

46 Verb *-ing* forms; verb + *-ing* form or infinitive?

Flying to another continent usually means spending hours trapped in a plane, bored stiff. But this is their first long-haul flight and they mean to enjoy it.



1 Verb *-ing* forms

Sometimes *-ing* forms can have their own subjects and objects:

- subject + *-ing* form: *I'm looking forward to **my wife returning**.*
- *-ing* form + object: ***Meeting new people** is one benefit of taking evening classes.*

We can use determiners, possessives, possessive adjectives or object pronouns before *-ing* forms:

***All this complaining** won't get you anywhere, you know.* (determiner)

***Peter's complaining** didn't do him any good.* (possessive)

*Exorbitant tax rates led to **him leaving** the country.* (object pronoun)

FORMALITY CHECK In formal English we prefer to use possessive adjectives rather than object pronouns before *-ing* forms: *Exorbitant tax rates led to **his leaving** the country.*



When we use the + *-ing* form and we want to link it with an object, we use *of*:

~~The giving presents is a traditional part of the naming ceremony.~~

***The giving of presents** is a traditional part of the naming ceremony.*

Many adjectives and nouns are followed by a preposition + *-ing* form (► Unit 65):

*Lara isn't **capable of lying** and she has **no reason for not telling** the truth.*

2 Verb + *-ing* form

The verbs below can be followed by an *-ing* form, but NOT by an infinitive:

admit appreciate* avoid* burst out can't help* consider contemplate defer delay deny detest* dislike* endure* enjoy* escape excuse* face* fancy* feel like finish give up imagine* involve* justify* keep (on) leave off mention* mind* miss* postpone practise prevent* put off put sb off recall* recommend resent* resist* risk* save suggest tolerate* understand*

* With these verbs we can also put an object before the *-ing* form. Compare:

*Can you **imagine wearing** that dress?* (verb + *-ing* form)

*Can you **imagine Jemima wearing** that dress?* (verb + object + *-ing* form)

*~~I avoid to travel in the rush hour.~~ ✓ **I avoid travelling** in the rush hour.*

Certain verbs (particularly sense verbs) are only followed by an *-ing* form when they have an object:

catch discover feel find hear leave notice observe see spot watch

~~In 'Hamlet' the prince discovers hiding behind the curtains.~~

*✓ In 'Hamlet' the prince **discovers Polonius** hiding behind the curtains.*

3 Verb + *-ing* form/infinitive

Some verbs can be followed by an *-ing* form or an infinitive, with no difference in meaning:

attempt begin bother can't bear can't stand cease continue deserve fear hate intend like (= enjoy) love prefer start

***I can't stand to see/seeing** animals in pain.*



We usually avoid putting two infinitives or two *-ing* forms together:

*[He intended starting taking lessons.] ✓ **He intended to start taking** lessons.*

4 Verb + *-ing* form or infinitive?

Some verbs can be followed by an *-ing* form or by *to* + infinitive, but there is a difference in meaning:

VERB	MEANING + <i>-ing</i> FORM	MEANING + <i>to</i> + INFINITIVE
<i>remember/forget</i>	think about an event or situation before the time of speaking: <i>Do you remember going to school for the first time?</i> <i>I'll never forget meeting him.</i>	think of something you have done or should do: <i>Did you remember to collect the dry cleaning this morning?</i> <i>Don't forget to lock the back door.</i>
<i>go on</i>	continue: <i>They went on playing despite the bad weather.</i>	stop one action and change to another: <i>After opening the hospital the Prince went on to meet the staff.</i>
<i>mean</i>	involves or will result in: <i>Flying to another continent usually means spending hours in a plane.</i>	intend to do something: <i>But this is their first long-haul flight and they mean to enjoy it!</i>
<i>need</i>	requires something to be done to it: <i>That floor is filthy. It needs washing.</i>	feel it necessary to do something: <i>I feel sick and I need to see a doctor.</i>
<i>regret</i>	feel sorrow about something you did/didn't do in the past: <i>I really regret not learning to swim when I was young.</i>	say sorry that something has/hasn't happened, in formal situations: <i>We regret to inform you of delays in today's service.</i>
<i>stop</i>	finish an action: <i>They stopped making fax machines about ten years ago.</i>	finish one action in order to do another one: <i>We stopped to get petrol.</i>
<i>try</i>	do something as an experiment (to see what will happen): <i>Try using a screwdriver to get the lid off.</i>	make an effort to do something difficult: <i>We tried to get tickets but the show was sold out.</i>



The verbs *advise*, *allow*, *forbid* and *permit* are followed by an *-ing* form when they have no object, but by an infinitive when they have an object:

✗ *The doctor **advised him taking** a course of antibiotics.*

✓ *The doctor **advised taking** a course of antibiotics.*

✓ *The doctor **advised him to take** a course of antibiotics.*

5 Sense verbs

Sense verbs (► Unit 25.3) can be followed by an object + *-ing* form when we are describing an action in progress or an action that is repeated:

*As I walked past the house I **heard someone playing** Brahms' Lullaby on the piano.*

(The person was in the middle of playing when I walked past.)

*I **saw a young mother slapping** her child. (She slapped him several times.)*

However, when we are describing a single action or the action is complete, we use an object + infinitive (without *to*) after sense verbs:

*We **saw a young mother slap** her child in the supermarket. (She slapped once.)*

*Last week I **heard them play** the fifth symphony. (I heard the complete symphony.)*

With this meaning we use *to* + infinitive if the sense verb is passive:

*The young mother **was seen to slap** her child.*

Note we use an object pronoun, not a possessive adjective, after sense verbs:

✗ *Have you seen **our** performing yet?* ✓ *Have you seen **us** performing yet?*

Practice

1 Choose the correct or most likely explanation, A or B.

- 1 I'm looking forward to Sally cooking my favourite dish this evening.
A I'm cooking this evening. B Sally's cooking this evening.
- 2 Alastair forgot to lock the door.
A He should have done this but he didn't.
B He can't remember whether he locked the door or not.
- 3 The airline strike delayed my taking up my new position in the Los Angeles office.
A This is a person speaking. B This is an extract from a formal letter.
- 4 I heard a famous actor read *Treasure Island* on the radio last week.
A I heard the entire story. B I heard part of the story.
- 5 After the lesson ended we went on chatting.
A We had been chatting during the lesson.
B We hadn't been chatting during the lesson.
- 6 Why don't you try giving Tom some herb tea?
A Tom hates herb tea. B It might make him feel better.

2 Choose the correct form in *italics*.

- 1 Darling, did you remember *packing/to pack* some extra memory cards for the video camera yesterday?
- 2 I really regret *leaving / to leave* school so young, it's ruined my career prospects.
- 3 We tried *pressing / to press* the 'escape' key but the program just wouldn't respond.
- 4 A suspicious young man was seen *enter / to enter* the building shortly before the incident.
- 5 As we drove over the river we noticed local women *washing / wash* their clothes in the water.
- 6 Nothing will stop their enquiries, they mean *getting / to get* to the bottom of this strange business.
- 7 Transglobe Airlines regrets *announcing / to announce* the cancellation of today's service to Istanbul due to air traffic restrictions.
- 8 Do you remember *seeing / to see* that film last summer?
- 9 That wound's quite deep. You really need *putting / to put* some antiseptic on it.
- 10 We were all exhausted so we stopped *getting / to get* some rest at a motel.

3 Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first. Use the word in brackets, as in the example. 3.34 Listen and check.

- 0 Clarissa said she hadn't used my laptop. (denied) *Clarissa denied using* my laptop.
- 1 I'm sorry that I gave up my job in the civil service. (regret)
..... in the civil service.
- 2 Make sure you top up your mobile phone credit before we leave. (forget)
..... before we leave.
- 3 Because of his injury, Stephen can't drive at the moment. (capable)
At the moment, Stephen because of his injury.
- 4 As part of the ceremony, the president lays flowers on the soldier's grave. (the)
..... on the soldier's grave by the president is part of the ceremony.
- 5 Although she was pregnant, Julia didn't stop work. (went)
Despite her pregnancy, Julia
- 6 To help with his insomnia, the doctor suggested Pedro give up drinking coffee. (advised)
To help with his insomnia, the doctor drinking coffee.

- 7 If you accept this job you will have to take on a lot of responsibility. (means)
Accepting this job
- 8 There are a lot of mistakes in this letter. Please retype it. (needs)
This letter
- 9 Is it all right with you if my brother comes to the party? (coming)
Do you to the party?
- 10 Hilary laughed out loud when she heard the joke. (burst)
Hilary the joke.

4 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the article with suitable forms of verbs from the box, as in the example. 3.35 Listen and check.

catch close come exploit go hear install over-fish see take wear

JELLYFISH INVADE TOURIST BEACHES



IF YOU FEEL LIKE (0) *going* FOR A SWIM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN THESE DAYS YOU MIGHT BE IN FOR A SHOCK – IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE!

Beaches from the Costa del Sol to the French Riviera have been invaded by shoals of stinging jellyfish. The main culprit is *Pelagia noctiluca*, or the 'mauve stinger'. Its sting can cause painful injuries even to healthy humans. And, if anyone suffering from an allergy is stung, they will probably need (1) a doctor immediately. Medical experts advise (2) the usual basic precautions such as only swimming at beaches with lifeguards on duty. Those who wish to swim in more remote locations should remember (3) a wetsuit, as this offers considerable protection.

One tourist who was stung said, 'I don't regret (4) here but I think they should have warned us about the jellyfish. I (5) our holiday rep saying something about it but I wasn't really listening. I mean, you don't expect jellyfish in the Med, do you? It's something you associate with the tropics.'

Some scientists blame the problem on global warming. Rising sea temperatures mean jellyfish can live in parts of the sea that were previously too cold. (6) of tuna and turtles, which are natural predators of jellyfish, is thought to be another major cause. As the numbers of these predators have declined, so the number of jellyfish has increased. Environmentalists believe that until we stop (7) the limited stocks of tuna the problem will only get worse.

Tourism authorities have promised to take action against the problem, even if it means (8) huge nets around popular beaches. They certainly want to avoid (9) any beaches to the public, as this would be disastrous for the tourist industry. In some areas authorities are trying (10) the jellyfish before they approach the coast by sending out fishing boats to hunt for the creatures in deeper water.

OUR ADVICE IS – STAY IN THE SWIMMING POOL!