

APSU Writing Center
Gerunds and Infinitives

Gerunds

A gerund is a verb form that ends in -ing and functions as a noun in a sentence. Gerunds express actions or states of being, even though they are based on verbs.

- Examples: walking, running, swimming, voting, traveling, hiking, amusing, etc.

Gerund Phrase

A gerund phrase includes a gerund plus any modifiers, pronouns, or noun phrases that complete its meaning. Gerund phrases function as nouns (subjects, objects, or complements) and do not require punctuation at the end.

- **Example:** Playing Apples to Apples is a great way to spend an evening.
 - **Gerund:** Playing
 - **Clarifying Information:** Apples to Apples

Gerunds as the Subject

A gerund can act as the subject of a sentence.

- **Example:** Swimming is my favorite activity.
 - **Gerund:** swimming

Gerunds as the Direct Object

A direct object receives the action of the verb. When a gerund functions as the direct object, it names the activity that receives the action.

- **Example:** The neighbors do not like my dog barking.
 - **Gerund:** barking

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Gerunds as the Subject Complement

A subject complement follows a linking verb and identifies or describes the subject.

- **Example:** Her biggest challenge is learning.
 - **Gerund:** learning

Gerunds as the Object of a Preposition

When a preposition is followed by a gerund, the gerund functions as the object of the preposition.

- **Example:** He got in trouble for avoiding his work and not completing it.
 - **Gerund Phrase:** avoiding his work and not completing it

Preposition

A preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, time, place, location, or relationship.

- **Examples:** in, at, on, of, to, by, for, after, before, with, about.

Object of a Preposition

The object of a preposition is the noun, pronoun, or gerund that completes the meaning of the prepositional phrase.

- **Example:** She is interested in learning French.
 - **Preposition:** in
 - **Object of Preposition:** learning French

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Infinitives

An infinitive is the base form of a verb preceded by to. Infinitives can function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

- **Example:** To vote is a legal obligation.
 - **Subject:** to vote
 - **Complement:** a legal obligation

Common Verbs Followed Only by a Gerund

Some verbs are always followed by a gerund, not an infinitive.

- **Example:** He **enjoys** reading historical novels.
- **Examples:** admit, avoid, consider, delay, deny, enjoy, finish, imagine, keep, practice, etc.

Common Verbs Followed Only by an Infinitive

Some verbs are always followed by an infinitive.

- **Example:** They **plan** to visit next month.
- **Examples:** agree, decide, expect, hope, learn, need, plan, promise, refuse. etc.

Dangling Elements

A dangling element is a verbal phrase (a participle, gerund, or infinitive) that appears in a sentence without a clear or explicit subject.

How to Fix Dangling Elements

- Use the noun or pronoun that the dangling element refers to as the subject of the main clause.
- Turn the dangling element into a full clause with its own subject.



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References

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