

# MPC English & Study Skills Center

## Gerunds

A **gerund** (verb + ing) is the present participle form of a verb used as if it were a noun. It may be used alone or as the start of a group of words that go with it (**gerund phrase**). It can be used as a subject, a subject complement, an object, or an object of a preposition.

- **Swimming** is good exercise. (subject)
- That song is very **fitting** for the occasion. (subject complement)
- I like **fishing**. (direct object)
- She is tired of **studying**. (object of preposition "of")
- **Driving on freeways in Los Angeles** can be a challenge. (gerund phrase as subject)

Gerunds are frequently used after verbs. In some cases, gerunds and infinitives (to + verb) may be used interchangeably, but sometimes the meaning changes, depending upon whether a gerund or infinitive is used. The following structures usually or always use gerunds. The gerunds and gerund phrases are in bold type.

### After preference verbs

hate	abhor	prefer	like
loathe	can't stand	enjoy	appreciate
dislike	mind	love	

- I dislike **doing homework**.
- I love **eating chocolate**.
- I can't stand **hearing babies cry**.

### After verbs that show beginnings or endings

finish	postpone	put off
stop (= quit)	delay	start
quit	avoid	begin

- He finished **playing the piano**.
- She stopped **working in the yard**.  
*This means that she quit what she was doing.*

### After prepositions to name an action

- Rachel is thinking about **working**.
- Bill got to the front of the line by **pushing**.
- After **studying**, I took a long break.
- I can't be blamed for **trying**.

## After synonyms for some phrasal verbs (two-word verbs)

- “think about” = “consider” (synonym)
  - She thought about **majoring in psychology**.
  - She considered **majoring in psychology**.
- “talk about” = “discuss” (synonym)
  - She talks about **taking a vacation**.
  - She discusses **taking a vacation**.

## After idiomatic phrases with the preposition "to"

- BE accustomed to: They are accustomed to **sleeping late**.
- BE opposed to: Josiah is opposed to **signing a treaty**.
- BE used to: I am used to **working at the computer**.
- GET accustomed to: John got accustomed to **stopping for coffee each morning**.

## After a form of "go" to name an activity

- They go **boating on the weekends**.
- I plan to go **shopping on Saturday**.
- They went **bowling last week**.
- I want to go **dancing tonight**.

## As a subject or object to name an action

- **Exercising** is good for a person.
- **Studying** can be difficult.
- He considered **quitting his job**.

## After "remember" and "forget" when they refer to past events

- I remember **seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time**.  
*This means I remember this event.*
- I forgot **meeting her at the fair**.  
*This means I did meet her at the fair but forgot about doing so.*

## After special expressions that follow HAVE

- I had fun **playing pool**.
- They have a good time **studying together**.
- She has trouble **learning formulas**.

## After "spend" and an expression of time

- She spent last weekend **sleeping**.
- Harry spends hours **sleeping in the hammock**.
- Mom spent six hours **preparing Thanksgiving dinner**.
- Next year, she will spend most of her time **traveling**.

### **After position verbs (sit, stand, lie) followed by an expression of place**

- She lay on her bed **dreaming about vacation**.
- Estella stood at the door **talking to Rufus**.
- Grandma sat by the window **knitting a sweater**.

### **After the idiomatic phrase "can't help"**

- I can't help **falling in love with you**.
- I can't help **wanting to change my life**.