

English B1 · Gerunds and infinitives

Intermediate English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

The two stubborn grandpas

Every verb has a favourite costume: enjoy only wears -ing; want only wears to. They never swap, like two stubborn grandpas.

The gerund family

Verb	Example
enjoy / finish / mind	I enjoy reading. Have you finished eating?
avoid / keep / practise	We practised speaking.
suggest / imagine / miss	She suggested leaving early.
as a subject	Swimming is fun. Learning English is a journey.

Use the evidence

Would you mind opening the window? — the politest request in Britain.

Your turn: the costume check

Your turn

I enjoy ____.

- A. to swim
- B. swimming
- C. swim
- D. to swimming

The infinitive family

Verb	Example
want / decide / hope / plan	She decided to study medicine.
promise / learn / agree / refuse	We agreed to meet at five.
afford	I can't afford to buy it.

Use the evidence

After to, the base form: to swim, never to swimming.

Your turn: the bridge

Your turn

I want ____ home.

- A. go
- B. to go
- C. going
- D. to going

The meaning-changers

Verb	+ -ing	+ to-infinitive
stop	stop the activity: I stopped smoking.	stop in order to: I stopped to buy water.
remember	a memory: I remember meeting her.	a task: Remember to call her!
try	an experiment: Try adding salt.	an effort: Try to finish on time.

Use the evidence

I stopped smoking vs I stopped to smoke: opposite meanings, one costume apart.

Your turn: which meaning

Your turn

On the way home, I stopped ____ some water.

- A. buying
- B. to buy
- C. bought
- D. buy

The preposition shadow

After a preposition, always -ing

interested in learning · good at swimming · thank you for coming

A preposition is a preposition; the gerund follows it like a shadow.

Say it aloud

I enjoy watching films. I have finished pretending otherwise.



I want to travel. I am learning to cook. I can't afford both this month.



I remember meeting my best friend. I must remember to message them today.



Try adding one English sentence to your diary tonight; try to keep it going for a week.

Check yourself

- I enjoy swimming — enjoy only wears -ing.
- She decided to study medicine — decide only wears to.
- I stopped to buy water — stopped in order to.
- She suggested leaving early — suggest never takes to.