

Gerunds and infinitives

English Grammar · B1

Verb + -ing

After the verb

+ -ing	+ to
enjoy, finish, avoid	want, decide, hope
<i>enjoy reading</i>	<i>want to go</i>

After the verb: reference card grid

Some verbs are followed by a **gerund** (verb-ing). Common examples include: *enjoy, like, love, hate, finish, stop, mind, suggest, avoid*.

I enjoy reading.

I enjoy reading.

She finished doing her homework.

She finished her homework.

Note A gerund functions as a noun; its form is **verb-ing**.

Verb + Infinitive

Other verbs are followed by an **infinitive** (to + base form). Common examples include: *want, need, decide, hope, promise, learn, would like, plan*.

I want to learn English.

I want to learn English.

They decided to stay.

They decided to stay.

Note Some verbs accept both forms with similar meanings: *like, love, start, begin*. *I like swimming.* = *I like to swim.*

-ing after Prepositions

After a **preposition** (*in, on, at, of, about, for, good at, interested in...*), the verb must take the **-ing** form:

She's good at drawing.

She is good at painting.

Thank you for helping me.

Thank you for helping me.

Note The base form of a verb never follows a preposition: *~~good at draw~~* × → *good at drawing* ✓.

Common Errors

- × *~~I enjoy to read.~~* / *~~I want reading.~~* → ✓ I enjoy **reading**. / I want **to read**. — Which verb takes which form is fixed; memorize the collocations, do not swap them.
- Distinguish the two meanings of *stop*: *He stopped **smoking***. (Quit smoking) vs. *He stopped **to smoke***. (Stopped what he was doing to go smoke)— The meanings are completely different.
- × *~~I look forward to see you.~~* → ✓ I look forward to **seeing** you. — Here, *to* is a preposition and is followed by -ing.
- × *~~Swim is good exercise.~~* → ✓ **Swimming** is good exercise. — When a verb acts as the subject, use the -ing form.