



### What have you learned from your grammar textbook?

Some verbs can be followed by (1) a **gerund**. Other verbs can be followed by (2) an **infinitive**, or (3) a **noun phrase + infinitive**. Finally, some verbs can be followed by (4) either a **gerund** or an **infinitive**.

1. I *enjoy playing* soccer.
2. Sara *decided to play* badminton.
3. Sara *asked* Doug *to play* badminton.
4. Kate *likes playing/to play* tennis.

### What does the corpus show?

- A** Overall, **verb + infinitive** combinations are **more common** than verb + gerund combinations. (See Unit 34 for verb + gerund combinations.)
- B** Although many verbs can be followed by an infinitive, with or without a noun phrase (NP), only a few verbs are very common with an infinitive. When we consider both **conversation** and **writing**, the most common verbs fall into four categories of meaning:

Meaning Category	Verb (+ Infinitive) (* = very common)	Example
1. want or need	<i>hope</i> <i>like</i> * <i>need</i> <i>want</i> * <i>want</i> NP <i>wish</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well, I <i>hope to see</i> you soon. (CONV.)</li> <li>• Wouldn't you <i>like to see</i> Aunt Irene? (CONV.)</li> <li>• I <i>needed to get</i> away. (CONV.)</li> <li>• I don't really <i>want to be</i> here. (CONV.)</li> <li>• We <i>want you to do</i> it. (CONV.)</li> <li>• Bobby did not <i>wish to hear</i> any more. (FICT.)</li> </ul>
2. effort	<i>attempt</i> * <i>fail</i> * <i>manage</i> <i>try</i> *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Express <i>had attempted to start</i> a similar promotion. (NEWS)</li> <li>• The information <i>failed to cheer</i> them up. (NEWS)</li> <li>• He <i>managed to communicate</i> to a certain extent through gestures. (ACAD.)</li> <li>• I <i>try to keep</i> my mouth shut. (CONV.)</li> </ul>
3. begin or continue	<i>begin</i> * <i>continue</i> <i>start</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aircraft <i>began to lose</i> height. (ACAD.)</li> <li>• The movie theatre industry <i>will continue to thrive</i>. (NEWS)</li> <li>• She looked at him and <i>started to laugh</i>. (FICT.)</li> </ul>
4. "seem" verbs	<i>appear</i> <i>seem</i> * <i>tend</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot of motorists <i>appeared to have joined</i> carpools. (NEWS)</li> <li>• Lisa <i>seemed to like</i> him a lot. (CONV.)</li> <li>• I <i>tend to sweat</i> heavily in warm climates. (FICT.)</li> </ul>

**Be careful!** The verbs in the "want or need" category are very **common only in conversation**. They are rarely used in academic writing. The **other categories** are used in both **conversation** and **writing**.

**C** In **conversation**, four of the **verb + infinitive** combinations that were covered in Section B are **especially common**:

- **want + infinitive** is extremely common. It is often pronounced as one word: “wanna.”
- **like, try, and seem + infinitive** are also very common.

**D** In **conversation**, **try and** is sometimes used as an **alternative** to **try to**. It is often used when the verb **try** is an infinitive:

- We want to **try and find** a copy of that magazine. [= *We want to try to find a copy . . .*]
- You don't have to **try and cook** everything in under ten minutes. [= *You don't have to try to cook . . .*]

**E** In **academic writing**, no single verb + infinitive combination is very common. In addition to the verbs in Section B, five other verbs are **relatively common**. They fall into **two meaning categories**:

Meaning Category	Verb (+ Infinitive)	Example
1. <b>report research findings</b>	<i>be found</i> (passive)	• Younger families <b>have been found to move</b> more frequently than older families.
2. <b>“allow” verbs</b>	<i>allow</i> NP <i>enable</i> NP <i>require</i> NP <i>be required</i> (passive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The size of the farm <b>did not allow</b> them <b>to make</b> a full-time living.</li> <li>• A checklist <b>will enable</b> you <b>to listen</b> to those words over and over again.</li> <li>• The test <b>required</b> participants <b>to identify</b> certain stimuli.</li> <li>• More work <b>is required to separate</b> molecules.</li> </ul>

## Activities

**1 Notice in context:** Read the conversation and the newspaper paragraph. Underline the **verb + infinitive** combinations.

**1. Conversation:** *Talking about Diana's four-year-old daughter, Amanda.*

DIANA: I realized today that I nag Amanda too much. She takes forever for everything. Like getting dressed.

JOAN: What do you say to her?

DIANA: I just sort of try and bring her attention back to the task. But now I'm thinking to myself, I don't think I should say anything. 'Cause she knows what she needs to do.

JOAN: She can put on her own clothes, right?

DIANA: Yeah, but she's slow. I want to get ready to go out, and she'll start to get dressed, and then she'll get distracted and start playing, and I'll be like, okay, now you need to put your pants on.

**2. Newspaper writing:** *From an article about lead-based paint as a health hazard for children.*

The primary source of lead exposure for children remains old, lead-based paint. Lead in paint made it more durable, but due to health concerns, manufacturers began to reduce lead as long ago as 1940. Lead in paint was finally banned in 1978. Doctors say children should be tested for lead poisoning first when they are about a year old, and then once or twice thereafter. If a child appears to have lead poisoning, it may be time to have the home checked as well.

**2 Analyze and edit:** Each of the following sentences has a **verb + infinitive** combination that is typical of conversation rather than writing. Change the verb or entire combination to one that is more typical of writing using the meaning category in parentheses. Cross out the original combination and write the new one above it.

1. Congressional Democrats have said they will sue the president if he ~~tries to~~ <sup>attempts to</sup> exert his veto powers. (**effort**)
2. Some employers will not want you to share your workload officially, but may be open to revising your job description to fit in with the company's needs. (**allow**)
3. In research studies, some people will not give personal information, or they don't even try and cooperate with the researchers. (**effort**)
4. In a study, Americans hoped to have the use of food stamps rather than policies for a guaranteed minimum income for all people. (**report research findings**)
5. For the first time last fall, all freshmen needed to take algebra. (**allow**)
6. Individual schools and determined teachers in the privacy of their own classrooms wanna violate numerous regulations and traditions. (**effort, with success**)

**3 Analyze discourse:** Read through (1) a newspaper article, (2) a page in a novel, and (3) a page in a textbook. List the **verb + infinitive** combinations you find in each reading. What meaning categories do they fall into? How do the verbs and categories differ among the newspaper, novel, and textbook? Share your findings with a partner.

**4 Practice conversation:** Write a conversation between two friends who want to study together after class. Use **verb + infinitive** combinations that are common in conversation. When you are finished, practice your conversation with a partner.

**Scene:** *A has a check to deposit at the bank and would enjoy eating an ice cream cone. B's mother asked her to go grocery shopping, and she also has nothing suitable to wear for her job interview tomorrow.*

A: *So, what do you have to do before our study date?*

B: *I need to do some grocery shopping for my mom . . .* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5 Practice writing:** Below are sentences from three different types of writing. Create a paragraph for each one, including at least two **verb + infinitive** combinations most likely to appear in each type of writing. Write your paragraphs on a separate piece of paper.

1. **Newspaper writing:** Thick fog covered the city early today, cutting visibility during morning rush-hour traffic.
2. **Fiction writing:** My grandson was staring at me, and it occurred to me he was about to burst into tears or else run out of the room.
3. **Academic writing:** Scientists have found a way to help night shift workers get a decent day's sleep.



**What have you learned from your grammar textbook?**

Some verbs can be followed by (1) a **gerund**. A few verbs can be followed by (2) either a **gerund or an infinitive**.

1. I *enjoy playing* soccer.
2. Kate *likes playing/to play* tennis.

**What does the corpus show?**

- A** Although many verbs *can* be followed by a gerund, **only a few verbs are very common with gerunds**. Verb + infinitive combinations are much more common than verb + gerund combinations (see Unit 33).
- B** The **most common verbs** used with gerunds fall into **three categories of meaning**. These verbs are typical of **conversation** and **fiction**; they are rarely used in academic writing.

Meaning Category	Verb (+ Gerund) (* = very common)	Example
1. <b>begin, continue, or end</b>	<i>begin*</i> <i>get</i> (NP) <sup>1</sup> <i>keep*</i> <i>keep on</i> <i>spend time</i> <i>start*</i> <i>stop*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dog <i>began barking</i>. (FICT.)</li> <li>• Let's <i>get going</i>. (CONV.)</li> <li>• The fear will <i>get me moving</i>. (CONV.)</li> <li>• She <i>keeps saying</i> she wants to go to Florida. (CONV.)</li> <li>• They've got stamina. They know how to <i>keep on going</i>. (FICT.)</li> <li>• I <i>spent</i> a lot of <i>time working</i> on my project. (CONV.)</li> <li>• Last night my leg <i>started hurting</i> in the middle of the night. (CONV.)</li> <li>• The leaves had not <i>stopped falling</i>. (FICT.)</li> </ul>
2. <b>remember or think</b>	<i>remember</i> <i>think about</i> <i>think of</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I <i>remember painting</i> with my dad. (CONV.)</li> <li>• Well, maybe I ought to <i>think about moving</i> here. (CONV.)</li> <li>• It makes me <i>think of being</i> sick. (CONV.)</li> </ul>
3. <b>hear, see, or other sense</b>	<i>hear</i> NP <i>see</i> NP*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They <i>heard</i> the door <i>opening</i>. (FICT.)</li> <li>• He could <i>see</i> Simon <i>looking</i> at him. (FICT.)</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Here *get* = to cause. See more on the meanings of *get* in Unit 4.

- C** In **conversation**, **go + gerund** is used with some **special meanings**. The most common are:

Meaning	Example
1. participating in a <b>recreational activity</b>	• We should <i>go swimming</i> before I take a shower.
2. expressing <b>dislike</b> or <b>surprise</b> at an activity	• I had to <i>go chasing</i> after them.
3. expressing <b>disapproval</b> (usually with "not")	• You <i>can't go yelling</i> at people.

**D** In **academic writing**, verb + gerund combinations are rare. **Only three verbs** are commonly followed by gerunds. They are useful when **describing a process** or **reporting research**.

Verb (+ Gerund)	Example
1. <i>be used for</i> (passive)	• Chlorine <i>is</i> widely <i>used for</i> disinfecting water.
2. <i>be achieved by</i> (passive)	• Communication can only <i>be achieved by relating</i> language with context.
3. <i>involve</i>	• Browsing <i>involves viewing</i> an ordered sequence of items.

**E** In most cases, when a verb can be followed by either **a gerund or an infinitive** and have roughly the same meaning, the **verb + infinitive** combination is **more common**. There is **one exception** to this pattern: the verb **start**.

In **conversation**, **start + gerund** is **more common** than *start + infinitive*:

MORE COMMON: They just **started learning** this song on Monday.

LESS COMMON: They just **started to learn** this song on Monday.

In **academic writing**, **start + infinitive** occurs more than *start + gerund*, but **neither combination is common**.

## Activities

**1 Notice in context:** Read the conversation and the two paragraphs from different types of writing. Underline the **verb + gerund** combinations.

**1. Conversation:** *Two students discuss their future plans.*

YELENA: Once I get an academic degree I plan to become a teacher and that's what you do. You just stay in school. You continue to do what you always did. You stop getting degrees and you start earning a salary.

NADIA: That's one of the things I've considered, and then specifically I have thought about teaching English.

YELENA: It's a good field, and if you get some good students it's great.

NADIA: My sister has three degrees. And she just kept going to school. She never quit. She went to college for . . . I can't think of how many years she went to college.

**2. Fiction writing:** *Leaving a warm house at the wrong time.*

The first thing he realized when he got outside was that he had left his coat behind in the house. He began shivering. It was growing darker every minute, and he kept slipping into deep drifts of snow, and skidding on frozen puddles, and tripping over fallen tree-trunks, and sliding down steep banks, and scraping his shins against rocks, till he was wet and cold and bruised all over. The silence and the loneliness were dreadful.

**3. Academic writing:** *The relationship of computers and people.*

In discussing the development of computer systems, we shall examine some of the general questions that have arisen. This will involve reflecting a little on the nature of computers, the needs they fulfill, the side-effects they produce, and the psychology of human nature.

**2 Practice the structure:** Complete each sentence with a common verb from Sections B-E. Use the correct tense and form, and make sure the sentence makes sense. In some sentences, more than one answer is possible. The sentences from academic writing have been identified; the others are from conversation and fiction.

1. When we were driving back, suddenly his car started / began making a weird noise.
2. I have \_\_\_\_\_ more time traveling in the east than I ever have in the west.
3. Hey, the blackout is over! They've \_\_\_\_\_ the street lights working again.
4. Ezinma lay shivering on a mat beside a huge fire that her mother had \_\_\_\_\_ burning all night.
5. I haven't seen you in such a long time. I \_\_\_\_\_ hearing you guys went to China, like for your honeymoon?
6. Go ahead, \_\_\_\_\_ walking. I'll catch up.
7. Meeting the basic needs of all citizens usually \_\_\_\_\_ focusing on a society's poorest members. (ACAD.)
8. We've got to move some of this furniture to make more space. We \_\_\_\_\_ about pulling the bookcase out of the baby's room and putting the toy chest back in.
9. How does garlic grow? I really have never \_\_\_\_\_ garlic growing.
10. One of his knees had been scraped. It \_\_\_\_\_ bleeding.
11. Make several copies of the outline. One copy should \_\_\_\_\_ for transcribing your notes. (ACAD.)
12. This is like the funniest picture. We couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ laughing when we saw that picture.

**3 Practice conversation:** Work with a partner. For each one of the topics listed below, tell your partner about a personal experience. Include the suggested **verb + gerund** combinations. For the last topic, supply your own **verb + gerund** combinations. Make sure you use the correct tenses and forms of the verbs.

1. Talk about a job you had or special project you did in the past.  
Use **begin, stop, and remember** with gerunds.
2. Think about a place that you like to go. Describe it to your partner.  
Use **see** and **hear** with noun phrases and gerunds.
3. Tell your partner about a childhood memory.  
Pick your own verb + gerund combinations!

#### EXAMPLE

Talk about your favorite recreational activity.  
Use **go** and **spend time** with gerunds.

I like to **go jogging** in my neighborhood. I always go on the same streets so I can see how my neighbors' gardens are growing. When I'm not jogging, I **spend time gardening**, and I sometimes trade plants with my neighbors.



### What have you learned from your grammar textbook?

There are **two main types** of noun clause: **wh-clauses** and **that-clauses**:

- I don't know **why** he did that.
- I think **that** today is Thursday.

### What does the corpus show?

- A** *Be* is the **most common verb** used with a noun clause in **academic writing**. The typical structure and uses of *be* + *wh*-clause are very different from *be* + *that*-clause.
- B** *Be* + *wh*-clause usually occurs with a **demonstrative pronoun as subject**. The pronoun refers to the previous sentence, while the *wh*-clause provides new information.

Wh-word	Function	Example
<i>what</i> <i>who</i>	providing further <b>explanation</b>	• The acts of weighing involve probing the box's interaction with gravitational field. <b>That is what</b> "weighing" is.
<i>why</i>	identifying the <b>reason</b>	• But no doubt these conclusions are open to challenge. <b>This is why</b> the issue needs to be evaluated for its classroom validity.
<i>where</i>	identifying a <b>place</b> or a <b>point in time</b>	• Robert Gravier was reported to have chartered the ill-fated Falcon Jet to take him to Acapulco. <b>Here is where</b> the intrigue started.
<i>when</i>	identifying the <b>time</b>	• As previously explained, <b>this is when</b> keyboard input is expected.

- C** The subject of a *be* + *whether*-clause is usually a **full noun phrase** that refers to a **question** or **issue**:
- The question is **whether** grammar ought to be taught as a separate formal subject.
- D** *Be* + *that*-clause usually has a **full noun phrase as subject**. In this case, the new information is in the *that*-clause, but the subject tells the reader **how to interpret the information**; e.g., an "explanation" or a "result."
- One result was **that** older people made greater head movements than younger people.

- E** **Frequency information.** Here is a list of **common subject nouns** in *be* + *that*-clause constructions:

Nouns (* = very common)	Examples
<i>advantage</i> <i>answer</i> <i>argument</i> <i>assumption</i> <i>conclusion</i> <i>consideration</i> <i>danger</i> <i>difficulty</i> <b><i>explanation</i>*</b> <i>fact</i> <i>finding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heath (1990) compares three studies on class differences in education, carried out respectively in 1949, 1972, and 1983. Very broadly, <b>his conclusion is that</b> class inequalities in education—at least for boys—have changed very little since the First World War.</li> <li>• This points to a toxic effect of alcohol. <b>An alternative explanation is that</b> liver disease might be a major factor.</li> <li>• To explain such extreme velocities, we consider two possibilities. <b>The first is that</b> the masers are emitted from a molecular circle. <b>The second possibility is that</b> the masers are emitted from the nuclear region.</li> <li>• The night shift is supposed to be for working youth and adults. <b>The truth is that</b> many children also work.</li> </ul>
<i>hypothesis</i> <i>idea</i> <i>implication</i> <i>interpretation</i> <i>likelihood</i> <b><i>point</i>*</b> <b><i>possibility</i>*</b> <b><i>problem</i>*</b> <b><i>result</i>*</b> <i>reason</i> <i>truth</i>	

# Activities

**1 Notice in context:** Read the two passages from academic texts. Underline the noun clauses and circle the subject of each sentence with a noun clause.

1. *From a book about aquarium plants.*

In the second year, these plants drop the underwater leaves and grow above the surface of the water. This is why this species is not suitable for an aquarium.

2. *From a study about primary school education.*

One very valuable possible audience for project work might be younger children in the same school. Fourth-year students can produce booklets for first- or second-year students. A good test of suitability of the material they create is whether these younger children can read and understand it and find it enjoyable.

The general point is that primary schools might be more imaginative and flexible in their staff assignments: there is no law that says that there should be one teacher to one class for all of the time.

**2 Analyze discourse:** Look back at Activity 1 and at the noun clauses that you underlined. Write the function of each noun clause (**explanation, reason, time, information, question/issue**) in the margin. Draw an arrow between the noun clause and its function. Discuss with a partner.

**3 Practice the structure:** Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Look at Sections B-E for examples of typical patterns.

point    that    whether    who    where    when    why    result

1. The interesting question for political sociology is who controls or dominates the society.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ is that, when reading a text for research, students are unlikely to find answers to their research questions in just one area of the text, so students are forced to be selective in what they read. This is \_\_\_\_\_ the skills of skimming a text to gain a general impression are very useful.
3. One particular time when we are concerned with several computer structures is \_\_\_\_\_ we transfer programs from an old computer to a new one.
4. A much more complicated question is \_\_\_\_\_ it might be necessary to consider international law as the default law even for local contracts that do not expressly contain those laws covered by international guidelines.
5. Teacher-training, which still follows traditional teaching techniques, does not offer teachers sufficient guidance for them to be able to adapt to the new requirements of the curriculum, and the \_\_\_\_\_ is that pupils are inadequately guided, and projects and assignments are poorly executed.
6. The fact is \_\_\_\_\_ the family is so important in most people's social structure and in personal life that much social work cannot be carried out with the client unless it is within the family context.



**4 Practice writing:** Read the first paragraph from a news article. Using the information in the paragraph and your own ideas, write a paragraph to predict how the story ends, and explain your prediction. Include at least one of each of the following types of combinations in your paragraph: **be + whether**, **be + wh-word**, **be + that**.

Lachina, then 16 years old, was carrying her cousin Pam on her shoulders in the swift moving waters of the Kaweah River. Lachina slipped on the rocky bottom of the river, and her hair caught in the buttons of Pam's swimsuit as Lachina's head went underwater. They began thrashing. "All of a sudden I felt this pushing," Lachina said. "A lion shoved us — two panicking girls — from behind toward shallow water."

**EXAMPLE**

The main question now is **whether** the lion will help or hurt the two girls. One possibility is **that** the lion did not realize the girls were humans. It might. . .

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