

Infinitives

vs

Gerunds

(A complete Guide)

## Common verbs followed by infinitives:

Hope to do something

Plan to do something

Intend to do something\*

Decide to do something

Promise to do something

Agree to do something

Offer to do something

Refuse to do something

Seem to do something

Appear to do something

Pretend to do something

Ask to do something

Expect to do something

Would like to do something

Want to do something

Need to do something

*\* Intend is usually followed by an infinitive (Intend to go to the meeting.) but sometimes may be followed by a gerund (intend going to the meeting) with no change in meaning.*

## Common verbs followed by (pro)nouns infinitives:

tell someone to

advise someone to\*\*

encourage someone to

remind someone to

require someone to

order someone to

force someone to

ask someone to

invite someone to

permit someone to

allow someone to

warn someone to

expect someone to

would like someone to

want someone to

need someone to

*\*\*A gerund is used after advise (active) if there is no noun or pronoun object.*

*Compare:*

*(1) He advised buying a Lexus.*

*(2) He advised me to buy a Lexus. Or I was advised to buy a Lexus.*

**Common verbs followed by infinitives or by objects and then infinitives:**

ask to / ask someone to

want to / want someone to

expect to / expect someone to

would like to / would like someone to

need to / need someone to

## It + an infinitive or a gerund subject

Be a bad experience

Be a bad idea

Be better

Be clever

Be dangerous

Be difficult

Be easy

Be essential

Be foolish

Be a good experience

Be a good idea

Be fun

Be hard

Be important

Be impossible

Be interesting

Take effort

Take energy

Take money

Take patience

Take time

Be possible

Be relaxing

Be necessary

Be a pleasure

**Exercise 1.** Complete the sentences with *to leave* or *me to leave*. In some cases, both completions are possible.

1. He told *me to leave*.

2. He decided *to leave*.

3. He asked *to leave / me to leave*.

4. He offered\_\_\_\_\_.

5. She wanted\_\_\_\_\_.

6. He agreed\_\_\_\_\_.

7. She would like\_\_\_\_\_.

8. He warned\_\_\_\_\_.

9. She refused\_\_\_\_\_.

10. He promised\_\_\_\_\_.

11. She hoped\_\_\_\_\_.

12. He permitted\_\_\_\_\_.

13. She expected\_\_\_\_\_.

14. He forced\_\_\_\_\_.

15. She allowed\_\_\_\_\_.

16. He reminded\_\_\_\_\_.

17. She planned\_\_\_\_\_.

18. He pretended\_\_\_\_\_.

**Exercise 2.** Report what was said by using the verbs in the list to introduce an infinitive phrase.

1. The professor said to Alan, "You may leave early."

>>>> *The professor allowed Alan to leave early.*

OR

>>>> *Alan was allowed to leave early.*

advise

allow

ask

encourage

expect

force

order

permit

remind

require

tell

warn

2. Roberto said to me, “Don’t forget to take your book back to the library.”

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3. Mr. Chang thinks I have a good voice, so he said to me, “You should take singing lessons.”

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4. Mrs. Alvarez was very stern and a little angry. She shook her finger at the children and said to them, “Don’t play with matches!”

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5. I am very relieved because the Dean of Admissions said to me, “You may register for school late.”

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6. The law says, "Every driver must have a valid driver's license."

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7. My friend said to me, "You should get some automobile insurance."

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8. The robber had a gun. He said to me, "Give me all of your money."

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9. My boss said to me, "Come to the meeting ten minutes early."

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**Exercise 3.** Work in small groups. Speaker A forms the question, and Speaker B gives the answer. Speaker C changes the sentence to passive (the fry-phrase can be omitted).

Example: What / someone / remind / you / do / recently?

Speaker A: What did someone remind you to do recently, Mario?

Speaker B: My roommate reminded me to recharge my cell phone.

Speaker C: Mario was reminded to recharge his cell phone.

1. What / a family member / remind / you / do / recently?

2. Where / a friend / ask / you / go / recently?

3. What / the government / require / people / do?
4. What / doctors / advise / patients / do?
5. What / teachers / expect / students / do?
6. What / our teacher / tell / you / do / recently?
7. What / the laws / not permit / you / do?
8. Where / parents / warn / their kids / not / go?
9. What / our teacher / encourage / us / do to practice our English?

**Exercise 4.** Complete each sentence with a gerund or an infinitive.

1. We're going out for dinner. Would you like **to join** us?

2. Jack avoided **looking** at me.

3. I was broke, so Jenny offered \_\_\_\_\_ me a little money.

4. Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_ the door for me?

5. Even though I asked the people in front of me at the movie \_\_\_\_\_ quiet, they kept \_\_\_\_\_.

6. Lucy pretended \_\_\_\_\_ the answer to my question.

7. The teacher seems \_\_\_\_\_ in a good mood today, don't you think?

8. I don't mind \_\_\_\_\_ alone.

9. Mrs. Jackson warned her young son not\_\_\_\_\_the hot stove.

10. Residents are not allowed\_\_\_\_\_pets in my apartment building.

11. All applicants are required\_\_\_\_\_an entrance examination.

12. My boss expects me\_\_\_\_\_the work ASAP.\*

13. Joan and David were considering\_\_\_\_\_married in June, but they finally decided\_\_\_\_\_until August.

14. Jack advised me\_\_\_\_\_a new apartment.

15. I was advised\_\_\_\_\_a new apartment.

16. Jack advised\_\_\_\_\_a new apartment.

17. Jack suggested \_\_\_\_\_ a new apartment.

18. When we were in New York, we had a really good time \_\_\_\_\_ in Central Park on sunny days.

19. This is my first term at this school. I haven't really had any problems, but sometimes I have trouble \_\_\_\_\_ the lectures. Some professors speak too fast.

20. Ms. Gray is a commuter. Every workday, she spends almost two hours \_\_\_\_\_ to and from work.

**Exercise 5.** Which pairs have basically the same meaning? Which pairs have different meanings?

1. A) It began to snow.

B) It began snowing.

2. A) I remembered to call my parents.

B) I remembered calling my parents.

3. A) We love to listen to music.

B) We love listening to music.

4. A) He forgot to buy a gift.

B) He forgot buying a gift.

5. A) I stopped to talk to my friend.

B) I stopped talking to my friend.

**Exercise 6.** Complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. I always remember (turn) to **turn off** all the lights before I leave my house.
2. I remember (play)\_\_\_\_\_with dolls when I was a child.
3. What do you remember (do)\_\_\_\_\_when you were a child?
4. What do you remember (do)\_\_\_\_\_before you leave for class every day?
5. What did you forget (do)\_\_\_\_\_before you left for class this morning?
6. I won't ever forget (watch)\_\_\_\_\_our team score the winning goal in the last seconds of the championship game.
7. Don't forget (do)\_\_\_\_\_your homework tonight.
8. Please stop (bite)\_\_\_\_\_your fingernails.
9. I stopped (get)\_\_\_\_\_gas yesterday and was shocked at the high price.
10. I stopped (drive)\_\_\_\_\_so much because of the high price of gas.



**Exercise 7.** Listen to each sentence and choose the sentence (a. or b.) with the same meaning.

1. a. Joan thought about her phone call with her husband.

b. Joan didn't forget to call her husband.

2. a. Rita was thinking about the times she went to the farmers' market with her grandmother.

b. Rita didn't forget to go to the farmers' market with her grandmother.

3. a. Roger got a cigarette and began to smoke,

b. Roger quit smoking.

4. a. Mr. and Mrs. Olson finished eating.

b. Mr. and Mrs. Olson got something to eat before the movie.

5. a. The speaker is sorry about something he did.

b. The speaker is delivering some bad news.

**Exercise 8.** Complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. Maria loves (swim) swimming / to swim \_\_\_\_\_ in the ocean.

2. After a brief interruption, the professor continued (lecture) \_\_\_\_\_

3. I hate (see) \_\_\_\_\_ any living being suffer. I can't bear (watch) \_\_\_\_\_ news reports of children who are starving. I can't stand (read) \_\_\_\_\_ about animals that have been cruelly abused by people.

4. I'm afraid of flying. When a plane begins (move) \_\_\_\_\_ down the runway, my heart starts (race) \_\_\_\_\_. Uh-oh! The plane is beginning (move\*) \_\_\_\_\_, and my heart is starting (race) \_\_\_\_\_

6. I prefer (drive) \_\_\_\_\_ rather than (take) \_\_\_\_\_ a plane.

7. I regret (inform) \_\_\_\_\_ you that your loan application has not been approved.

8. I regret (listen, not) \_\_\_\_\_ to my father's advice. He was right.

9. When a student asks a question, the teacher always tries (explain)

\_\_\_\_\_ the problem as clearly as possible.

10. I tried everything, but the baby still wouldn't stop (cry)\_\_\_\_\_

I tried (hold) \_\_\_\_\_

I tried (feed) \_\_\_\_\_

him, but that didn't help. him, but he \_\_\_\_\_

refused the food and continued (cry) \_\_\_\_\_

I tried (burp)\_\_\_\_\_him.

I tried (change)\_\_\_\_\_his diaper.

Nothing worked. The baby wouldn't stop crying.

**Exercise 9.** Complete each sentence with an appropriate form of the verb in parentheses.

1. Mary reminded me (be, not) ***not to be*** late for the meeting.

2. I've volunteered (help)\_\_\_\_\_at the local school during my time off and  
(paint)\_\_\_\_\_the lunchroom.

3. We discussed (quit)\_\_\_\_\_our jobs and (open)\_\_\_\_\_our own  
business.

4. I'm getting tired. I need (take)\_\_\_\_\_a break.

5. Sometimes students avoid (look)\_\_\_\_\_at the teacher if they don't want (answer)  
\_\_\_\_\_ a question.

6. Most children prefer (watch)\_\_\_\_\_television to (listen)\_\_\_\_\_to the radio.

7. The taxi driver refused (take)\_\_\_\_\_a check. He wanted the passenger  
(pay)\_\_\_\_\_cash.

7. The taxi driver refused (take) \_\_\_\_\_ a check. He wanted the passenger (pay) \_\_\_\_\_ cash.

8. The travel agent advised us (wait, not) \_\_\_\_\_ until August (make) \_\_\_\_\_ a reservation.

9. Keep (talk) \_\_\_\_\_ I'm listening to you.

10. Linda offered (water) \_\_\_\_\_ my plants while I was out of town.

11. Igor suggested (go) \_\_\_\_\_ (ski) \_\_\_\_\_ in the mountains this weekend. How does that sound to you?

12. The doctor ordered Mr. Gray (smoke, not) \_\_\_\_\_.

13. Don't tell me his secret. I prefer (know, not)\_\_\_\_\_.

14. Toshi was allowed (renew)\_\_\_\_\_his student visa.

15. Don't forget (tell) \_\_\_\_\_ Jane (call) \_\_\_\_\_ me about (go)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (swim)\_\_\_\_\_tomorrow.

16. Sally reminded me (ask)\_\_\_\_\_you (tell)\_\_\_\_\_Bob  
(remember) \_\_\_\_\_ (bring) \_\_\_\_\_ his soccer ball to the picnic.

17. Recently, Jo has been spending most of her time (do) \_\_\_\_\_ research for a  
book on pioneer women.

18. The little boy had a lot of trouble (convince) \_\_\_\_\_ anyone he had seen a  
mermaid.

**Exercise 10.** All of the sentences are correct. What differences do you notice in their grammatical structure? Do you agree or disagree with the statements? Why or why not?

1. Speaking a second language without an accent is nearly impossible for adult language learners.
2. To speak a second language without an accent is nearly impossible for adult language learners.
3. It is nearly impossible for adult language learners to speak a second language without an accent.



**Exercise 11.** Make sentences beginning with it. Use a form of the given word followed by an infinitive phrase for each sentence.

1. be dangerous >>>> ***It 's dangerous to ride a motorcycle without wearing a helmet.***

2. be important

3. not be easy

4. be silly

5. must be interesting

6. be always a pleasure

7. be smart

8. not cost much money

9. be necessary

10. take time

**Exercise 12.** Add for (someone) and any other words to give a more specific and accurate meaning to each sentence.

1. It isn't possible to be on time.

>>>>> ***It isn't possible for me to be on time for class if the bus drivers are on strike and I have to walk to class in a rainstorm.***

2. It's easy to speak Spanish.

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3. It's important to learn English.

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4. It is essential to get a visa.

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5. It's important to take advanced math courses.

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6. It's difficult to communicate.

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7. It was impossible to come to class.

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8. It is a good idea to study gerunds and infinitives.

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**Exercise 13.** Choose the correct form of the verbs in italics. In some sentences, both verbs are correct.

1. Hassan volunteered *bringing / to bring* some food to the reception.
2. The students practiced *pronouncing / to pronounce* the “th” sound in the phrase “these thirty-three dirty trees.”
3. In the fairy tale, the wolf threatened *eating / to eat* a girl named Little Red Riding Hood.
4. The movers struggled *lifting / to lift* the piano up the stairs.
5. Anita demanded *knowing / to know* why she had been fired.
6. My skin can’t tolerate *being / to be* in the sun all day. I get sunburned easily.
7. Mr. Kwan broke the antique vase. I’m sure he didn’t mean *doing / to do* it.

8. Fred Washington claims *being / to be* a descendant of George Washington.
9. Linda failed *passing / to pass* the entrance exam.
10. I hate *getting / to get* to work late.
11. I can't bear *seeing / to see* animals suffer.
12. Ming Wan just started a new business. He risks losing *I to lose* everything if it doesn't succeed.

**Exercise 14.** Complete each sentence with an appropriate form of the verb in parentheses.

1. How did you manage (find) to find out about the surprise party?
2. I think Sam deserves (have)\_\_\_\_\_another chance.
3. Olga finally admitted (be)\_\_\_\_\_responsible for the problem.
4. Mrs. Freeman can't help (worry)\_\_\_\_\_about her children.
5. Children, I forbid you (play)\_\_\_\_\_in the street. There's too much traffic.
6. Lori suggested (leave) \_\_\_\_\_ around six. Is that too early for you?
7. I urged Omar (return) \_\_\_\_\_ to school and (finish) \_\_\_\_\_ his education.

8. Oscar keeps (hope) \_\_\_\_\_ and (pray) \_\_\_\_\_ that things will get better.
9. Nadia keeps (promise) \_\_\_\_\_ (visit) \_\_\_\_\_ us, but she never does.
10. My little cousin is a blabbermouth! He can't resist (tell) \_\_\_\_\_ everyone my secrets!
11. I finally managed (persuade) \_\_\_\_\_ Yoko (stay) \_\_\_\_\_ school and (finish) \_\_\_\_\_ her degree.
12. Margaret challenged me (race) \_\_\_\_\_ her across the pool.

**Exercise 15.** Correct the errors.

1. I don't mind to have a roommate.
2. Most students want return home as soon as possible.
3. Learning about another country it is very interesting.
4. I tried very hard to don't make any mistakes.
5. The task of find a person who could tutor me in English wasn't difficult.
6. All of us needed to went to the ticket office before the game yesterday.
7. I'm looking forward to go to swimming in the ocean.



8. Ski in the Alps it was a big thrill for me.
9. Don't keep to be asking me the same questions over and over.
10. During a fire drill, everyone is required leaving the building.
11. I don't enjoy to play card games. I prefer to spend my time for read or watch movies.
12. Is hard for me understand people who speak very fast.
13. When I entered the room, I found my young son stand on the kitchen table.
14. When I got home, Irene was lying in bed think about what a wonderful time she'd had.

**Exercise 16.** Work in groups of three to five. Choose one of the story beginnings or make up your own. Each group member continues the story by adding a sentence or two. At least one of the sentences should contain words from the list provided, plus a gerund or infinitive phrase (but it is okay to continue the story without using a gerund or infinitive if it works out that way). As a group, use as many of the words in the list as you can.



**Example:** Yoko had a bad night last night. First, when she got home, she discovered that . . .

Speaker A: . . . her door was unlocked. She didn't *recall leaving* her door unlocked. She always *remembers to* lock her door and in fact specifically *remembered locking* it that morning. So she became afraid that someone had broken into her apartment.

Speaker B: She thought about going inside, but then decided *it would be better not to go* into her apartment alone. What if there was a burglar inside?

Speaker C: Instead of going into her apartment alone, Yoko walked to her next-door neighbor's door and knocked.

Speaker D: Her neighbor answered the door. He could see that something was the matter. "Are you all right?" he asked her.

## Story beginnings:

1. (\_\_\_\_\_) is having trouble with (her/his) roommate, whose name is (\_\_\_\_\_\_). (Her/His) roommate keeps many pets even though the lease they signed forbids residents to keep animals in their apartments. Yesterday, one of these pets, a/an . . . .
2. It was a dark and stormy night. (\_\_\_\_\_) was all alone at home. Suddenly . . . .
3. Not long ago, (\_\_\_\_\_) and (\_\_\_\_\_) were walking home together after dark. They heard a strange whooshing sound. When they looked up in the night sky, they saw a huge hovering aircraft. It glowed! It was round and green! (\_\_\_\_\_) was frightened and curious at the same time. (She/He) wanted to . . . , but
4. Once upon a time, (\_\_\_\_\_) lived in a faraway village in a remote mountainous region. All of the villagers were terrified because of the dragon that lived nearby. At least once a week, the dragon would descend on the village and . . . .
5. (\_\_\_\_\_) had a bad day yesterday. First of all, when (she/he) got up in the morning, (she/he) discovered that . . . .

*List of words and phrases to use in your story:*

<b>Prepositional expressions followed by gerunds</b>	<b>Verbs followed by gerunds or infinitives</b>	<b>It + an infinitive or a gerund subject</b>
be accused of	admit	be a bad experience
be accustomed to	advise	be a bad idea
in addition to	afford	be better
be afraid of	agree	be clever
apologize (to someone) for	ask	be dangerous
believe in	avoid	be difficult
blame (someone) for	beg	be easy
be capable of	begin	be essential
be committed to	consider	be foolish
complain about	continue	be a good experience
dream of	convince	be a good idea
be excited about	decide	be fun
forgive (someone) for	demand	be hard
be guilty of	deny	be important
instead of	discuss	be impossible
be interested in	dislike	be interesting
look forward to	encourage	be necessary
be opposed to	enjoy	be a pleasure
prevent (someone) from	expect	be possible
be scared of	fail	be relaxing
stop (someone) from	force	take effort
succeed in	forget	take energy
take advantage of	hesitate	take money
be terrified of	hope	take patience
thank (someone) for	invite	take time
think of	learn	
be tired of	like	
be worried about	manage	
	mind	
	need	
	offer	
	permit	
	persuade	
	plan	
	postpone	
	prefer	
	prepare	
	pretend	
	promise	
	quit	
	recall	
	refuse	
	regret	
	remember	
	remind	
	risk	
	seem	
	start	
	stop	
	struggle	
	suggest	
	threaten	
	wait	
	want	
	warn	