gerund as the subject of the sentence

Examples

- **Eating** people is wrong.
- **Hunting** tigers is dangerous.
- **Flying** makes me nervous.
- **Brushing** your teeth is important.
- **Smoking** causes lung cancer.

The gerund as the complement of the verb 'to be'

Examples

- One of his duties **is attending** meetings.
- The hardest thing about learning English **is understanding** the gerund.
- One of life's pleasures **is having** breakfast in bed.

The gerund after prepositions

The gerund must be used when a verb comes after a preposition. This is also true of certain expressions ending in a preposition, for example the expressions *in spite of* & *there's no point in*.

Examples

- Can you sneeze **without opening** your mouth?
- She is good **at painting**.
- She avoided him **by walking** on the opposite side of the road.
- We arrived in Madrid **after driving** all night.
- My father decided **against postponing** his trip to Hungary.
- There's no point **in waiting**.
- In spite **of missing** the train, we arrived on time.

The gerund after phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs are composed of a **verb + preposition or adverb**.

Examples

- When will you **give up smoking**?
- She always **puts off going** to the dentist.
- He **kept on asking** for money.
- Jim **ended up buying** a new TV after his old one broke.

There are some phrasal verbs that include the word "to" as a preposition for example *to look forward to*, *to take to*, *to be accustomed to*, *to get around to*, & *to be used to*. It is important to recognise that the word "to" is a preposition in these cases because it must be followed by a gerund. It is not part of the infinitive form of the verb. You can check whether "to" is a preposition or part of the infinitive. If you can put the pronoun "it" after the word "to" and form a meaningful sentence, then the word "to" is a preposition and must be followed by a gerund.

Examples

- I **look forward to hearing** from you soon.
- I **look forward to it**.
- I am **used to waiting** for buses.
- I am **used to it**.
- She didn't really **take to studying** English.
- She didn't really **take to it**.

- When will you **get around to mowing** the grass?
- When will you **get around to it**?

The gerund in compound nouns

In compound nouns using the gerund, it is clear that the meaning is that of a noun, not of a continuous verb. For example, with the word "swimming pool" it is a pool for swimming in, it is not a pool that is swimming.

Examples

- I am giving Sally a **driving lesson**.
- They have a **swimming pool** in their back yard.
- I bought some new **running shoes**.

The gerund after some expressions

The gerund is necessary after the expressions *can't help*, *can't stand*, *to be worth*, & *it's no use*.

Examples

- She **couldn't help falling** in love with him.
- I **can't stand being** stuck in traffic jams.
- It's **no use trying** to escape.
- It might **be worth phoning** the station to check the time of the train.