

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

## 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 <b>to find</b> that she remembered him.
anxious	I don't want to wait any longer - I'm anxious <b>to begin</b> .
ashamed	He was ashamed <b>to admit</b> the truth.
careful	He was careful <b>not to mention</b> the problem.
certain	She's certain <b>to succeed</b> .
compulsory	It's compulsory <b>to wear</b> protective clothing in the plant.
delighted	I'm delighted <b>to inform</b> you that we are offering you the job.
determined	I'm determined <b>to finish</b> this by the end of the day.
eager	He's eager <b>to start</b> his English course.
easy	It isn't easy <b>to negotiate</b> with people from different cultures.
eligible	Are you eligible <b>to vote</b> ?
happy	We're happy <b>to accept</b> your offer.
hesitant	She was hesitant <b>to reply</b> .
likely	We aren't likely <b>to succeed</b> .
lucky	I'm so lucky <b>to have</b> this job.
possible	It isn't possible <b>to park</b> here.
proud	I'm very proud <b>to announce</b> the launch of our new vehicle.
ready	Are you ready <b>to leave</b> ?
reluctant	I'm reluctant <b>to employ</b> someone with so little experience.
shocked	He was shocked <b>to discover</b> the truth.
surprised	They were surprised <b>to hear</b> 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 <b>to expand</b> into North America was unsuccessful.
chance	I didn't get a chance <b>to speak</b> to him.
decision	We were unhappy with the decision <b>to delay</b> production.
motivation	Motivation <b>to succeed</b> is essential for this job.
opportunity	We have an opportunity <b>to make</b> a lot of money.
permission	Can I have your permission <b>to deal</b> with this myself?
plan	I have a plan <b>to reorganise</b> the teams.
refusal	His refusal <b>to deal</b> with this immediately is causing problems.
tendency	He has a tendency <b>to lose</b> concentration.
way	We have to find a way <b>to solve</b> 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 <b>working</b> with Asian people.
addicted to	She's addicted to <b>shopping</b> online.
afraid of	He's afraid of <b>failing</b> .
capable of	We're capable of <b>dealing</b> with the situation without help.
committed to	They're committed to <b>finding</b> a solution.
excited about	Are you excited about <b>going</b> to Australia?
famous for	He's famous for <b>designing</b> lots of the buildings in this city.
guilty of	He's guilty of <b>lying</b> to the government.
proud of	He's proud of <b>achieving</b> these results.
responsible for	Who is responsible for <b>making</b> this mess?
worried about	I'm not worried about <b>losing</b> the contract.

### Nouns

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



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