

Gerund or Infinitive as Object of Verb?

OBJECTS OF VERBS: gerund or infinitive * gerund only * infinitive only * other

Gerunds and infinitives can both be used as subjects, subject complements, and direct objects of verbs. The choice of whether to use a gerund or infinitive as a subject, subject complement, or object of some verbs is left to the speaker/writer. This choice can indicate shades of meaning.

But the choice between which to use as a direct object is sometimes dictated by the verb, leaving no choice. Which verbs can be followed by gerunds, which by infinitives, (and which by either) must be memorized. In addition, some verbs require that an infinitive object have a different subject (agent) from that of the first verb, for others no other agent is possible, and for some both are possible. Again, these must be memorized. The general meanings associated with gerunds and infinitives can offer clues, but do not always predict which forms are possible.

Remember, the question here concerns verbs which control gerunds and infinitives as their objects. Of course, both infinitives and gerunds can follow an unlimited number of verbs for other reasons. For example, infinitives can also follow verbs to show purpose, in reduced adjective or adverb clauses, or with other meanings. Gerunds with noun modifiers can be the objects of many different verbs. And present participles, which may look like gerunds, are not controlled by preceding verbs. And remember that noun clauses can also be used as objects of many of these same verbs

VERBS THAT CAN HAVE INFINITIVE OR GERUND OBJECTS, with little or no difference in meaning:

_____ *studying.*
_____ *to study.*

can afford	cease	dread	loathe	prefer	start
can't bear	commence	hate	love	propose	undertake
begin	continue	like	neglect	(can't) stand	

VERBS THAT CAN HAVE GERUND OBJECTS, BUT NOT INFINITIVES:

(usually actual events, often past)

_____ *(his) studying*

gerund subjects (agents) are usually possessive (*his*, etc.)

admit	deny	get through	mention	recollect	stop
anticipate	detest	give up	(not) mind	recommend	suggest
appreciate	discuss	go on	miss	report	take up
avoid	dislike	can't help	postpone	resent	tolerate
complete	enjoy	imagine	practice	resist	understand
consider	escape	involve	put off	resume	
defend	excuse his	keep (on)	quit	risk	
delay	finish	would like (him)	recall	(can't) see	

VERBS THAT CAN HAVE INFINITIVE OBJECTS, BUT NOT GERUNDS:

(often suggesting a potential or unreal event)

_____ *to study*

him = infinitive must have a subject (agent)
 for him = infinitive must have a subject introduced by *for*
 (him) or (for him) = subject (agent) of infinitive is optional
 (none of the above = verb is followed directly by the infinitive)

agree	command him	fail	long	promise	train him
aim	condescend	force him	manage	refuse	trust him
appear	consent	get (him)	motivate him	remind him	volunteer
appoint him	convince him	happen	need (him)	resolve	vow
arrange (for him)	dare (him)	hesitate	oblige him	seem	wait (for him)
authorize him	decide	hire him	offer	select him	want (him)
ask (him)	demand	help him	order him	send him	warn him
beg (him)	deserve	hope	pay him	strive	wish (him)
(not) care	desire	instruct him	persuade him	struggle	yearn
cause him	direct him	intend	plan	swear	
challenge him	enable him	invite him	prepare (him)	tell him	
choose (him)	endeavor	lead him	pretend	tend	
claim	expect (him)	learn	proceed	threaten	

**VERBS THAT CAN HAVE INFINITIVE OR GERUND OBJECTS,
 but with a **difference** in meaning:**

	_____ <i>studying</i> actual: first it happens; then there is mental activity) >	_____ <i>to study.</i> potential: first there is mental activity about a possible future event)
attempt forget mean regret remember try stop	do it, hoping for success do it, then have a mental lapse it exists, it has a significance do it, then feel bad do it, then be aware of it do it, hoping for success finish/quit doing something.	make an effort, hoping to do it have a mental lapse, and therefore not do it have an intention to do it feel bad, but then do it think about it, and then do it make an effort, hoping to do it to take a break/finish doing something else to do something

**VERBS THAT CAN HAVE INFINITIVE OBJECTS WITH AGENTS, OR
 GERUNDS :**

_____ *studying*
 _____ *him to study*

advise	encourage	permit	require	teach	urge
allow	forbid				

FORMS of GERUNDS and INFINITIVES

INFINITIVES				GERUND -- verb modifiers					
(of) (for)	(him) (not) TO	have	been	writing	being written	(his) [him]	(not)	writing	being written
				written				writing	written
		WRITE						WRITING	
		be		written	being written				
				writing					
				being written					

(plus adverbs, objects, as appropriate)

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GERUND -- noun modifiers	
(his) (adj) WRITING (s)	
(a/the) (adj) WRITING (s)	of _____ (transitive object/intransitive subject) by _____ (transitive subject)

(NOT: negative, passive, perfect, or followed by infinitive)

MEANING	
INFINITIVE	GERUND
potential	actual/fact
idea/plan/future	past/end
single/repeated	ongoing
request/instruction/causation	attitude (no plan)
(often reduced from modals/ subjunctive/imperative)	

FUNCTIONS of GERUNDS and INFINITIVES

VERB COMPLEMENTS (any tense) (similar to noun clauses)		
		(CHECK GRAMMAR BOOKS FOR LISTS:
INFINITIVE ONLY	GERUND OR INFINITIVE	GERUND ONLY
have agreed I am planning to pay . hope (with subject) should forbid I order him to pay . taught asked I want (him) to pay . need arranged would hate I intend (for him) to pay . am waiting	start prefer like I forget to pay . mean paying . try get I need to wash it. It needs washing . I advise him to pay . paying	enjoy miss finish I consider (his) paying . go stop

SUBJECT OR SUBJECT COMPLEMENT (similar to noun clauses)	
INFINITIVE	GERUND
OLD _____ (For him) to ski is fun. It _____ is fun (for him) to ski My goal _____ is (for him) to ski .	NEW His ranting madly frightened me. The mad rantings of Bob My hobby is swimming the painting of barns .
INFINITIVE ONLY	GERUND ONLY
PURPOSE	OBJECT OF PREPOSITION
He went (in order) (for her) to buy a car.so that s/he could buy a car.	I'm interested in (her) selling my house.
REDUCED INDIRECT QUESTIONS	COMPOUND (ATTRIBUTIVE) NOUN
He wonders what to do what he should do.	a new sleeping bag (is ..) grassy playing fields (are ..)
REDUCED INDIRECT STATEMENTS	don't confuse with participial adjectives: A sleeping dog (is ..) Playing children (are ..) or gerund + object: Playing games is a waste of time. Playing a game is fun once in a while.
We believe him to be crazy. that he is crazy. He is believed to be crazy	
AFTER TOO and ENOUGH	
It's too dark (for me) to drive . It's not light enough (for anyone) to drive .	
MODIFYING A NOUN	
(reduced adjective or noun clauses) He was the first person to die .	

Is there a car **(for him) to drive?**
I have a job **(for you) to do.**

MODIFYING AN ADJECTIVE

action: It was useful **(for him) to go.**
person: It was rude **(of him) to leave.**
emotion: It was surprising **to see her.**

OUTCOME

He awoke **to find** the house on fire.

IN MODAL PHRASES

used
ought
has
He is **to come.**
is supposed
is able
is going

<http://www.iei.uiuc.edu/structure/structure1/gerinfvbs.html>