

The Writing Center

DLA: Gerunds and Infinitives



This DLA is a writable PDF form. You can enter your answers directly into this document.

YOU MUST DOWNLOAD AND SAVE THIS FILE TO YOUR COMPUTER.

Do not complete this form in a web browser. You will not be able to save your work.

Student Name:

Important Note

To get completion credit for this DLA, make sure you complete all the required activities. If you'd like help while working on a specific DLA, you can meet with a specialist at the Writing Center. Keep in mind that you might need to schedule a second appointment to review your work, check your understanding, and get your completion credit. You can only review **ONE** DLA per appointment. (Check the last section of this DLA for information on making your appointment and receiving completion credit for your work).

Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

Understanding Gerunds & Infinitives

Sometimes a main verb is followed by an object. That object can be either a *gerund* or an *infinitive*.

A *gerund* is a **base verb + ing** that works like a noun.

- We finished **reading** the book.
- He risked **not getting** a raise. (negative)

An *infinitive* consists of **to + base form** of the verb.

- I want to take a Japanese class.
- They urged me not to say anything. (negative)

To make it easier to remember, remember these SEVEN rules for gerunds and infinitives!

Rule#1: Verbs and Certain Expressions Followed by Gerunds ONLY

We use a gerund after some verbs and verb phrases.

- They *quit* **smoking**.
- I *finished* **painting** the house.

Here are some verbs that are followed by gerunds only:

admit	deny	(not) mind	recall
appreciate	discuss	postpone	recommend
avoid	enjoy	practice	resist
can't help	finish	prevent	risk
complete	give up	prohibit	stand
consider	involve	put off	suggest
delay	keep (on)	quit	tolerate

We usually use *go* (in any tense) + a gerund to describe recreational activities.

- We *went* **sightseeing** today.
- Let's *go* **surfing**!

go biking	go hunting	go shopping
go bowling	go jogging	go sightseeing
go camping	go kayaking	go skating
go dancing	go running	go skiing
go fishing	go sailing	go surfing
go hiking	go scuba diving	go swimming

We use a gerund after many common expressions:

Expression	Example
be busy	I'll <i>be busy</i> writing my paper tomorrow.
have difficulty/trouble	He <i>has difficulty</i> pronouncing my last name.
waste of time/money	It's a <i>waste of time/money</i> washing the car because it's going to rain tomorrow.
no use	It's <i>no use</i> worrying about it. Nothing can be done
(not) worth	It's <i>not worth</i> waiting in line for those tickets.

Rule#2: Gerunds as Subjects

A gerund can be the subject of a clause or a sentence.

- **Knitting** is my favorite hobby.
- **Swimming** and **dancing** are excellent forms of exercise.
- I think that **eating** well is the best thing for good health.

Gerunds can be singular or plural. A gerund is singular when there is only one as the subject of a sentence or clause. When there are two or more gerunds, they take a plural verb.

- **Singing** makes me happy.
- **Kayaking** and **running** are my favorite sports.

Note: Sometimes an infinitive can act as a subject, though it is more common for gerunds to be subjects.

Rule#3: Gerunds as Objects of Prepositions

Prepositions are words like *about, against, at, by, for, in, of, on, to, with, without, etc.* We use a gerund after a *preposition*.

- What do you like *about* **studying** at Mt. SAC?
- I'm good *at* **learning** songs quickly.
- They look forward *to* **meeting** us tomorrow.
- She's interested *in* **working** with us.

Rule#4: Verbs Followed by Infinitives ONLY

We use infinitives after some verbs.

- I *want* **to take** English 68 next semester.

Here are some verbs that are followed by infinitives only:

afford	hope	pretend
agree	learn	promise
appear	manage	refuse
decide	need	seem
demand	offer	threaten
expect	plan	want

Rule#5: Verbs Followed by Objects and Infinitives

After some verbs, we use an object, then an **infinitive**.

- They *encouraged* us **to stay**.
- The teacher *told* the students **to finish** the chapter at home.
- He *asked* Anne **to take** him to the airport.

Here are some verbs that follow the verb + object + **infinitive** pattern.

advise	persuade
allow	prefer
ask	remind
encourage	require
invite	teach
order	tell
permit	warn

Some verbs do not follow the previous pattern:

Causative verbs like *make/have/let*

- The officer *made* me **step** out of my car. (*make* + object + **base**)
- The teacher *will have* the students read for 20 minutes. (*have* + object + **base**)
- Her parents never *let* her **stay** out after 11:00 p.m. (*let* + object + **base**)

Perception verbs like *see, hear, watch*

- We *saw* them **leave** the party. (*see* + object + **base**)
- He *watched* her **walk away**. (*watch* + object + **base**)

Rule#6: Infinitives after Certain Words

We use the **infinitive** after many *adjectives*.

- They were *happy* **to stay** with me.
- He is *ashamed* **to tell** you the truth.
- It is *important* **to read** a contract before you sign.

We use the **infinitive** after certain *nouns*.

- It's *time* **to go** home.
- Her *decision* **to leave** the group was a hard one.

We use the **infinitive** after indefinite pronouns like *something* and *anything*.

- I need *something* **to read** on the plane.
- Would you like to have *anything* **to drink**?

We use the **infinitive** with *too* and *enough*.

- It's *too* hot **to play** outside.
- You are not tall *enough* **to get** on this ride.
- We don't have *enough* money **to buy** a house this year.

We use the infinitive to show purpose.

- I took this class (in order) **to improve** my writing skills.
- He called **to tell** me that he loves me.

Rule#7: Verbs followed by Gerunds OR Infinitives

Some verbs can be followed by a **gerund** or an **infinitive**. With these verbs, there is **no difference** in meaning.

begin	can't stand	like	prefer
start	continue	love	hate

- I love **to skate**. *OR* I love **skating**.

With these verbs, there is a **difference** in meaning.

forget	regret
remember	stop

Verb	Verb + gerund	Verb + infinitive
forget	to say that we forgot something <i>after</i> we have already done it I <i>forgot</i> buying peanut butter. (First you bought peanut butter, and then you forgot about it.)	to say that we didn't do something because we forgot I <i>forgot</i> to buy peanut butter. (You didn't buy any peanut butter because you forgot.)
remember	to say that we remember something <i>after</i> we have already done it I <i>remember</i> mailing the check.	to say that we remember something <i>before</i> we do it I <i>remembered</i> to mail the check.

Verb	Verb + gerund	Verb + infinitive
	(First you mailed the check, and then you remembered it.)	(First you remembered, and then you mailed the check.)
regret	to say that we regret something <i>after</i> we have already done it <i>I regret taking this class.</i> (First, I took the class. Now I regret it.)	to say that we regret something we have to do <i>now</i> <i>I regret to tell you that you failed the class.</i> (First, I regret it, and now I have to tell you.)
stop	to quit or finish something <i>I stopped smoking.</i> (I no longer smoke.)	to say why we stop <i>I was driving, but I stopped to smoke.</i> (I stopped driving in order to smoke.)

Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

☐ 1. Gerunds and Infinitives Review

Review the information on this sheet. Then, answer the following questions.

What is a gerund?

What is an infinitive?

☐ 2. Online Quiz

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/gerundsandinfinitivesdla> and take the DLA quiz. You must score at least 75% on the quiz before meeting with a specialist. After you complete the task, please take a screenshot of the page that has your score and show it to your specialist. Do not exit the quiz until you take the screenshot.

□ 3. *Sentence Correction*

Review the above information on gerunds and infinitives and then read the following sentences. Write “C” if the sentence is correct or “X” if there is a gerund or an infinitive error. If there is an error, correct the sentence and write the rule number from this DLA that explains the correction.

1. Karen decided looking for a new job.
2. The doctor advised John drinking more water.
3. Christina is very good at making crafts.
4. Mina insisted on to pay the bill.
5. Doug forgot turning off the pot on the stove, so the beans are burned.
6. Lourdes was shocked finding her son still in bed at 1:00 PM.
7. Professor Jacob recommended to read for twenty minutes each day.
8. Amy hates being stuck in traffic.

9. The new student was embarrassed to ask a question.
10. The professor gave us the choice attending a workshop or complete a DLA.
11. Do you have time to help me?
12. Joyce reminded Garrett to turn in his time sheet.
13. Cynthia believes that to brush her hair three times a day makes it grow longer.
14. Nicole enjoys going shopping for colorful clothes.

Choose 4a or 4b Below

☐ 4a. Correct Your Own Writing

Collect some of your graded work that identifies gerund and infinitive errors. Correct all marked errors and look for others to correct as well. Bring this revised work with you to the DLA tutoring session.

If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (4b).

☐ **4b Write Your Own Sentences**

On the space provide below, create one sentence for each of the gerunds and infinitives rule.

□ 5. *Review the DLA/Receive Completion Credit*

1. Go to [EAB Navigate](#) and make an appointment (online or in-person).
2. Attend your session and be prepared to explain your understanding of the information you've learned in the DLA. Consider the main concept you learned and how you might use this in your future assignments/classes.
3. If your professor asks you to provide proof, you can review the "appointment summary report" through EAB Navigate (app or desktop). You will find all Writing Center appointments under "appointment summary reports" (app or desktop). Look for the summary report for your DLA appointment. This is where your writing specialist will indicate the title of your DLA and state whether it is "completed" or "not completed." If it is marked as "not completed," book a follow up appointment to complete.

Note: Appointment summary reports are also sent weekly to your instructor on record. If there is an issue, please contact us at writingcenter@mtsac.edu or (909) 274-5325.

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center's website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, access@mtsac.edu, (909) 274-4290.

Revised November 2025