

# verb + infinitive

Some verbs can be followed by the **infinitives** of other verbs.

*I want to talk to you for a minute. We need to change our plans.*

**1 CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE** In sentences 1–12, put in the infinitive of a verb from the boxes (nine sentences) or an **-ing form** (three sentences). Use a dictionary if necessary.

advertise create establish increase order reorganise

- 1 I've decided ..... for a new assistant.
  - 2 I like cooking, and I really enjoy ..... new dishes.
  - 3 We expect ..... our sales by 50% in the next three years.
  - 4 The Space Exploration Agency hopes ..... a permanent base on the moon before 2100.
  - 5 Our advisers suggested ..... the whole company from top to bottom.
  - 6 I didn't know how to get the equipment I needed, but Maggie offered ..... it for me.
- compete convict entertain extend pretend reverse
- 7 We're preparing ..... some important overseas visitors.
  - 8 Economic growth is falling, but the new government has promised ..... the trend.
  - 9 The police keep arresting these well-known gangsters, but the courts never seem ..... them.
  - 10 The airport authorities would like ..... Runway No 6 by 700 metres.
  - 11 When I leave this job I won't miss ..... to agree with everything the boss says.
  - 12 She's strained a leg muscle, so she may not manage ..... in the London Marathon.

**2 Complete the sentences using verbs from the boxes. Use a dictionary if necessary.**

afford attempt hesitate intend pretend ✓

- ▶ I .. *pretended* ..... to understand him, but I didn't really.
  - 1 We can't ..... to go away on holiday this year, I'm afraid.
  - 2 I knew she was wrong, but I ..... to say anything.
  - 3 I failed my driving test again, but I don't ..... to stop trying.
  - 4 My brother ..... to swim across the River Severn, but the current was much too strong.
- attempt bother choose fail swear tend
- 5 I argued for hours, but I ..... to convince him.
  - 6 He's got such a bad temper, nobody ever ..... to criticise him.
  - 7 I had an offer of a scholarship, but I ..... not to take it up.
  - 8 His lectures are useful, but they ..... to be rather boring.
  - 9 In a court case you have to ..... to tell the truth.
  - 10 I spent hours helping her, and she didn't even ..... to thank me.

For infinitives after modal verbs (e.g. *I must go*), see page 59.  
For *to* used instead of a whole infinitive (e.g. *I don't play football now, but I used to*), see page 278.

'What Women Want: To be loved, to be listened to, to be desired, to be respected, to be needed, to be trusted, and sometimes, just to be held. What Men Want: Tickets for the world series.'  
(Dave Barry)

## verb + -ing form

Some verbs can be followed by the *-ing* forms of other verbs.

*Does he ever stop talking? I can't imagine living abroad all my life, can you?*

- 1 CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE** In sentences 1–12, put in the *-ing* form of a verb from the boxes (eight sentences) or an infinitive (four sentences). Use a dictionary if necessary.

accept charge draft polish punish smile

- 1 The school decided ..... the children by giving them all extra homework.
- 2 I dislike ..... presents from people I don't know well.
- 3 Some people enjoy ..... their cars. Not me.
- 4 The police expect ..... several people with robbery.
- 5 'Smile!' 'I don't feel like .....
- 6 We hope to finish ..... the new timetable today.

climb reduce juggle replace water worry

- 7 I've completely given up ..... about the world's problems.
- 8 If we keep on ....., we must get to the top sooner or later.
- 9 I offered ..... the vase I'd broken, but she wouldn't let me.
- 10 I practised ..... for weeks, but I could only manage to keep three balls in the air.
- 11 My sister promised ..... my plants while I was away, but they all died.
- 12 The accountants advise ..... expenditure on staff by 25%.

## 2 Choose the best verbs to complete the sentences.

- 1 'What's your new job like?' 'Mixed. I ..... having a bit more money, but I ..... having my own office, and I really ..... having to write a detailed report on every single job I do.'  
(*admit, appreciate, deny, miss, resent*)
- 2 Not another meeting! I just ..... seeing all those people again. Honestly, when Peter opens his mouth I just ..... screaming. Would you ..... going and taking notes for me? Tell them I'm ill, or my grandmother's died, or something.  
(*can't face, feel like, imagine, involve, mind*)
- 3 They said the job would ..... some light housework. They didn't ..... cooking, gardening and decorating the house from top to bottom. I can't ..... staying another day – I'm off.  
(*admit, imagine, involve, mention, mind*)
- 4 During his trial, the driver continued to ..... talking on his mobile phone at the time of the accident, and refused to ..... driving dangerously, claiming that he was forced to accelerate in order to ..... hitting an old lady who was crossing the road at the time.  
(*admit, appreciate, avoid, deny, involve*)



'I'm thinking of leaving his body to science.'



**prepositional verbs** Some prepositional verbs (see page 112) can be followed by *-ing* forms.

*She insisted on paying. I thought of/about resigning.*

*Vegetarians don't believe in eating meat.*

**3 Complete some or all of these sentences with your own ideas, using *-ing* forms.**

- 1 I've often thought of .....
- 2 I've never thought of .....
- 3 I don't like to spend money on .....
- 4 It's important to thank people for .....
- 5 I don't believe in .....
- 6 I always apologise for .....

**need -ing** After *need*, an *-ing* form can be used in British English with a **passive** meaning.

*The car needs washing. (= '... needs to be washed.') My shoes need mending.*

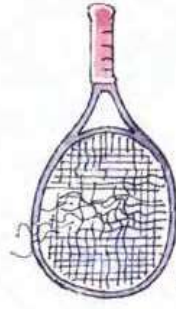
**4 Look at the pictures. What needs doing in each one? Use the words in the box.**

clean cook cut make mend paint re-string service

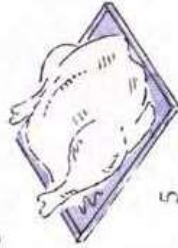
- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....
- 5 .....
- 6 .....
- 7 .....
- 8 .....



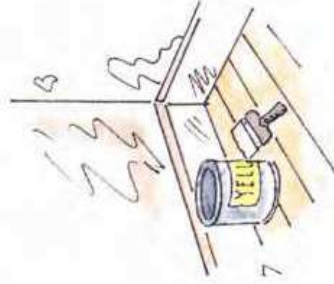
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3



5



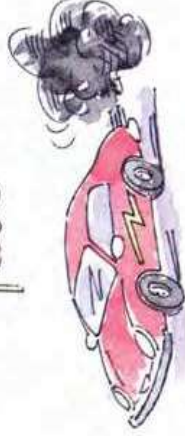
7



2



4



6



8





**believe, consider etc** Some verbs that refer to thoughts, feelings, opinions and knowledge (e.g. *believe, consider, feel, know, find, understand*) can be followed by **object + infinitive** (usually *be*) in a formal style. In a more ordinary style, *that*-clauses are more common.

*I considered her to be very efficient.* (Less formal: *I considered that she was ...*)  
*Everybody supposed them to be married.* We **believed her to be reliable.**

This structure is very uncommon with *think*, and impossible with *say*.

*I thought that he was mistaken.* (MORE NATURAL THAN *I thought him to be mistaken.*)  
*The director said that she was away.* (NOT ... ~~*said her to be away.*~~)

*To be* can be dropped after *consider*.

*I considered her a first-class administrator.*

The passive version of this structure is more common than the active (see page 83).

## 2 Make these sentences more formal.

- ▶ People supposed that he was an army officer. ... *People supposed him to be an army officer.*.....
- 1 The police believe that the jewels have been stolen.  
.....
- 2 An examination showed that the money was forged.  
.....
- 3 Copernicus proved that Ptolemy was wrong.  
.....
- 4 My parents considered that I was a very strange child.  
.....
- 5 We understand that he is living in France.  
.....

**object + -ing form** Some verbs can be followed by an object and an *-ing* form.

*I hate people telling me how to live my life.*

Prepositional verbs (see page 114) can be used in this structure.

*We may be ready tomorrow: it depends on John finishing his part of the work.*

## 3 Put in nouns and verbs from the box. Use -ing forms. Use a dictionary if necessary.

|           |             |        |              |     |      |                |
|-----------|-------------|--------|--------------|-----|------|----------------|
| customers | Mrs Jameson | people | the children | ✓   | them | younger people |
| correct   | cry         | ✓      | get          | pay | talk | think          |

- ▶ Don't shout – you'll start *the children crying*..... again.
- 1 You can stop ..... , but you can't stop .....
- 2 I resent ..... the promotion – I should have had the job.
- 3 When they take an order, they insist on ..... a 20% deposit.
- 4 I hate ..... me, especially when they're right.

**With some verbs** (e.g. *accuse, forgive*) a preposition is necessary after the object.

## 4 Put in verbs from the box.

|         |               |         |           |        |
|---------|---------------|---------|-----------|--------|
| accused | congratulated | forgave | prevented | talked |
|---------|---------------|---------|-----------|--------|

- 1 The teacher ..... me of lying.
- 2 Her parents ..... her from marrying her internet boyfriend.
- 3 I never ..... Jenny for stealing from me.
- 4 She ..... me into lending her my cat, and then she crashed it.
- 5 Everybody ..... John on getting the top job.



## infinitive and -ing form both possible

**different meanings** After some verbs, and one or two adjectives, both structures can be used with different meanings.

**Remember and forget + infinitive** refer to things that **must be done**.

**Remember to pick up the cleaning.** I forgot to phone Jenny – sorry.

**Remember and forget + -ing form** look back at things that have happened.

I still remember buying my first bicycle. I'll never forget meeting the Queen.

**Regret ...ing** also looks back. **Regret to ...** is used mostly to **announce bad news**.

I'll always regret leaving school so early.

We regret to inform passengers that the 4.15 train has been cancelled.

**Go on ...ing** means 'continue ...ing'. **Go on to ...** means 'move on to (another activity)':

He went on talking about himself right through the meal. Then he stopped talking about himself and went on to talk about his children.

**Stop** is normally followed by an **-ing form**.

I had to stop running because of knee problems.

An **infinitive** after **stop** gives the **reason** for stopping something.

I ran for half an hour, and then stopped to rest.

### 1 Choose the right forms of the verbs in the boxes. Use a dictionary if necessary.

consider force inform lock marry nag

- 1 I always forget ..... my car.
- 2 I regret ..... you that your application has not been successful.
- 3 Relax! Why do you go on ..... yourself to do too much?
- 4 I wish that woman would stop ..... her children.
- 5 'Do you ever regret ..... me?' 'Not all the time.'
- 6 We discussed the plans for the new building, and then went on ..... the costs.

believe cancel climb collect have stretch work

- 7 After a couple of hours' driving we stopped ..... coffee and ..... our legs.
- 8 I'll always remember ..... my first mountain.
- 9 I'll probably go on ..... here for another couple of years.
- 10 I stopped ..... in any religion in my teens.
- 11 'Did you remember ..... the restaurant booking?' 'Sorry, I forgot.'
- 12 In an emergency, leave the building immediately. Do not stop ..... coats or other possessions.

### 2 Write true or false things about yourself. Use -ing forms.

- 1 I'll never forget .....
  - 2 I'll always regret .....
  - 3 I hope I can go on .....
  - 4 I'll never stop .....
  - 5 I don't remember .....
- ..... for the rest of my life.



**Mean + infinitive** has the sense of 'intend'.

*Sorry - I didn't mean to wake you up.*

**Mean + -ing form** suggests 'involve', 'have as a result'.

*If you want to pass the exam it will mean studying very hard.*

**Try** can be used with both structures. To talk about doing something difficult, we more often use an infinitive.

*I tried hard to change the wheel, but my hands were too cold.*

We use **try + -ing form** to talk about trying an **experiment** (to see if something works).

**Try changing** the batteries. *And if that doesn't get it going, try kicking it.*

**Advise, allow, permit and forbid** are followed by **object + infinitive**, but by **-ing forms** if there is **no object**. Compare:

*John advised us to see a lawyer. John advised seeing a lawyer.*

*They don't allow anybody to park here. They don't allow parking here.*

**After hear, listen, see and watch + object**, we usually prefer an **infinitive** (without *to*) to talk about **complete actions**, and an **-ing form** to talk about **actions in progress**. Compare:

*I once heard him give a wonderful talk about women's rights.*

*Listen to Jessica singing in the shower!*

*The police watched him get out of the car and disappear into the bank.*

*I glanced out of the window and saw Rob crossing the road.*

### 3 Choose the right forms of the verbs in the boxes. Use a dictionary if necessary.

explode glue make send tip train

- 1 'My girlfriend won't speak to me.' 'Try ..... her flowers.'
- 2 You want to do the London marathon? It will mean ..... hard for months.
- 3 People heard the bomb ..... from 50 miles away.
- 4 I'm sorry. We don't allow staff ..... personal phone calls.
- 5 I tried ..... the broken chair, but I couldn't make the pieces stick.
- 6 I meant ..... the waiter 15%, but I gave him twice as much by mistake.

blow change consult look tune up visit

- 7 The hospital only allows ..... between 4.00 and 6.00.
- 8 The doctor advised me ..... a heart specialist.
- 9 Can you hear the wind ..... in the trees?
- 10 'I don't understand this word.' 'Try ..... it up.'
- 11 I like to listen to the orchestra ..... It's often better than what follows.
- 12 'I'm having trouble with the bank again. What do you advise?' '..... banks.'

### 4 Write true or false things about yourself. Use infinitives or -ing forms.

- I never mean ..... but I sometimes do.  
If I was in charge of the world, I wouldn't allow people .....  
I like to watch people .....  
If I'm depressed, I try .....





## infinitive and -ing form both possible (continued)

With *hate*, we prefer an infinitive when we are talking about **one present action**. Compare:

*I hate to cook / cooking.* *I hate to break up the party, but I've got to go home.* (NOT *I hate-breaking up...*)

With *like*, we prefer an infinitive when we are talking about **choices and habits**. Compare:

*I like to climb / climbing mountains.*

*If I'm travelling, I like to pack the night before.* (NOT *I like-packing the night before.*)

After *would like/hate*, only an infinitive is possible. Compare:

*Do you like to dance/dancing?* *Would you like to dance?* (NOT *Would you like dancing?*)

### 5 Choose from the alternatives: A, B or both.

- 1 A I like to start work early. B I like starting work early.
- 2 A I hate to say this, but your pronunciation is terrible.  
B I hate saying this, but your pronunciation is terrible.
- 3 A I really like to watch old cowboy films. B I really like watching old cowboy films.
- 4 'Can I give you a lift?' A 'Thanks, I'd like walking.' B 'Thanks, I'd like to walk.'
- 5 A I hate to make phone calls in a foreign language.  
B I hate making phone calls in a foreign language.
- 6 'I've written a very long poem.' A 'Oh, I'd just love to see it.' B 'Oh, I'd just love seeing it.'
- 7 A I like to do the most difficult jobs first. B I like doing the most difficult jobs first.

*Afraid (of)* can be used with both structures.

*I'm not afraid to tell / of telling people what I think.*

But we use **afraid of...** to talk about fear of things that happen **accidentally**.

*Let's turn the music off – I'm afraid of waking the baby.*

**Sure/Certain of ...ing** describe the feelings of the **person we are talking about**.

*She seems very sure of winning.* *Are you certain of being ready in time?*

**Sure/certain to ...** express the **feelings of the speaker**.

*She's very confident, but I think she's sure to lose.* *It's certain to rain before long.*

**Interested to ...** mostly refers to reactions to learning something.

*I was interested to see in the paper that they have found gold on the moon.*

**Interested in ...ing** suggests a wish to do something.

*I'm interested in taking a Chinese course. Do you know a good school?*

### 6 Complete some of these sentences, using -ing forms or infinitives.

**Different answers are possible.**

- 1 She thinks she'll pass the exam, but I think she's sure .....
- 2 'What sort of job do you want to do after you finish studying?' 'Well, I'm interested .....
- 3 My father doesn't like to drive fast, because he's afraid .....
- 4 I won't wash up your glasses, because I'm afraid .....
- 5 I was really interested .....
- 6 You seem very sure .....
- 7 He's not that bad. I'm not afraid .....



**no difference** Some verbs can be followed by infinitives or *-ing* forms with little or no difference of meaning. Common examples: *begin, can't bear, continue, intend, love, prefer, start.*

*She began to play / playing the violin at age 4.*

*I can't bear to see / seeing animals suffer.*

*The members continued to debate / debating until midnight.*

*I love to make / making new friends.*

*What do you intend to do / doing now?*

*I really must start to save / saving money.*

*After would love/prefer, only an infinitive is possible.*

*I'd love to meet your friend Julia. (NOT ~~I'd love meeting~~ ...)*

**7 CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE. Choose the best ways to complete the sentences.**

- 1 Did you remember ... bread when you were out? **A to buy B buying C both**
- 2 After she had finished her speech, the President went on ... medals to the soldiers.  
**A to give B giving C both**
- 3 We regret ... that the flight to Amsterdam will be delayed for one hour.  
**A to announce B announcing C both**
- 4 I like ... through my lunch break so that I can leave the office early. **A to work B working C both**
- 5 I don't intend ... in this job for the rest of my life. **A to stay B staying C both**
- 6 ... you like to come out with me this evening? **A Do B Would C both**
- 7 I really love ... at the sea. **A to look B looking C both**
- 8 We don't allow people ... inside the building. **A to smoke B smoking C both**
- 9 If we buy a house it will mean ... a lot of money. **A to borrow B borrowing C both**
- 10 'My computer won't work.' 'Try ... it on.' **A to switch B switching C both**
- 11 I can hear somebody ... up the stairs. **A come B coming C both**
- 12 I was interested ... that interest rates were going up again. **A to hear B in hearing C both**
- 13 Whichever party wins the election, they're sure ... things even worse.  
**A to make B of making C both**
- 14 I hate ... this, but your hair looks terrible. **A to say B saying C both**
- 15 My sister can't bear ... spiders. **A to look at B looking at C both**

**8 CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE. Put in five words from the box.**

afraid allow forget go on love regret remember try try

- 1 In the film *The Constant Gardener*, she plays a diplomat's wife who is murdered when she ..... to expose the illegal dealings of western drug companies.
- 2 I ..... once telling my father that I was bored. "BORED?" he shouted. "I wish I had the luxury of being bored. .... working like the rest of us. Then you'll be glad of a little boredom."
- 3 Many doctors are ..... of being treated in their own hospitals, while a lack of support from the Government has left elderly patients at risk from hospital-acquired infections and malnourishment.
- 4 In a letter sent to the Queen in the 1950s, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan wrote: "After lunch, which was extremely good, Dr Adenauer delivered for an hour a lecture on the dangers of communism and the best way to deal with it in the schools, in the factories and in the homes. I ..... to inform Your Majesty that I fell asleep during the latter part of this oration."