

Verbs and expressions



We considered **trying** a new restaurant but finally decided **to go** to our usual one.

Some verbs can only be followed by a **gerund** and some verbs can only be followed by an **infinitive**:

We avoided **using** the motorways. ✓

We avoided to use the motorways. ✗

I want **to go** home early. ✓

I want going home early. ✗

There are some guidelines that might help us decide whether to use a gerund or infinitive. For example:

1. Gerunds often perform exactly the same function as a noun:

This job involves **dealing** with customers.

This job involves contact with customers.

We delayed **launching** the product until January.

We delayed the launch until January.

2. We often use infinitives for actions that happen after the action of the main verb:

He decided **to work** at the weekend. [The decision was before the work.]

We expect **to have** the results next week. [The expectation is before obtaining the results.]

However, there are no definitive 'rules' without exceptions so we have to learn which to use.

Here are some examples:

Verbs followed by an
infinitive

Verbs followed by a gerund

agree	She agreed to talk to him.	admit	He admitted stealing a cake.
appear	He appears to be ill.	advise	I advise returning it.
arrange	They arranged to meet .	allow	They allow parking here.
ask	She asked to leave .	anticipate	I anticipate finishing early.
attempt	He attempted to finish it.	avoid	We avoided discussing it.
choose	They chose not to wait .	consider	I'm considering not going .
claim	He claimed to be a doctor.	delay	We delayed telling them.
decide	They decided not to wait .	deny	They denied breaking it.
deserve	He deserves to succeed .	discuss	We discussed replacing her.
fail	He failed to recognise her.	encourage	They encourage cycling to work.
happen	She happened to notice it.	finish	We finished eating at nine.
hesitate	I hesitated to tell her.	imagine	Can you imagine flying ?
hope	Do you hope to work there?	involve	The job involves travelling .
learn	Is he learning to drive ?	keep	I keep forgetting .
manage	I managed not to laugh .	mention	He mentioned meeting her.
mean	I meant to call her.	mind	Do you mind waiting ?
offer	They offered to help .	miss	I miss working in a team.
plan	I plan to talk for one hour.	permit	She doesn't permit swearing .
prepare	We're preparing to negotiate .	recall/recollect	I recall seeing him in Paris.
pretend	He pretended not to hear .	recommend	I recommend eating there.
promise	She promised not to be late .	resist	Did you resist eating it?
seem	He seemed to understand .	require	The problem requires investigating .
tend	I tend to agree .	risk	She risks losing her job.
threaten	He's threatening to leave .	suggest	He suggested renting a car.
want	Do you want to go home?	urge	They urged replacing him.
would like	He'd like to change jobs .		

Gerunds with 'to go'

We use the verb 'to go' + gerund to talk about some sports and leisure activities. For example:

They go **swimming** on Fridays.

We went **sightseeing** in the morning.

We never go **camping** in the winter.

We're going **shopping** this afternoon.

Shall we go **skiing** next year?

Expressions followed by gerunds or infinitives



He was proud **to accept** the award.

There are lots of expressions which use the infinitive after adjectives and nouns.

After adjectives

Subject + 'to be' + adjective + infinitive
pleased **to be** here today.

These are often about feelings. Here are some examples:

To be...	Adjective + infinitive
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amazed	He was amazed to find that she remembered him.
anxious	I don't want to wait any longer - I'm anxious to begin .
ashamed	He was ashamed to admit the truth.
careful	He was careful not to mention the problem.
certain	She's certain to succeed .
compulsory	It's compulsory to wear protective clothing in the plant.
delighted	I'm delighted to inform you that we are offering you the job.
determined	I'm determined to finish this by the end of the day.
eager	He's eager to start his English course.
easy	It isn't easy to negotiate with people from different cultures.
eligible	Are you eligible to vote ?
happy	We're happy to accept your offer.
hesitant	She was hesitant to reply .
likely	We aren't likely to succeed .
lucky	I'm so lucky to have this job.
possible	It isn't possible to park here.
proud	I'm very proud to announce the launch of our new vehicle.
ready	Are you ready to leave ?
reluctant	I'm reluctant to employ someone with so little experience.
shocked	He was shocked to discover the truth.
surprised	They were surprised to hear the news.

Note that the same rule applies to **comparative** adjectives. For example:

This computer is easier **to use** than my old one.
It's better **to go** out to lunch than eat at your desk.

After nouns

Expression with a noun + infinitive

They were disappointed with the decision **to close** the factory.

Here are some examples:

Noun + infinitive	
attempt	Their attempt to expand into North America was unsuccessful.
chance	I didn't get a chance to speak to him.
decision	We were unhappy with the decision to delay production.
motivation	Motivation to succeed is essential for this job.
opportunity	We have an opportunity to make a lot of money.
permission	Can I have your permission to deal with this myself?
plan	I have a plan to reorganise the teams.
refusal	His refusal to deal with this immediately is causing problems.
tendency	He has a tendency to lose concentration.
way	We have to find a way to solve this.

Expressions with prepositions are followed by gerunds.

She's worried about **travelling** alone.

I have fond memories of **travelling** in India.

Here are some more examples:

'to be' + adjective/noun + preposition + gerund

Adjectives

accustomed to	He's accustomed to working with Asian people.
addicted to	She's addicted to shopping online.
afraid of	He's afraid of failing .
capable of	We're capable of dealing with the situation without help.
committed to	They're committed to finding a solution.
excited about	Are you excited about going to Australia?
famous for	He's famous for designing lots of the buildings in this city.
guilty of	He's guilty of lying to the government.
proud of	He's proud of achieving these results.
responsible for	Who is responsible for making this mess?
worried about	I'm not worried about losing the contract.

Nouns

advantage of	My office has the advantage of being on the ground floor.
credit for	He took the credit for introducing the new measures.
dedication to	I admire his dedication to modernising the company.
delay in	I don't want any delay in investigating this problem.
fear of	He has a fear of flying .
interest in	I have no interest in competing with him.
knowledge of	His knowledge of sailing is impressive.
love of	We share a love of travelling .
memory of	I have no memory of getting home last night.
process of	We're in the process of updating the files.
reason for	I don't agree with your reason for delaying .
reputation for	They have a reputation for delivering on time.
story about	I don't believe his story about forgetting the date.

Note that 'to' in these expressions is a preposition. It is not part of an infinitive and that is why we see 'to shopping' etc.

 They're committed to **finding** a solution. They're committed to find a solution.

'Before' and 'after'

Whether we are talking about the past, present or future, 'before' and 'after' can be followed by the gerund as an alternative to a subject and verb:

I always check the electrics before **giving** a presentation. ['I give']

After **speaking** to him yesterday, I decided to cancel the order. ['I spoke']

Before **leaving** this afternoon, could you call Tom for me? ['you leave']

Suggest

We never use the infinitive with 'suggest' - with or without an object:

I suggest to have a presentation. ❌ I suggest you to have a presentation. ❌

If it is necessary to use an object in order to specify 'who' the suggestion was made to, we use 'to'.

These are the correct ways to use this verb:

+ noun or gerund	+ object + bare infinitive
I suggest a presentation. I suggest having a presentation. I suggested a presentation (to Thomas/him).	I suggest (that) <u>we have</u> a presentation. I suggest (that) <u>you go</u> to the presentation. I suggested (to Thomas/him that) <u>we have</u> a presentation.

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