

## Finite and non-finite Verbs

### Finite verbs

Present Simple:	I type	I speak
Present Continuous:	I am typing	I am speaking
Past Simple:	I typed	I spoke
Present Perfect:	I have typed	I have spoken

### Non-finite verbs

Present Participle:	Typing speed	Speaking engagement
Perfect Participle:	Having typed	Having spoken
Past Participle:	Typed letters	Spoken commentary
Gerund:	Typing can be difficult.	Do you find speaking stressful?
Infinitive:	To type is a real skill.	They want you to speak.

### Non-finite verbs are not limited by subject, person, number or tense

The Present Participle is formed by adding the suffix – ing. It functions as an adjective.

His **typing** speed was less than ideal.

The **speaking** engagement was for next Friday afternoon.

The Perfect Participle is formed by combining with the past participle:

**Having typed** the letter, he went home.

**Having spoken** her mind, she felt more at ease.

The Past Participle without an auxiliary, functions as an adjective:

**Typed** letters don't always look better than hand-written ones.

Most sports shows have a **spoken** commentary with them.

The Gerund is merely the present participle that functions as a noun.

**Typing** is something I don't do as well as I should.

I find **speaking** stressful.

## The Infinitive

**To type** is a real skill.

**To win** the prize is my dream.

This is the best software package **to improve** productivity.

They want you **to speak**.

## Careful:

You will need **to limit** your workload (infinitive).

I will work **to the limit** of my power. (prepositional phrase)

## Exercises:

**Having looked** over the papers, she looked out of the window.

He asked me **to go** later.

**Walking** through the park is my favourite activity..

My **walking** shoes are extremely comfortable.

## Present Participles ( –ing form) can be used as an adjective.

This is an **interesting** book. (This book interests me)

John has become very **boring**. (John now bores us.)

An **astounding** number of men stay bachelors. (The number astounds us.)

A **charming** house on the outskirts of town. (The house charms us.)

There is nothing very **surprising** in this. (Nothing in this surprises us.)

When Bernhard moans, he's much more **convincing**. (When he moans, he convinces us much more.)

Oil and gas drillers are doing a **booming** business. (The business of oil drillers is booming.)

I love the noise of **falling** rain. (I love it when rain falls.)

I don't like **screaming** children. (The Children who are screaming)

**Exercises:**

1. The film wasn't as good as we had expected. It was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Diana teaches young children. She likes it, but she finds it \_\_\_\_\_.
3. It's been hot all week. I hate this weather. It's \_\_\_\_\_.

**Present Participles** ( -ing form) can be combined with adverbs in compound structures

An **adequately functioning** computer. (A computer that functions adequately.)

**Pro-active performing** staff (Staff who perform pro-actively)

**Quick-growing** trees (These trees grow quickly)

**Slow-moving** produce (This produces moves slowly)

**Exercises:**

1. This class is expanding rapidly. This is a \_\_\_\_\_
2. Our stomachs are aching badly. We have \_\_\_\_\_
3. This exercise is exhausting me thoroughly. This is a \_\_\_\_\_

**Present Participles** ( -ing form) with an object can be used as an adjective. Note the word order.

**Tamil-speaking** Sri Lankans (These Sri Lankans speak Tamil)

A **rabbit-hunting** woman. (A woman who hunts rabbits.)

Is that oven **self-cleaning**? (Does that oven clean itself?)

**Exercises:**

1. She likes to think of herself as someone who occasionally eats meat. She is a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. This sort of work destroys your soul. It's \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I'm not sure if I know what you mean. This could consume a lot of my time.  
It could be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Verbs + ing** forms

After some verbs, an –ing form is necessary:

stop	delay	fancy	consider	admit	miss	involve
finish	postpone	imagine	avoid	deny	risk	enjoy
practise	detest	dislike	dread	envisage	hate	miss
recall	resent	regret	risk	propose	give up	put off
carry on	go on	keep / keep on				

After some expressions, an –ing form is necessary:

It's no use    it's no good    there's no point in    it's (not) worth    have difficulty  
A waste of money                      spend/waste time

### Examples with passive:

She fears that patients would resent **being interviewed** by a medical computer.

He loves **being looked at** by others.

### **Verb-like -ing forms**

Agent (subject) of gerund is also the subject of the verb in the sentence.

### Same time

Carol's in the bar **having** a drink.

A man ran out of the house **shouting**.

Don't just stand there **doing** nothing.

Steve hurt his arm **playing** tennis.

Be careful when **crossing** the road

He had been up all night, **attending** a dying man.

They ran **screaming** out of the room.

A little girl walked past, her doll **dragging** behind her on the pavement.

A little girl walked past, **dragging** her doll behind her on the pavement.

A car roared past with smoke **pouring** from the exhaust.

**Strolling** in nonchalantly, she failed to notice the time on the clock on the wall.

Often used with verbs of reporting.

I saw a small girl **standing** in the goldfish pond.

I saw him **walking** down the street.

She heard me **reading** aloud my vocabulary.

Liz felt something **touching** her on the back.

Tim smelt something **burning**.

Succession of events

After finishing her work, she went home.

After scanning the article, she was able to answer the multiple-choice questions.

After talking to you I always feel better.

Cause/Effect

**Feeling** tired, I went to bed early.

**Being French**, it's surprising that she's such a terrible cook.

**Having** so little time, there was not much that I could do.

Training funds **being** available, she was able to improve her knowledge of spreadsheets

Nobody **having** any more to say, the meeting was closed.

Not **knowing** what to do, I telephoned the police.

With Peter **working** in Geelong, and Lucy **travelling** most of the week, the house seems pretty empty.

Instead of relative clauses

Who's the fat man **sitting** in the corner?

There's a woman **crying** her eyes out over there.

Anyone **touching** that wire, will get a shock.

There's Neville, **eating** as usual.

Who's the girl **dancing** with your brother?

But: Who's the girl your brother's dancing with?

Referring to objects, even indirect objects:

I watched the match because I knew some of the people **playing**.

I don't like children **screaming**.

I found him **sitting** at a table covered with papers.

We can offer you a job **cleaning** cars.

After conjunctions and prepositions.

She's been quite different since **coming** back from Singapore.

On **meeting** each other, Australian people often shake hands.

They left without **saying** goodbye.

Misrelated participles

My wife had a long talk with Sally, **explaining** why she didn't want the children to play together.

Like adverbs?

Generally **speaking**, men can run faster than women.

**Considering** everything, it wasn't a bad holiday.

I thought it pointless **starting** before nine o' clock.

## Perfect Participles

**Having found** a hotel, we looked for somewhere to have dinner.

**Having finished** her work, she went home.

**Having lost** all of my money, I went home.

**Having failed** my medical exams, I took up teaching.

After **having annoyed** everybody he went home.

**Having driven** five hours to the meeting, Don learnt that it had been postponed.

**Having been invited** to the party, we could hardly refuse to go.

All the money **having been spent**, we started looking for work.

**Having been hunted** close to extinction, the rhino is once again common in this area.

**Having been declared** insane, he was confined for four months in a prison hospital.

She's angry about not **having been invited** to the party.

## Past participles

Past Participles (–ed form) can be used as an adjective. These are derived from passive constructions.

The upstairs toilet window is still **broken**. (The window was broken by someone)

The house looked **abandoned**. (The house had been abandoned by its occupants.)

We cannot refuse to teach children the **required** subjects. (The subjects are required by the school.)

She says she's got a **broken** heart. (Her heart was broken by someone.)

A **lost** dog. (The dog was lost by someone.)

The **recovered** animals will be released. (The animals were recovered by someone.)

He was driven home in an **armoured** car. (The car was armoured. It had been armoured by a vehicle security firm.)

## Compound structures

**Government-inspired** rumours (These rumours have been inspired by the government.)

**Home-made** cake (This cake was made at home.)

A **recently-built** house. (This house was recently built.)

The **above-mentioned** point (This point was mentioned above.)

I like **highly-motivated** students.

It was a **richly-deserved** honour.

She had a very **laid-back** manner.

After nouns (or pronouns) – these are similar to reduced relative clauses:

I got the only ticket **left**.

Most of the people **invited** to the reception were old friends.

We couldn't agree on any of the problems **discussed**.

The people **questioned** gave very different opinions.

Most of those **questioned** refused to answer.

Those **selected** will begin training on Monday.

Half of the people **invited** to the party didn't turn up.

Clause-like structures

**Rejected** by all his friends, he decided to become a monk.

**Used** economically, one tin will last for six weeks.

**Served** with milk and sugar, it makes a delicious breakfast.

Participle clauses after conjunctions and prepositions.

Once **deprived** of oxygen, the brain dies.



## Gerunds

A gerund is a verbal form that ends in *-ing* and functions as a noun. Since a gerund functions as a noun, it occupies some positions in a sentence that a noun ordinarily would, for example: subject, direct object, subject complement, and object of preposition.

Gerund as subject:

- *Travelling* might satisfy your desire for new experiences.
- The study abroad program might satisfy your desire for new experiences.

Gerund as direct object:

- They do not appreciate my *singing*.
- They do not appreciate my assistance.

Gerund as subject complement:

- My cat's favourite activity is *sleeping*.
- My cat's favourite food is salmon.

Gerund as object of preposition:

- The police arrested him for *speeding*.
- The police arrested him for criminal activity.

**A Gerund Phrase is a group of words consisting of a gerund and the modifier(s) and/or (pro)noun(s) or noun phrase(s) that function as the direct object(s), indirect object(s), or complement(s) of the action or state expressed in the gerund, such as:**

*Finding a needle in a haystack* would be easier than what we're trying to do.

**The gerund phrase functions as the subject of the sentence.**

Finding (gerund)  
a needle (direct object of action expressed in gerund)  
in a haystack (prepositional phrase as adverb)

I hope that you appreciate *my offering you this opportunity*.

**The gerund phrase functions as the direct object of the verb *appreciate*.**

my (possessive pronoun adjective form, modifying the gerund)  
offering (gerund)  
you (indirect object of action expressed in gerund)  
this opportunity (direct object of action expressed in gerund)

Newt's favourite tactic has been *lying to his constituents*.

**The gerund phrase functions as the subject complement.**

lying to (gerund)  
his constituents (direct object of action expressed in gerund)

You might get in trouble for *faking an illness to avoid work*.

**The gerund phrase functions as the object of the preposition *for*.**

faking (gerund)  
an illness (direct object of action expressed in gerund)  
to avoid work (infinitive phrase as adverb)

*Being the boss* made Jeff feel uneasy.

**The gerund phrase functions as the subject of the sentence.**

Being (gerund)  
the boss (subject complement for *Jeff*, via state of being expressed in gerund)

## **Punctuation**

A gerund virtually never requires any punctuation with it.

### **Points to remember:**

1. A gerund is a verbal ending in *-ing* that is used as a noun.
2. A gerund phrase consists of a gerund plus modifier(s), object(s), and/or complement(s).
3. Gerunds and gerund phrases virtually never require punctuation.

### **Exercise on Gerunds:**

Underline the gerunds or gerund phrases in the following sentences and label how they function in the sentence (subject, direct object, subject complement, object of preposition).

1. Swimming keeps me in shape.
2. Swimming in your pool is always fun.
3. Telling your father was a mistake.
4. The college recommends sending applications early.
5. He won the game by scoring during the overtime period.
6. Her most important achievement was winning the national championship.
7. Going to work today took all my energy.
8. Fighting for a losing cause made them depressed.

## Infinitives

The infinitive may function as a subject, direct object, subject complement, adjective, or adverb in a sentence. Although an infinitive is easy to locate because of the *to* + verb form, deciding what function it has in a sentence can sometimes be confusing.

- *To wait* seemed foolish when decisive action was required. (subject)
- Everyone wanted *to go*. (direct object)
- His ambition is *to fly*. (subject complement)
- He lacked the strength *to resist*. (adjective)
- We must study *to learn*. (adverb)

**An Infinitive Phrase** is a group of words consisting of an infinitive and the modifier(s) and/or (pro)noun(s) or noun phrase(s) that function as the actor(s), direct object(s), indirect object(s), or complement(s) of the action or state expressed in the infinitive, such as:

We intended <i>to leave early</i> .	<b>Functioning as direct object of the verb <i>intended</i>.</b> to leave (infinitive) early (adverb)
I have a paper <i>to write before class</i> .	<b>Functioning as an adjective modifying <i>paper</i>.</b> to write (infinitive) before class (prepositional phrase as adverb)
Phil agreed <i>to give me a ride</i> .	<b>Functioning as the direct object of the verb <i>agreed</i>.</b> to give (infinitive) me (indirect object of action expressed in infinitive) a ride (direct object of action expressed in infinitive)
They asked <i>me to bring some food</i> .	<b>Functioning as the direct object of the verb <i>asked</i>.</b> me (actor or "subject" of infinitive phrase) to bring (infinitive) some food (direct object of action expressed in infinitive)
Everyone wanted <i>Carol to be the captain of the team</i> .	<b>Functioning as the direct object of the verb <i>wanted</i>.</b> Carol (actor or "subject" of infinitive phrase) to be (infinitive) the captain (subject complement for <i>Carol</i> , via state of being expressed in infinitive) of the team (prepositional phrase as adjective)

**Actors:** In these last two examples the actor of the infinitive phrase could be roughly described as the "subject". It is a bit misleading to use the word *subject*, however, since an infinitive phrase is not a full clause with a subject and a finite verb. Also notice that when it is a pronoun, the actor appears in the objective case (*me*, not *I*, in the fourth example). Certain verbs, when they take an infinitive direct object, require an actor for the infinitive phrase; others can't have an actor. Still other verbs can go either way, as the charts below illustrate.

**Verbs that take infinitive objects without actors:**

agree	begin	refuse	decide
fail	hesitate	hope	intend
learn	neglect	offer	plan
prefer	pretend	promise	
remember	start	try	

Examples:

Most students *plan* to study.

We *began* to learn.

They *offered* to pay.

They *neglected* to pay.

She *promised* to return.

In all of these examples no actor can come between the italicized main (finite) verb and the infinitive direct-object phrase.

**Verbs that take infinitive objects with actors:**

advise	allow	convince	remind
encourage	force	hire	teach
instruct	invite	permit	tell
implore	incite	appoint	order

Examples:

He *reminded* me to buy milk.

Their fathers *advise* them to study.

She *forced* the defendant to admit the truth.

You've *convinced* the director of the program to change her position.

I *invite* you to consider the evidence.

In all of these examples an actor is required after the italicized main (finite) verb and before the infinitive direct-object phrase.

**Verbs that use either pattern:**

ask	expect	(would) like	want
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Examples:

I *asked* to see the records.

I *asked* him to show me the records.

Trent *expected* his group to win.

Trent *expected* to win.

Brenda *likes* to drive fast.

Brenda *likes* her friend to drive fast.

In all of these examples the italicized main verb can take an infinitive object with or without an actor.

**Punctuation:**

If the infinitive is used as an adverb and is the beginning phrase in a sentence, it should be set off with a comma; otherwise, no punctuation is needed for an infinitive phrase.

- *To buy a basket of flowers*, John had to spend his last dollar.
- *To improve your writing*, you must consider your purpose and audience.

## Split infinitives:

Split infinitives occur when additional words are included between *to* and the verb in an infinitive. Many readers find a single adverb splitting the infinitive to be acceptable, but this practice should be avoided in formal writing.

Examples:

I like *to* on a nice day *walk* in the woods. \* (unacceptable)

On a nice day, I like *to walk* in the woods. (revised)

I needed *to* quickly *gather* my personal possessions. (acceptable in informal contexts)

I needed *to gather* my personal possessions quickly. (revised for formal contexts)

## Exercise on Infinitives:

Underline the infinitive phrase and label the way it is used in the sentence, adding any punctuation as needed.

1. I want to go.
2. I want you to go home.
3. We want to see the play.
4. To see a shooting star is good luck.
5. To fight against those odds would be ridiculous.

Now underline the infinitive phrase and label how it is used in the sentence.

6. To design a new building for them would be challenging.
7. I want him to be my bodyguard.
8. Jim is expected to program computers at his new job.
9. They will try to build a new stadium in ten years.
10. To distill a quart of moonshine takes two hours.
11. The president wants to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.
12. She has the money to buy it.
13. We demonstrated to attract attention to our agenda.
14. I do not like to give poor grades.
15. The dogs were taught to stand, to sit, and to bark on command.
16. To be great is to be true to yourself and to the highest principles of honor.
17. To see is to believe.