

LESSONS

The Gerund

1) Gerunds as Subject, Object or Complement:

Try to think of gerunds as verbs in noun form. Like nouns, gerunds can be the subject, object or complement of a sentence:

- **Smoking** costs a lot of money.
- I don't like **writing**.
- My favourite occupation is **reading**.

But, like a verb, a gerund can also have an object itself. In this case, the whole expression [gerund + object] can be the subject, object or complement of the sentence.

- **Smoking cigarettes** costs a lot of money.
- I don't like **writing letters**.
- My favourite leisure is **reading detective stories**.

Like nouns, we can use gerunds with adjectives (including articles and other determiners):

- pointless **questioning**
- a **settling** of debts
- the **making** of Titanic
- his **drinking** of alcohol

2) Gerunds after Prepositions:

This is a good rule. It has no exceptions! If we want to use a verb after a preposition, it must be a gerund. It is impossible to use an infinitive after a preposition. So for example, we say:

- I will call you *after* **arriving** at the office.
- Please have a drink *before* **leaving**.
- I am looking forward *to* **meeting** you.
- Do you object *to* **working** late?
- Tara always dreams *about* **going** on holiday.

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3) Gerunds after Certain Verbs

We sometimes use one verb after another verb. Often the second verb is in the infinitive form, for example:

- I *want to eat*.

But sometimes the second verb must be in gerund form, for example:

- I *dislike eating*.

This depends on the *first verb*. Here is a list of verbs that are usually followed by a verb in gerund form:

- *admit, appreciate, avoid, carry on, consider, defer, delay, deny, detest, dislike, endure, enjoy, escape, excuse, face, feel like, finish, forgive, give up, can't help, imagine, involve, leave off, mention, mind, miss, postpone, practise, put off, report, resent, risk, can't stand, suggest, understand*

Look at these examples:

- She is *considering having* a holiday.
- Do you *feel like going* out?
- I *can't help falling* in love with you.
- I *can't stand not seeing* you.