

Gerunds – Nouns that Look Like Verbs

Definition – A **gerund** is a word that ends in **–ing**. This word looks like a verb, but it is used as a noun. This means that a gerund will be used as one of the **six noun functions**.

Examples: My father loves **exercising** at the gym in the morning. (Gerund is **exercising**, used as a direct object.)

Writing is Sara’s favorite subject. (Gerund is **writing**, used as the subject of the sentence.)

➤ *Activity*

Cut out and read each sentence. Decide if the *–ing* word is a gerund or is part of the verb. Sort the sentences into two piles.

GERUND
NOT A GERUND

I have been **sleeping** at least eight hours each night.

My goal, **sleeping** at least eight hours, has been difficult.

Carrying a heavy backpack can injure your back.

My brother was **carrying** a heavy backpack.

Dad is **doing** a complicated crossword puzzle.

Dad’s favorite hobby is **doing** complicated crossword puzzles.

That little dog loves **burying** bones in our yard.

That little dog has been **burying** bones in our yard.

➤ *Exercise*

Underline each gerund.

Above each gerund, write its noun function: S, OP, DO, IO, PN, or APP.

HINT: You can review and use the **Six Noun Functions Chart** to help you.

S

1. Camping in national parks is fun for many people.
2. Mrs. Thompson had just finished icing the cake.
3. The teacher began the contest by separating the boys and girls.
4. Guessing a person's age is often difficult.
5. Harry's excellent pitching won the game.
6. I hope that you will think more about planning ahead.
7. The noise that I heard was an odd tapping at the window.
8. A quarterback's job is calling each play.
9. Marge's job, answering the phone on weekends, is never boring.
10. Skiing on an icy slope can lead to serious accidents.

NOTE: *Since gerunds are nouns, they must be modified by adjectives.*

Examples: **His** sleeping on the floor seemed to help his sore back.

The choir was worried about **my** singing.

Sentence Combining with Gerunds

Examples: Choppy sentences

These books can be covered with vinyl. This will keep them from tearing.

Improved sentence: *Covering these books with vinyl will keep them from tearing.* (Gerund **covering** used as the subject.)

Choppy sentences

Nan graded the students' papers. Then she recorded the grades in her notebook.

Improved sentence: *After grading the students' papers, Nan recorded the grades in her notebook.* (Gerund **grading** used as the object of the preposition **after**.)

➤ Exercise

Combine each pair of sentences using a gerund.

1. I had to find a gift for Barb's birthday. This was not an easy task.
(Use gerund as **subject**.)

2. The Jones family sold all of their furniture. They also sold their house.
(Use gerund as **object of a preposition**.)

3. I drive to Tallahassee each week. This is how I get my mail.
(Use gerund as subject or as **object of a preposition**.)

4. John loves to ski at Lake Talquin. It's his favorite form of exercise.
(Use gerund as **predicate nominative**.)

5. You should use a good brand of cleanser. That is the best way to disinfect your kitchen sink.
(Use gerund as **subject**.)
