Gerunds and infinitives

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NIVELES B1 Y B2 DE INGLÉS

Use the gerund (verb+ing)

- 1. After prepositions and phrasal verbs
- 2. As the subject of a sentence
- 3. After some verbs, e.g. hate, spend, don't mind

- Common verbs which take the gerund include: admit, avoid, can't help, can't stand, complete, consider, continue, deny, dislike, enjoy, fancy, feel like, finish, hate, imagine, involve, keep, like, love, miss, mind, need (passive sense), practise, recall, resist, risk, resent, spend, stop, suggest, to be worth, and phrasal verbs, e.g. give up, go on...

- Examples
  - 1. I'm very good at remembering names / She´s given up smoking
  - 2. Eating out is quite cheap here.
  - 3. I don't mind getting up early

Use the infinitive (+to)

- 1. After adjectives
  - This is difficult to do.
- 2. To express a reason or purpose (not use)
  - Save to buy a car.
- 3. After some verbs, e.g. want, need, learn
- 4. Common verbs which take the infinitive (with to) include: appear (opinion), (can't) afford, arrange, agree, be able, decide, expect, fail, forget*, help, hope, intend, learn, manage, need, offer, plan, pretend, promise, refuse, remember, seem, try, threaten, want, wish, would like/love/prefer

- 5. Also, verb+object+infinitve
  - Advice, expect, order, remind, allow, forbid, invite, recommend, teach, ask, force, persuade, tell, warn, encourage, enable, want, would like, help, mean
- Examples:
  - 1. My flat is easy to find.
  - 2. He's saving money to buy a new car.
  - 3. She's never learnt to drive.
  - 4. Try not to make a noise.
  - 5. He allowed me to come in.

Use the infinitive (without to)

- 1. After most modal and auxiliary verbs
  - Can, could, may, might, must, shall, will, should, would, needn't
- 2. After make and let
  - But in the passive we use the infinitive: I was allowed to go / I was made to sing
- 3. After perception verbs
  - See, hear, feel, smell,
- 4. After dare* / help*

- Examples
  - 1. I can't drive. We must hurry.
  - 2. My parents don't let me go out much / She always makes me laugh.
  - 3. I heard him cry / I saw it fall / I heard it break
  - 4. Do we dare follow our passions?

Verbs that can take a gerund or an infinitive

- Some verbs (forget, try, go on, mean, regret, stop) can take a gerund or an infinitive but the meaning is different:
  - Try to be on time (=make an effort to be on time)
  - Try doing yoga (=do it to see if you like it)
  - Remember to phone him (=don't forget to do it)
  - I remember meeting him years ago (=I have a memory of it)
  - I went on writing the article (=continue)
  - I went on to convince him (=change the activity)

  - I regret saying those things (=things I have said before)
  - I regret to tell you this (=I'm sorry for what I'm about to say)
- More verbs take the infinitive than the gerund.
- These common verbs can take either the gerund or the infinitive with no difference in meaning: begin, continue, prefer, start
- Gerunds and infinitives for the negative with not, e.g. not to be, not being

To learn more…

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