GERUND OR INFINITIVE

We use gerunds (verb + ing):

* After certain verbs - I **enjoy singing**
* After prepositions - I drank a cup of coffee **before leaving**
* As the subject or object of a sentence - **Swimming** is good exercise

We use 'to' + infinitive:

* After certain verbs - We **decided to leave**

- I came to London **to study** English

* After many adjectives - It's **difficult to get** up early

We use the bare infinitive (the infinitive without 'to'):

* After modal verbs - I can **meet** you at six o'clock
* After 'let', 'make' and (sometimes) 'help' - The teacher let us **leave** early
* After some verbs of perception (see, watch, hear, notice, feel, sense) - I watched her **walk** away
* After expressions with 'why' - why **go** out the night before an exam?

Here are some of the most common verbs that are usually followed by the gerund.

* enjoy: I enjoyed **living** in France.
* fancy: I fancy **seeing** a film tonight.
* discuss: We discussed **going** on holiday together.
* dislike: I dislike **waiting** for buses.
* finish: We've finished **preparing** for the meeting.
* mind: I don't mind **coming** early.
* suggest: He suggested **staying** at the Grand Hotel.

He suggested(that) we(should) meet at 9.

* recommend: They recommended **meeting** earlier.
* keep: He kept **working**, although he felt ill.
* avoid: She avoided **talking** to her boss.
* miss: She misses **living** near the beach.
* appreciate: I appreciated her **helping** me.
* delay: He delayed **doing** his taxes.
* postpone: He postponed **returning** to Paris
* practise: She practised **singing** the song.
* consider: She considered **moving** to New York.
* can't stand: He can't stand her **smoking** in the office.
* can't help: He can't help **talking** so loudly.
* risk: He risked **being** caught.
* admit: He admitted **cheating** on the test.
* deny: He denied **committing** the crime.
* mention: He mentioned **going** to that college.
* imagine: He imagines **working** there one day.
* tolerate: I tolerated her **talking**.
* understand: I understand his **quitting**.
* involve: The job involves **travelling** to Japan once a month.
* complete: He completed **renovating** the house.
* report: He reported her **stealing** the money.
* anticipate: I anticipated **arriving** late.
* recall: Tom recalled **using** his credit card at the store.

And here are some common verbs followed by 'to' and the infinitive.

* agree: She agreed **to give** a presentation at the meeting.
* ask\*: I asked **to leave** early / I asked him **to leave** early.
* decide: We decided **to go** out for dinner.
* help\*: He helped **to clean** the kitchen / he helped his flatmate **to clean** the kitchen.
* plan: She plans **to buy** a new flat next year.
* hope: I hope **to pass** the exam.
* learn: They are learning **to sing**.
* want\*: I want **to come** to the party / I want him **to come** to the party.
* would like\*: I would like **to see** her tonight / I would like you **to see** her tonight.
* promise: We promised not **to be** late.
* can afford: We can't afford **to go** on holiday.
* manage: He managed **to open** the door without the key.
* prepare\*: They prepared **to take** the test /  
  the teachers prepared the students **to take** the test.
* demand: He demanded **to speak** to Mr. Harris.
* choose: I chose **to help**.
* offer: Frank offered **to drive** us to the supermarket.
* wait: She waited **to buy** a movie ticket.
* would hate\*: I'd hate **to be** late / I'd hate you **to be** late.
* would love\*: I'd love **to come** / I'd love him **to come**.
* seem: Nancy seemed **to be** disappointed.
* expect\*: They expect **to arrive** early / they expect Julie **to arrive** early
* intend: We intend **to visit** you next spring.
* pretend: The child pretended **to be** a monster.
* refuse: The guard refused **to let** them enter the building.
* tend: He tends **to be** a little shy.
* would prefer\*: I'd prefer **to do** it / I'd prefer him **to do** it.
* deserve: He deserves **to go** to jail.
* appear: His health appeared **to be** better.
* arrange: Naomi arranged **to stay** with her cousin in Miami.
* claim: She claimed **to be** a princess.

\*We can use an object before the infinitive with these verbs.

(Note that 'help' can also be followed by the infinitive without 'to' with no difference in meaning: 'I helped to carry it' = 'I helped carry it'.)

**These verbs can be followed by either the gerund or the infinitive with a change in meaning.**  
  
**Remember + gerund**  
  
This is when you remember something that has happened in the past. You have a memory of it, like being able to see a movie of it in your head.

* I remember going to the beach when I was a child. (= I have a memory of going to the beach).
* He remembers closing the door. (= He has a memory of closing the door).

**Remember + to + infinitive**  
  
This is when you think of something that you need to do. (And usually, you then do the thing).

* I remembered to buy milk. (= I was walking home and the idea that I needed milk came into my head, so I bought some).
* She remembered to send a card to her grandmother.

**Forget + gerund**  
  
This is the opposite of remember + gerund. It's when you forget about a memory, something that you've done in the past.

* Have we really studied this topic before? I forget reading about it.
* I told my brother that we'd spent Christmas at Granny's house in 1985, but he'd forgotten going there.

**Forget + to + infinitive**  
  
This is the opposite of remember + to + infinitive. It's when you want to do something, but you forget about it.

* I forgot to call my mother. (= I wanted to call my mother, but when it was a good time to call her, I forgot. I was thinking about something else, and the idea to call my mother didn't come into my head).
* She keeps forgetting to bring her book back.

**Try + gerund**  
  
This is when you do something as an experiment. The thing you do is not difficult, but you want to see if doing it will have the result that you want.

* I wanted to stop smoking, so I tried using nicotine patches. (= Using nicotine patches was easy, but I wanted to know if it would help me stop smoking).
* She tried giving up chocolate, but it didn't help her lose weight. (It was easy for her to give up chocolate. She gave it up to see if it would help her lose weight, but it didn't).

**Try + to + infinitive**  
  
This is when the thing you do itself is difficult. In the present tense or future tense, this means you might not succeed in doing it. In the past tense, it means that you made an effort to do the thing, but you did not succeed.

* I'll try to carry the suitcase, but it looks too heavy for me.
* She tried to catch the bus, but she couldn't run fast enough.

**Look at the difference:**

* I tried giving up chocolate (it was no problem to stop eating chocolate) but it didn't make me feel more healthy.
* I tried to give up chocolate, but it was too hard. I always ate some when my friends offered it to me.
* It was too hot in the room. I tried opening the window (it was easy to open the window). It didn't help though, because it was very hot outside too.

• I tried to open the window, but I couldn't because it was stuck.

**Stop + gerund**  
  
When we stop doing something it means the verb in the gerund is the thing that we stop. It can mean 'stop forever' or 'stop at that moment'.

* I stopped working when I was expecting a baby. (Working is the thing I stopped).
* My grandmother stopped driving when she was 85. (Driving is the thing she stopped).
* My boss came into the room, so I stopped browsing the internet.
* There was a fire alarm, so I stopped eating and went outside.

**Stop + to + infinitive**  
  
In this case, we stop something else in order to do the verb in the infinitive.

* I stopped to eat lunch. (I stopped something else, maybe working or studying, because I wanted to eat lunch.
* She was shopping and she stopped to get a cup of coffee. (She stopped shopping because she wanted to get a cup of coffee).

**Look at the difference:**

* I stopped smoking. (I gave up cigarettes OR I threw away my cigarette at that moment).
* I stopped to smoke. (I stopped doing something else because I wanted to have a cigarette).

**Regret + gerund**  
  
This is when you are sorry about something you did in the past and you wish you hadn't done it.

* I regret going to bed so late. I'm really tired today.
* She regrets leaving school when she was sixteen. She wishes that she had studied more and then gone to university.

**Regret + to + infinitive**  
  
We use this construction when we are giving someone bad news, in quite a formal way. The verb is almost always something like 'say' or 'tell' or 'inform'.

* I regret to tell you that the train has been delayed.
* The company regrets to inform employees that the London office will close next year.

**Gerund or Infinitive - Exercise 1**

1) A lot of people are worried about ------their jobs. (lose)

2) He agreed -------a new car. (buy)

3) The question is easy---------. (answer)

4) Not everybody can afford -------to university. (go)

5) I look forward to --------- you at the weekend.(see)

6) Are you thinking of --------- London? (visit)

7) He apologized for ----------- so late. (arrive)

8) Stop --------- noise, please; I’m studying. (make)

9) She doesn't mind --------- the night shift. (work)

10) I learned ---------- the bike at the age of 5. (ride)

**Gerund or Infinitive- Exercise 2**

Fill the gaps with the verb in brackets in the appropriate form.

1 I can't stand --------- in queues. (wait )

2 I wouldn't like --------- in his shoes. (be )

3 Jim loves ---------- in Thailand. (work )

4 I hate --------- the shopping on Saturday. (do )

5 Blast! I forgot -------- milk. (buy )

6 In the end we decided --------- in. (stay )

7 I need --------- some information about Portugal. (find )

8 My parents like ---------- for long walks at the weekend. (go )

9 Tony gave up --------- years ago. (smoke )

10 I wanted --------- and see Troy but no one else was interested. (go )

11 Mrs Leith offered -------- us to the airport. (take )

12 Clare refused --------- clean up after the party. (help )

13 I tried ----------- him to come but it was no use. (persuade )

14 Do you mind not ---------- ? (smoke )

15 Everybody really enjoyed ---------- the cha-cha-cha. (dance )

16 Lionel admitted --------- my chocolate mousse. (eat )

**3) Put the verb into the gerund or the infinitive:**

1) I couldn't sleep so I tried ---------- (drink) some hot milk.

2) She tried ----------- (reach) the book on the high shelf but she was too small.

3) They tried ----------- (get) to the party on time but the bus was delayed.

4) He tried ---------- (get) a job in a newspaper firm but they wouldn't hire him.

5) You should stop ----------- (smoke), it's not good for your health.

6) They will stop ---------- (have) lunch at twelve.

7) His face looks quite familiar but I forget ----------- (meet) in person.

8) Please don't forget ------------(pick up) some juice on your way home.

9) I forget ------------- (lock) the door, but I'm sure I must have locked it.

10) I remember ------------ (go) to the beach as a child.

11) Finally I remembered -------------(bring) your book! Here it is.

12) I regret ------------- (tell) you the train has been delayed.

13) I regret -------------- (tell) Julie my secret. Now she has told everyone.