

Infinitives and verb + -ing form



Verbs followed by to+inf or the –ing form

The infinitive without to is used after:

- Modal verbs: *We must hurry or we'll be late*

The to infinitive is used after:

- Some verbs which are modal in meaning: *I have to go to work tomorrow.*
You ought to get more sleep.

Verb NEED – In the affirmative need is followed by to infinitive.

There are two negative forms: don't need+ to infinitive and needn't + infinitive without to.

The infinitive is used after certain verbs: *afford, agree, arrange, appear, attempt, choose, decide, expect, hope, intend, learn, manage, offer, pretend, promise, refuse, seem: We can't afford to go on holiday this year.*



It is also used after certain verbs + object: *advise, ask, enable, encourage, forbid, force, get, instruct, invite, order, persuade, recommend, remind, teach, tell, train, want, warn, wish*: *You can't force people to believe something.*

Verb *HELP* can or doesn't have to be followed by the 'to infinitive':

She helped me revise for my exam.

or

I helped her to complete the job application form.



The –ing form of the verb is used after:

- Some verbs which express likes and dislikes: *dislike, enjoy, loathe, (don't) mind, (can't) stand*: *She can't stand getting stuck in a traffic jam.*

EXCEPTIONS: *hate, love, prefer* – usually followed by the –ing form but sometimes followed by the 'to infinitive':

Would + hate/love/prefer is ALWAYS followed by the 'to infinitive': *I'd hate to get up early every morning.*

- Certain verbs: *admit, appreciate, avoid, can't help, consider, delay, deny, finish, imagine, involve, keep, mind, miss, postpone, prevent, report, resists, risk, suggest*: *The prime minister has just finished speaking.*



Verbs followed by the infinitive and the –ing form

A small number of words can be followed by either the infinitive or by the –ing form.

- a) No difference in meaning: *begin, can't bear, commence, continue, hate, intend, like, love, propose, start: I've just started to learn/learning to ski. He had intended to leave/leaving the party before midnight.*

Note: with verbs like *love, like, hate* there can be this slight difference in meaning:

I like to clean my car every week. I like to clean my car every week. (focus is on the result of the activity)

I like cleaning my car every week. (focus is on the activity itself, enjoying cleaning it)



With different meanings:

-verbs expressing perception (infinitive without to)

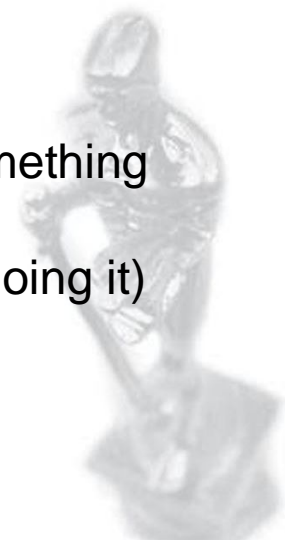
1. *We saw the plane took off.* (= We saw the whole action or process)
2. *We saw the plane taking off.* (= We saw only part of the process)

- forget:

1. *I forgot to phone my brother .* (=I didn't phone him)
2. *I will never forget phoning my sister that night.* (=I phoned her and recall it well).

- remember

1. *Tom remembered to close the windows before he left.* (= He did something he had to do; he didn't forget)
2. *Tom remembered closing the windows before he left.* (=He recalled doing it)



- go on:

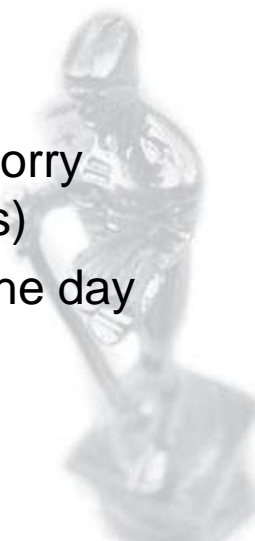
1. *He won his first race when he was seven and went on to break the world record.* (Breaking the world record was something he did later)
2. *He went on walking even though he was exhausted.* (He didn't stop walking)

- mean:

1. *I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be rude.* (=intend)
2. *If we want to catch the early train, it'll mean getting up at 5.00.* (=involve)

- regret:

1. *I regret to inform you that you haven't passed the test this time.* (=be sorry about something you are about to say-often because it is bad news)
2. *He now regrets taking the day off work.* (=He wishes he hadn't taken the day off work)



- stop

1. *We'd better stop to look at the map.* (=stop what you are doing in order to do something else)
2. *There's nothing you can do about it, so stop worrying.* (finish worrying)

- try

1. *I've been trying to repair my computer all morning.* (=attempt something difficult)
2. *Have you tried kicking it?* (=do something which might solve a problem)



Other uses of the –ing form:

- 1.As an adjective: That was a really *interesting* film.
- 2.As a noun: (the subject or object of a verb): *Driving* can be very tiring, especially late at night.
- 3.As part of participial clause of phrase: *Opening* the door I saw her sitting on the steps crying.
- 4.After a preposition: That you *for being* here.



Source: Guy Brook-Hart, Simon Haines, CAE, Student's Book

