**Gerund**

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Not to be confused with the [Gerundive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerundive).

A **gerund** ([/ˈdʒɛrənd, -ʌnd/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA/English)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-1) [abbreviated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_glossing_abbreviations) **GER**) is any of various [nonfinite verb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonfinite_verb) forms in various languages; most often, but not exclusively, one that functions as a noun. In English it has the properties of both verb and noun, such as being modifiable by an adverb and being able to take a direct object. The term "*-ing* form" is often used in English to refer to the gerund specifically. Traditional grammar makes a distinction within *-ing* forms between [present participles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Present_participle) and gerunds, a distinction that is not observed in such modern, linguistically informed grammars as [*A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Comprehensive_Grammar_of_the_English_Language) and [*The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cambridge_Grammar_of_the_English_Language).



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**Traditional use of the term**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/9/99/Question_book-new.svg/50px-Question_book-new.svg.png | This section **does not** [**cite**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACiting_sources) **any** [**sources**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AVerifiability). Please help [improve this section](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gerund&action=edit) by [adding citations to reliable sources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIntroduction_to_referencing_with_Wiki_Markup/1). Unsourced material may be challenged and [removed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AVerifiability#Burden_of_evidence).*Find sources:* ["Gerund"](https://www.google.com/search?as_eq=wikipedia&q=%22Gerund%22) – [news](https://www.google.com/search?tbm=nws&q=%22Gerund%22+-wikipedia) **·** [newspapers](https://www.google.com/search?&q=%22Gerund%22+site:news.google.com/newspapers&source=newspapers) **·** [books](https://www.google.com/search?tbs=bks:1&q=%22Gerund%22+-wikipedia) **·** [scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%22Gerund%22) **·** [JSTOR](https://www.jstor.org/action/doBasicSearch?Query=%22Gerund%22&acc=on&wc=on) *(July 2016) (*[*Learn how and when to remove this template message*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AMaintenance_template_removal)*)* |

The Latin gerund, in a restricted set of syntactic contexts, denotes the sense of the verb in isolation after certain prepositions, and in certain uses of the [genitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genitive), [dative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dative), and [ablative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ablative) cases. It is very rarely combined with dependent sentence elements such as [Object](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_%28grammar%29). To express such concepts, the construction with the [adjectival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adjective) [gerundive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerundive) is preferred. By contrast, the term gerund has been used in the grammatical description of other languages to label verbal nouns used in a wide range of syntactic contexts and with a full range of [clause](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clause) elements.

Thus, English grammar uses *gerund* to mean an -ing form used in [non-finite clauses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-finite_clauses) such as *playing on computers*. This is not a normal use for a Latin gerund. Moreover, the clause may function within a sentence as [subject](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject_%28grammar%29) or [object](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_%28grammar%29), which is impossible for a Latin gerund.

* **Playing on computers** is fun. (-ing clause as Subject)
* I like **playing on computers** (-ing clause as Object)

The contrast with the Latin gerund is also clear when the clause consists of a single word.

* **Computing** is fun. ("gerund" as Subject)
* I like **computing** ("gerund" as Object)

Latin never uses the gerund in this way, since the [infinitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinitive) is available.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-2)

Traditional English grammar distinguishes non-finite clauses used as above from [adverbial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adverbial) use, adjective-like modification of nouns, and use in [finite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finite_verb) [progressive (continuous)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continuous_and_progressive_aspects) forms

* **Playing on computers**, they whiled the day away.
* The boys **playing on computers** are my nephews.
* They are always **playing on computers**.

In these uses **playing** is traditionally labelled a [participle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participle).

Traditional grammar also distinguishes -ing forms with exclusively [noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun) properties as in

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I work in that **building** | *contrast "gerund"* | I like **building** things  |
| That is a good **painting** | *contrast "gerund"* | I like **painting** pictures  |
| Her **writing** is good | *contrast "gerund"* | I like **writing** novels  |

The objection to the term **gerund** in English grammar is that -ing forms are frequently used in ways that do not conform to the clear-cut three-way distinction made by traditional grammar into **gerunds, participles** and **nouns**[[*how?*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3APlease_clarify)].

**Latin gerund**

Further information: [Latin syntax § The gerund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#The_gerund), and [Latin conjugation § Gerund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_conjugation#Gerund)

**Form**

The Latin gerund is a form of the verb. It is composed of:

* the **infectum** stem (the stem used to form [Present](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Present_tense) and [Imperfect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperfect) tense forms)
* a vowel appropriate to the verb class or [conjugation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_conjugation#Conjugations) of the verb
* the suffix -nd-
* a [nominal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun) [Inflectional ending](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inflection)

For example,

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| laud- | -a- | -nd- | -um, -ī, -ō | First conjugation | *laudandum* | 'the act of praising'  |
| mon- | -e- | -nd- | -um, -ī, -ō | Second conjugation | *monendum* | 'the act of warning'  |
| leg- | -e- | -nd- | -um, -ī, -ō | Third conjugation | *legendum* | 'the act of reading'  |
| capi- | -e- | -nd- | -um, -ī, -ō | Third conjugation | *capiendum* | 'the act of taking'  |
| audi- | -e- | -nd- | -um, -ī, -ō | Fourth conjugation | *audiendum* | 'the act of hearing'  |

Related [gerundive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerundive) forms are composed in a similar way with [adjectival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adjective) inflexional endings.

**Function**

The four inflections are used for a limited range of grammatical functions[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-3)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Case** | **Function** | **Example** | **Translation** | **Notes**  |
| Nominative | Subject | no example |  | **infinitive** used  |
| Accusative | Object | no example |  | **infinitive** used  |
|  | After preposition | *canes alere ad* ***venandum***[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-4) | 'to rear dogs for hunting' | after *ad, in, ob* and occasionally other prepositions  |
| Genitive | Modifying abstract noun | ***pugnandi*** *tempus* | 'time for (lit. of) fighting' | nouns include *occasio, tempus, causa, gratia*  |
| Dative | Expressing purpose | ***auscultando*** *operam dare* | 'apply effort to listening' | after verbs e.g. *studeo, operam dare* and adjectives e.g. *natus, optimus*  |
| Ablative | Instrumental | ***pugnando*** *cepimus* | 'we took by fighting' | became undistinguishable from **participle** use, thus providing the *gerundio* forms in [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language), [Spanish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language), and [Portuguese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_language), which are used instead of forms derived from Latin present participles  |

These functions could be fulfilled by other abstract nouns derived from verbs such as *vẽnãtiõ* 'hunting'. Gerunds are distinct in two ways.

1. Every Latin verb can regularly form a gerund
2. A gerund may function syntactically in the same way as a finite verb. Typically the gerund of a finite verb may be followed by a direct object e.g. *ad* ***discernendum*** *vocis verbis figuras* 'for discerning figures of speech', *hominem* ***investigando*** *opera dabo* 'I will devote effort to investigating the man'.

However, this was a rare construction. Writers generally preferred the **gerundive** construction e.g. *res* ***evertendae*** *reipublicae* 'matters concerning the overthrow of the state' (literally 'of the state being overthrown').

When people first wrote grammars of languages such as English, and based them on works of Latin grammar, they adopted the term *gerund* to label non-finite verb forms with these two properties.

**Gerunds in various languages**

Meanings of the term *gerund* as used in relation to various languages are listed below.

* [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) has the non-finite *gerundium*, formed with in -andum, -endum and noun inflexions. It is the syntactic equivalent to a noun, except in the nominative and accusative cases, which use the infinitive. In particular the [ablative case](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ablative_case) forms (-ando, -endo) were used adverbially. Latin grammars written in English use the form *gerund*.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-5) See the section above for further detail.
* Several Romance languages have inherited the form, but without [case inflections](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_case). They use it in primarily in an adverbial function, comparably to the Latin ablative use. The same form may be used in an adjectival function and to express [progressive aspect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continuous_and_progressive_aspects) meaning. These languages do not use the term *present participle*. Grammars of these languages written in English may use the form *gerund*.
* [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language) *gerundio*: stem form + *-ando* or *-endo*
* [Spanish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language) *gerundio*: stem form + *-ando* or *-iendo*
* [Portuguese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_language) *gerúndio*: stem form + *-ando*, *-endo* or *-indo*
* [Romanian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanian_language) *gerunziu*: stem form + *-ând(u)* or *-ind(u)*
* [Catalan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan_language) and [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language) have inherited not the gerund form but the Latin present participle form in -nt.
* [Catalan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan_language) *gerundi*: stem form + *-ant* or *-ent*
* [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language) stem form + *-ant*. French grammar maintains a distinction between:
* *participe présent* when the form is used adjectivally, and may be inflected for gender and number.
* *gérondif* when the form is used adverbially, without inflection, generally after the preposition *en*. In Modern French, the *gérondif* cannot be used to express progressive meaning.

Grammars of French written in English may use the forms *gerundive* and *present participle*.

* In the earliest stages of the [West Germanic languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Germanic_languages), the [infinitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinitive) was [inflected](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inflection) after a preposition. These [dative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dative_case) and, more rarely, [genitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genitive_case) case forms are sometimes called *gerundium* or *gerund* or *West Germanic gerund*.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-7)
* [Old English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_English) *to* ***berenne*** (to bear) dative of *beran*
* [Old High German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_High_German) *zi* ***beranne*** dative of *beran*
* [Old Saxon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Saxon) ***berannia*** dative of *beran*
* [Old Frisian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Frisian) ***beranne***
* The modern continental successor languages [German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language) and [Dutch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_language) have preserved a few vestiges of these forms, which are sometimes termed *gerundium*.
* [Frisian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frisian_languages) preserves the original distinction, e.g. [West Frisian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Frisian_language) *freegje* ("ask") - *te freegjen*
* [English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) has no vestige of the *West Germanic gerund*. Traditional grammar uses the term *gerund* for the [*-ing*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/-ing) form of a verb when it is used as a noun (for example, the verb *reading* in the sentence "I enjoy reading.").[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-8) See the sections below for further detail.
* In [Dutch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_language), it translates either the term "[gerundium](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerundium)" or the description "zelfstandig gebruikte, verbogen onbepaalde wijs van het werkwoord". The infinitive form of the verb is used as gerund, e.g. ***Zwemmen*** *is gezond*.
* Since [Afrikaans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaans) has by and large lost explicit morphological marking of the infinitive form of the verb, verb stems are used as gerunds, e.g. ***Swem*** *is gesond*.
* In [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language), it refers to the verb's action noun, known as the masdar form (Arabic: المصدر). This form ends in a [tanwin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nunation) and is generally the equivalent of the -ing ending in English.
* In [Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language), it refers to the verb's action noun, known as the ism-masdar form (Persian: اسم مصدر).
* In [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language), it refers either to the verb's action noun, or to the part of the [infinitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinitive) following the infinitival prefix (also called the *infinitival construct*).
* In [Hungarian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_language), it practically refers to the [verbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_noun), formed by appending a suffix. Common suffixes are *-ás* (adás, giving), *-és* (kérés, asking).
* In [Japanese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_language), it designates verb and verbals adjective forms in dictionary form paired with the referral particle *no*, which turns the verbal into a concept or property noun, or also can refer to the -te form of a verb.
* In [Korean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_language), it refers to the word '것'('thing') modified by the adjective form of the verb.
* In [Bulgarian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgarian_language), it translates the term деепричастие (deepriʧastije). It refers to the verb noun formed by adding the suffix -йки (-jki) to the verb form, like ходи (*hodi, he/she/it walks*) - ходейки (*hodejki, while walking*)
* In [Macedonian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonian_language), it refers to the verb noun formed by adding the suffix -јќи (-jḱi) to the verb form, like in јаде (*jade, he eats*) — јадејќи (*jadejḱi, while eating*).
* In [Turkish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_language), it refers to a large number of verb endings subject to [vowel harmony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vowel_harmony) and sometimes used in conjunction with postpositions. Turkish gerunds may act as an adverb or constitute a part of an (adverbial) clause.
* In [Polish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_language), it refers to the [verbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_noun), formed by appending a suffix. Common suffixes are *-anie* (pływanie, swimming), *-enie* (jedzenie, eating).
* In [Serbian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_language) and [Croatian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croatian_language), it refers to the [verbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_noun), formed by appending a suffix. Common suffixes are *-anje* (plivanje, swimming), *-enje* (jedenje, eating).
* In [Russian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language), it translates the term деепричастие (dejepričastije) an adverbial participle formed with the suffixes -я (-ja) Present; -в (-v) or -вши (-vši) Past. [[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-9) [[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-11) [[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-12) [[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-13) [[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-14)

In other languages, it may refer to almost any non-finite verb form; however, it most often refers to an action noun, by analogy with its use as applied to Latin.

**Gerunds in English**

In traditional grammars of English, the term **gerund** labels an important use of the form of the verb ending in [*-ing*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/-ing) (for details of its formation and spelling, see [English verbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_verbs)). Other important uses are termed [participle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participle) (used adjectivally or adverbially), and as a pure [verbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_noun).

An -ing form is termed **gerund** when it behaves as a [verb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verb) within a [clause](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clause) (so that it may be modified by an [adverb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adverb) or have an [object](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_%28grammar%29)); but the resulting clause as a whole (sometimes consisting of only one word, the gerund itself) functions as a [noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun) within the larger sentence.

For example, consider the sentence "Eating this cake is easy." Here, the gerund is the verb *eating*, which takes an object *this cake*. The entire clause *eating this cake* is then used as a noun, which in this case serves as the [subject](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject_%28grammar%29) of the larger sentence.

An item such as *eating this cake* in the foregoing example is an example of a non-finite [verb phrase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verb_phrase); however, because phrases of this type do not require a subject, it is also a complete clause. (Traditionally, such an item would be referred to as a [phrase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrase), but in modern [linguistics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistics) it has become common to call it a clause.) A gerund clause such as this is one of the types of [non-finite clause](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-finite_clause). The structure may be represented as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Subject** | **Verb** | **Complement**  |
| STRUCTURE OF SENTENCE | Eating this cake | is | easy  |
|  | (**no subject**) | **Verb** | **Object**  |
| STRUCTURE OF NON-FINITE CLAUSE |  | eating | this cake  |

**Formation**

Non-finite verb forms ending in -ing, whether termed **gerund** or **participle** may be marked like finite forms as Continuous or Non-continuous, Perfect or Non-perfect, Active or Passive. Thus, traditional grammars have represented the gerund as having four forms – two for the active voice and two for the passive:[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-15)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Active** | **Passive**  |
| Present or Continuous | Loving | Being loved  |
| Perfect | Having loved | Having been loved  |

The same forms are available when the term **participle** is used.

**Examples of use**

The following sentences illustrate some uses of gerund clauses, showing how such a clause serves as a noun within the larger sentence. In some cases, the clause consists of just the gerund (although in many such cases the word could equally be analyzed as a pure [verbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_noun)).

* **Swimming** is fun. (gerund as [subject](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject_%28grammar%29) of the sentence)
* I like **swimming**. (gerund as [direct object](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_object))
* I never gave **swimming** all that much effort. (gerund as [indirect object](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indirect_object))
* **Eating biscuits in front of the television** is one way to relax. (gerund phrase as subject)
* Do you fancy **going out**? (gerund phrase as direct object)
* On **being elected president**, he moved with his family to the capital. (gerund phrase as complement of a [preposition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preposition))

Using gerunds of the appropriate [auxiliary verbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auxiliary_verb), one can form gerund clauses that express [perfect aspect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perfect_aspect) and [passive voice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passive_voice):

* **Being deceived** can make someone feel angry. (passive)
* **Having read the book once before** makes me more prepared. (perfect)
* He is ashamed of **having been gambling** all night. ([perfect progressive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perfect_progressive) aspect)

For more detail on when it is appropriate to use a gerund, see [Verb patterns classified as gerund use](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#Verb_patterns_classified_as_.22gerund.22_use) below, and also §§ [Uses of English verb forms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#Uses_of_English_verb_forms)​ and [Gerund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#Gerund).

**Distinction from other uses of the *-ing* form**

In traditional grammars, gerunds are distinguished from other uses of a verb's *-ing* form: the present participle (which is a [non-finite verb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-finite_verb) form like the gerund, but is adjectival or adverbial in function), and the pure verbal noun or [deverbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deverbal_noun).

The distinction between gerund and present participles is not recognised in modern reference grammars, since many uses are ambiguous.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-16)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-17)

**Roles of "gerund" clauses in a sentence**

Non finite -ing clauses may have the following roles in a sentence:[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-18)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Role** | **Example**  |
| A | **Subject** | ***Eating cakes*** *is pleasant*.  |
| B | **Extraposed subject** | *It can be pleasant* ***eating cakes****.*  |
| C | **Subject Complement** | *What I'm looking forward to is* ***eating cakes***  |
| D | **Direct object** | *I can't stop* ***eating cakes****.*  |
| E | **Prepositional object** | *I dreamt of* ***eating cakes***.  |
| F | **Adverbial** | *He walks the streets* ***eating cakes****.*  |
| G | **Part of noun phrase** | *It's a picture of a man* ***eating cakes****.*  |
| H | **Part of adjective phrase** | *They are all busy* ***eating cakes****.*  |
| I | **Complement of preposition** | *She takes pleasure in* ***eating cakes****.*  |

In traditional grammars the term gerund is not used for roles **F, G,** and **H**.

Thus

|  |
| --- |
| 1. *John suggested* ***asking*** *Bill.*  |
|  |  | **Subject** |  | **Verb** |  | **Object**  |
| STRUCTURE OF SENTENCE |  | John |  | suggested |  | asking Bill |  | Role D **object** — traditionally **asking** is a **"gerund"**  |
|  |  |  |  |  | (**no subject**) | **Verb** | **Object**  |  |
| STRUCTURE OF NON-FINITE CLAUSE |  |  |  |  |  | asking | Bill  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. *I heard John* ***asking*** *Bill.*  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Subject** |  | **Verb** |  | **Object**  |  |  |
| STRUCTURE OF SENTENCE |  | I |  | heard |  | John asking Bill |  | Role G **adverbial** — traditionally **asking** is a **"participle"**  |
|  |  |  |  |  | **Subject** | **Verb** | **Object**  |  |
| STRUCTURE OF NON-FINITE CLAUSE |  |  |  |  | John | asking | Bill  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. **Playing football** is enjoyable  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Subject** |  | **Verb** |  | **Complement**  |  |  |
| STRUCTURE OF SENTENCE |  | Playing football |  | is |  | enjoyable |  | Role A **subject** — traditionally **playing** is a **"gerund"**  |
|  | (**no subject**) | **Verb** | **Object**  |  |  |  |  |  |
| STRUCTURE OF NON-FINITE CLAUSE |  | playing | football  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. *Her* ***playing*** *of the Bach fugues was inspiring.*  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Subject** |  | **Verb** |  | **Complement**  |  |  |
| STRUCTURE OF SENTENCE |  | Her playingof the Bachfugues |  | was |  | inspiring |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Possessive** | **Head** | **Postmodifier**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| STRUCTURE OF NOUN PHRASE | Her | playing | of the Bach fugues |  |  |  |  | Noun phrase, not clause — **playing** is a **verbal noun** (also termed **deverbal noun**)  |  |  |

For more details and examples, see [*-ing*: uses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/-ing#Uses).

**"Gerund" clauses with a specified subject**

In traditional grammars, a grammatical subject has been defined in such a way that it occurs only in finite clauses, where it is liable to "agree" with the "number" of the finite verb form. Nevertheless, non-finite clauses imply a "doer" of the verb, even if that doer is indefinite "someone or something". For example,

* *We enjoy singing*. (ambiguous: somebody sings, possibly ourselves)
* *Licking the cream* was a special treat (somebody licked the cream)
* *Being awarded the prize is a great honour* (someone is or may be awarded the prize)

Often the "doer" is clearly signalled

* *We enjoyed singing yesterday* (we ourselves sang)
* *The cat responded by licking the cream* (the cat licked the cream)
* *His heart is set on being awarded the prize* (he hopes he himself will be awarded the prize)
* *Meg likes eating apricots* (Meg herself eats apricots)

However, the "doer" may not be indefinite or already expressed in the sentence. Rather it must be overtly specified, typically in a position immediately before the non-finite verb

* *We enjoyed* ***them*** *singing*.
* ***The cat*** *licking the cream was not generally appreciated*.
* *We were delighted at* ***Paul*** *being awarded the prize.*

The "doer" expression is not the grammatical subject of a finite clause, so objective **them** is used rather than subjective **they**.

Traditional grammarians may object to the term **subject** for these "doers". And [prescriptive grammarians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prescriptive_grammar) go further, objecting to the use of forms more appropriate to the subjects (or objects) of finite clauses. The argument is that this results in two noun expressions with no grammatical connection. They prefer to express the "doer" by a [possessive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_possessive) form, such as used with ordinary nouns:

* *We enjoyed* ***their*** *singing*. (cf ***their*** *voices*, ***their*** *attempt to sing*)
* ***The cat's*** *licking the cream was not generally appreciated*. (cf ***the cat's*** *purr*, ***the cat's*** *escape*)
* *We were delighted at* ***Paul's*** *being awarded the prize*. (cf ***Paul's*** *nomination,* ***Paul's*** *acceptance*)

The possessive construction with -ing clauses is actually very rare in present-day English. Works of fiction show a moderate frequency, but the construction is highly infrequent in other types of text.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-19)

Prescriptivists do not object when the non-finite clause modifies a noun phrase

* *I saw* ***the cat*** *licking the cream.*

The sense of *the cat* as notional subject of *licking* is disregarded. Rather they see *the cat* as exclusively the object of *I saw* The modifying phrase *licking the cream* is therefore described as a **participle** use.

Henry Fowler claims that the use of a non-possessive noun to precede a gerund arose as a result of confusion with the above usage with a participle, and should thus be called **fused participle**[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-20) or **geriple**.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-geriple-21)

It has been argued that if the prescriptive rule is followed, the difference between the two forms may be used to make a slight distinction in meaning:

* The teacher's shouting startled the student. (*shouting* is a gerund, the shouting startled the student)
* The teacher shouting startled the student. (*shouting* can be interpreted as a participle, qualifying *the teacher*; the teacher startled the student by shouting)
* I don't like Jim's drinking wine. (I don't like the drinking)
* I don't like Jim drinking wine. (I don't like Jim when he is drinking wine)

However, Quirk et al. show that the range of senses of *-ing* forms with possessive and non-possessive subjects is far more diverse and nuanced:[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-22)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sentence** | **Meaning**  |
| *The painting of Brown is as skilful as that of Gainsborough.* | a. 'Brown's mode of painting'b. 'Brown's action of painting'  |
| *Brown's deft painting of his daughter is a delight to watch.* | 'It is a delight to watch while Brown deftly paints his daughter.'  |
| *Brown's deftly painting his daughter is a delight to watch.* | a. 'It is a delight to watch Brown's deft action of painting.'b. 'It is a delight to watch while Brown deftly paints.'  |
| *I dislike Brown's painting his daughter.* | a. "I dislike the fact that Brown paints his daughter.'b. 'I dislike the way Brown paints his daughter.'  |
| *I dislike Brown painting his daughter.* | 'I dislike the fact that Brown paints his daughter (when she ought to be at school).'  |
| *I watched Brown painting his daughter.* | a. 'I watched Brown as he painted his daughter.'b. 'I watched the process of Brown('s) painting his daughter.'  |
| *Brown deftly painting his daughter is a delight to watch.* | a. 'It is a delight to watch Brown's deft action of painting his daughter'b. 'It is a delight to watch while Brown deftly paints his daughter.'  |

These sentence exemplify a spectrum of senses from more noun-like to more verb--like. At the extremes of the spectrum they place

* at the noun end (where possessive *Brown's* unmistakably expresses ownership) :

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Noun phrase** | **Meaning**  |
| *some paintings of Brown's* | a. 'some paintings that Brown owns' b. 'some paintings painted by Brown'  |
| *Brown's paintings of his daughters* | a. paintings depicted his daughter and painted by him'b. 'paintings depicting his daughter and painted by somebody else but owned by him'  |

* and at the verb end (where *Brown's* would clearly be impossible):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sentence** | **Meaning**  |
| *Painting his daughter, Brown noticed his hand was shaking.* | 'while he was painting'  |
| *Brown painting his daughter that day, I decided to go for a walk.* | 'since Brown was painting his daughter'  |
| *The man painting the girl is Brown.* | 'who is painting'  |
| *The silently painting man is Brown.* | 'who is silently painting'  |
| *Brown is painting his daughter.*  |  |

In some cases, particularly with a non-personal subject, the use of the possessive before a gerund may be considered redundant even in quite a formal register. For example, "There is no chance of the snow falling" (rather than the prescriptively correct "There is no chance of the snow's falling").

**Verb patterns classified as "gerund" use**

The term **gerund** describes certain uses of -ing clauses as 'complementation' of individual English verbs, that is to say the choice of class that are allowable after that word.

The principal choices of clauses are

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Clause type** | **Example** | **Subject of clause** | **Possessive** | **Passive equivalent**  |
| 1. **finite** | *I remember* ***that she came***. | overt grammatical subject *she* | impossible | ***That she came*** *is remembered.*— more frequent: *It is remembered* ***that she came***.  |
| 2. **bare infinitive** | *I saw* ***her come****.* | *her* acts as object of *saw* and subject of *come* | impossible | not possible  |
| 3a. **to-infinitive** without subject | *She remembered* ***to come***. | notional subject 'understood' as identical to *she* | n.a. | not possible  |
| 3b. **to-infinitive** with subject | *I reminded* ***her to come***. | *her* acts as object of *reminded* and subject of *to come* | impossible | *She was reminded* ***to come***.  |
| 4a. **-ing** without subject | *I remember* ***seeing her*** come. | notional subject 'understood' as identical to *I* | n.a. | rare but possible: ***Seeing her*** *come is remembered*.  |
| 4b. **-ing** with subject | *I remember* ***her coming***. | *her* acts as object of *remember* and subject of *coming* | possible | rare but possible: ***Her coming*** *is remembered*.  |
| 5a . **-ing** without subject | *She kept* ***coming***. | notional subject 'understood' as identical to *she* | n.a. | not possible  |
| 5b. **-ing** with subject | *We kept her* ***coming***. | *her* acts as object of *kept* and subject of *coming* | impossible | *She was kept* ***coming****.*  |
| 6a. **-ing** without subject | *She ended up* ***coming***. | notional subject 'understood' as identical to *she* | n.a. | not possible  |
| 6b. **-ing** without subject | *She wasted time* ***coming****.* | notional subject 'understood' as identical to *she* | n.a. | *Her time was wasted* ***coming****.*  |

* The term **gerund** is applied to clauses similar to [4a] and [4b].
* In [6a] and [6b] *coming* is related to the **participle** use as an adverbial.
* in [5a] and [5b] the verbs **kept** and **coming** refer to the same event. *Coming* is related to the **progressive aspect** use in *She is* ***coming***.
* Verbs such as *start* and *stop*, although similar to verbs like *keep*,[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-23) are generally classified with verbs like *remember*. Therefore, *She started* ***coming*** is termed a **gerund** use.
* The proposed test of [passivisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_passive_voice) to distinguish gerund use after *remember* from participle use after *keep* fails with sentences like [5b].
* The proposed test of possible possessive subject successfully distinguishes [4b] (traditional gerund) from [5b] (traditionally participle).

The variant \* *We kept* ***Jane's coming*** is not grammatically acceptable.

The variant *I remember* ***Jane's coming*** is acceptable — indeed required by prescriptive grammarians

**Verbs followed by "gerund" pattern**

Historically, the -ing suffix was attached to a limited number of verbs to form abstract nouns, which were used as the object of verbs such as *like*. The use was extended in various ways: the suffix became attachable to all verbs; the nouns acquired verb-like characteristics; the range of verbs allowed to introduce the form spread by analogy first to other verbs expressing emotion, then by analogy to other semantic groups of verbs associated with abstract noun objects; finally the use spread from verbs taking one-word objects to other semantically related groups verbs.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-24)

The present-day result of these developments is that the verbs followed by -ing forms tend to fall into semantic classes. The following groups have been derived from analysis of the commonest verbs in the [COBUILD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COBUILD) data bank:[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-25)

**Pattern 4a: *I remember seeing her come***

'LIKE' AND 'DISLIKE' GROUP

*adore, appreciate, (cannot|) bear, (not) begrudge, detest, dislike, (cannot) endure, enjoy, hate, like, loathe, love, (not) mind, mind, prefer, relish, resent, (cannot) stand, (cannot) stomach, (not) tolerate, take to*

*dread, (not) face. fancy, favour, fear, look forward to*

'CONSIDER' GROUP

*anticipate, consider, contemplate, debate, envisage, fantasise, imagine, intend, visualise*

'REMEMBER' GROUP

*forget, miss, recall, recollect, regret, remember, (cannot) remember*

'RECOMMEND' GROUP

*acknowledge, admit, advise, advocate, debate, deny, describe, forbid, mention, prohibit, propose, recommend, report, suggest, urge*

'INVOLVE' GROUP

*allow, entail, involve, justify, mean, necessitate, permit, preclude, prevent, save*

'POSTPONE' GROUP

*defer, delay, postpone, put off*

'NEED' GROUP

*deserve, need, require, want*

'RISK' GROUP

*chance, risk*

OTHERS WITH -ING OBJECT

*discourage, encourage, endure, mime, practise, get away with, go into. go towards, go without, play at*

**Pattern 5a: *She kept coming***

In addition, the COBUILD team identifies four groups of verbs followed by -ing forms that are hard to class as objects. In the **verb + -ing object** construction the action or state expressed by the verb can be separated from the action or state expressed by the -ing form. In the following groups, the senses are inseparable, jointly expressing a single complex action or state. Some grammarians do not recognise all these patterns as **gerund** use.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerund#cite_note-26)

'START' AND 'STOP' GROUP

*begin, cease, come, commence, continue, finish, get, go, (not) go, keep, quit, resume, start, stop, burst out, carry on, fall about, fall to, give over, give up, go about, go around/round, go on, keep on, leave off, take to*

'AVOID' GROUP

*avoid, (not) bother, escape, evade, forbear, omit, (cannot) resist, shun, hold off*

'TRY' GROUP

*chance, risk, try*

'GO RIDING' GROUP

*come, go*

**Pattern 4b: *I remember her coming***

Verbs with this pattern do not normally allow the 'subject' of the -ing clause to be used in an equivalent passive construction such as \**She is remembered* ***coming***.
The COBUILD Guide analyses *her* ***coming*** as the single object of *I remember*.

Many of the verbs that allow pattern 4a (without object) also allow this pattern.

'LIKE' GROUP (verbs from the above 'LIKE' AND 'DISLIKE', 'DREAD AND LOOK FORWARD TO', 'CONSIDER' and 'REMEMBER' groups)

*anticipate, envisage, appreciate, (cannot) bear, (not) begrudge, contemplate, dislike, dread, envisage, fear, forget, hate, (will not) have, imagine, like, (not) mind, picture, recall, recollect, remember, (not) remember, resent, see, stand, tolerate, visualise, want, put up with*

'REPORT' GROUP (subset of the above 'RECOMMEND' GROUP)

*describe, mention, report*

'ENTAIL' GROUP (subset of the above 'INVOLVE' GROUP)

*entail, involve, justify, mean, necessitate*

'STOP' GROUP (subset of the above 'START' AND 'STOP' GROUP)

*avoid, preclude, prevent, prohibit, resist, save, stop*

'RISK' GROUP (identical with above)

*chance, risk*

**Pattern 5b: *We kept her coming***

In contrast to Pattern 4b, these verbs allow the 'subject' of the -ing clauses to be used in an equivalent passive construction such as *She was kept* ***coming****.*
The COBUILD guide analyses *her* ***coming*** as a string of two objects of *We kept*:– (1)*her* and (2)*coming*.

'SEE' GROUP

*catch, feel, find, hear, notice, observe, photograph* (usually passive), *picture* (usually passive), see, show, watch

'BRING' GROUP

*bring, have, keep, leave, send, set*

**Pattern 6a: *She ended up coming***

These verbs refer to starting, spending or ending time.
The following -ing form is an adverbial, traditionally classed as a participle rather than a gerund.

*die, end up, finish up, hang around, start off, wind up*

**Pattern 6b: *She wasted time coming***

These verbs also relate to time (and, by extension, money). The object generally expresses this concept.
However, the object of *busy* or *occupy* must be a [reflexive pronoun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reflexive_pronoun) e.g. *She busied* ***herself*** *coming*.
The following -ing form is an adverbial, generally classed as a participle rather than a gerund.

*begin, busy, end, finish, kill, occupy, pass, spend, start, take, waste*

**Verbs followed by either "gerund" or to-infinitive pattern**

Like the -ing suffix, the to-infinitive spread historically from a narrow original use, a prepositional phrase referring to future time. Like the -ing form it spread to all English verbs and to form non-finite clauses. Like the -ing form, it spread by analogy to use with words of similar meaning.

A number of verbs now belong in more than one class in their choice of 'complementation'.

**Patterns 4a and 3a: *I remember seeing her come* and *She remembered to come***

Verbs in both 'START' AND 'STOP' (-ing) GROUP and 'BEGIN' ('to+infinitive) GROUPS

*begin, cease, come, commence, continue, get, start,*

Also *go on* — with different meanings

*She went on singing* — 'She continued singing'

*She went on to sing* — 'Afterwards, she sang'

*She went on at me to sing* — 'She nagged me to sing' (i.e. that I should sing)

Superficially, *stop* appears to be used in the 3a (to-infinitive) pattern

*She stopped to sing* — 'She stopped in order to sing'

However, the phrase *to sing* is quite separate and separable

*She stopped for a moment to sing*

*She stopped what she was doing to sing*

And the phrase may be used in all manner of sentences

*She travelled to Paris to sing*

*She abandoned her husband and her children to sing*

Verbs in both 'DREAD' AND LOOK FORWARD TO' (-ing) GROUP and 'HOPE' ('to+infinitive) GROUPS

*dread, fear*

Verb in both 'CONSIDER' (-ing) GROUP and 'HOPE' ('to+infinitive) GROUPS

*intend*

Verb in both 'REMEMBER' (-ing) GROUP and 'MANAGE' ('to+infinitive) GROUPS

*remember* — with different meanings

*I remembered going* —'I remembered that I had previously gone'

*I remembered to go* —'I remembered that I had to go, so I did go'

Verbs in both 'NEED' (-ing) GROUP and 'NEED' ('to+infinitive) GROUPS

*deserve, need*

**Patterns 4a, 4b, 3a and 3b: *I remember coming*, *She remembered to come*, *I remember her coming* and *I reminded her to come***

Verbs in both 'LIKE AND DISLIKE' (-ing) and WITH OBJECT (to-infinitive) GROUPS

*hate, like, love, prefer*

Unlike other Pattern 3b verbs, the object is indivisible

*He hates his wife to stand out in a crowd* does not mean *He hates his wife*

With *would* there is often a difference of meaning

*I like living in Ambridge* — 'I live in Ambridge, and I like it'

*I would like to live in Ambridge* — 'I don't live in Ambridge, but I have a desire to live there in the future'

*I would like living in Ambridge* — 'I don't live in Ambridge, but if I ever did live there, I would enjoy it'

There is an apparent similarity between

*I like boxing* — 'I box and I enjoy it'

*I like boxing* — 'I watch other people boxing and I enjoy it'

However, only the former meaning is possible with an extended non-finite clause

*I like boxing with an experienced opponent* — 'I like it when I box with an experienced opponent'

**Patterns 4a and 3b: *I remember coming* and *I reminded her to come***

Verbs in both 'RECOMMEND' (-ing) and 'TELL' or 'NAG' AND 'COAX'(to-infinitive) GROUPS

advise, forbid, recommend, urge

These verbs do not admit -ing Pattern 4b with a word serving as object of the RECOMMEND verb. However they can be used with a possessive 'subject' of the -ing form.

*I advised leaving* — 'I advised somebody (unidentified) that we (or the person or people we have in mind) should leave'

*I advised him to leave* — 'I advised him that he should leave' but **not** \**I advised him leaving*

*I advised his leaving* — 'I advised somebody (unidentified) that he should leave

Verbs in both 'CONSIDER' (-ing) and 'BELIEVE' or 'EXPECT' (to-infinitive) GROUPS

*consider, intend*

**Patterns 4b and 3b: *I remember her coming* and *I reminded her to come***

Verbs in both the 'SEE ' (-ing) and 'OBSERVE' (to-infinitive) GROUPS

*hear, see, observe*

The to-infinitive pattern occurs in passive clauses e.g. *She was seen to come.*

Corresponding active clauses use the bare infinitive pattern, e.g., *We saw her come.*

Verbs in both the 'SEE ' (-ing) and 'BELIEVE' (to-infinitive) GROUPS

*feel, find, show* (usually passive)

Verb in both the 'ENTAIL' subgroup (-ing) and the 'EXPECT' (to-infinitive) GROUPS

*mean* — with different meanings

*That means her going tomorrow* — 'In that case she'll go tomorrow'

*We mean her to go tomorrow* — 'We intend that she'll go tomorrow'

*She's meant to be here tomorrow* — 'It is intended that she'll be here tomorrow'

*She's meant to be here now* — 'It was intended that she should be here now, but she isn't'

**Patterns 5a and 3a: *She kept coming* and *She remembered to come***

Verb in both the 'TRY' (-ing) and 'TRY' (to-infinitive) GROUPS

*try* — with different meanings

*She tried leaving* — 'She left in order to see what might happen (or how she might feel)'

*She tried to leave* — 'She attempted to leave'

**Verbs followed by either "gerund" or bare infinitive pattern**

**Patterns 4b and 2: *I remember her coming* and *I saw her come***

Verb in both the 'SEE ' (-ing) and 'SEE' (bare infinitive) GROUPS

*feel. hear, notice, see,watch*

These patterns are sometimes used to express different meanings

*I saw him leaving* — 'I saw him as he was leaving'

*I saw him leave* — 'I saw him as he left'

**Borrowings of English -ing forms in other languages**

English verb forms ending in *-ing* are sometimes borrowed into other languages. In some cases, they become [pseudo-anglicisms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudo-anglicism), taking on new meanings or uses not found in English. For instance, *camping* means "campsite" in many languages, while *parking* often means a car park. Both these words are treated as nouns, with none of the features of the gerund in English. For more details and examples, see [*-ing* words in other languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/-ing#-ing_words_in_other_languages).

**See also**

* [Gerundive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerundive)
* [Infinitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinitive)
* [Non-finite verb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-finite_verb)
* [Participle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participle)
* [Verbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_noun)

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Latin Verbal Constructions

**Participles**

Unlike Greek, Latin is deficient in participles, having only three, as follows:[[185]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-185)

* Present : *faciēns* (pl. *facientēs*) : 'doing' or 'while doing'
* Perfect : *factus* : 'done' or 'having been done'
* Future : *factūrus* : 'going to do'

Thus, there is no passive present or future participle, and no active past participle. In deponent verbs, however, the Perfect participle is active in meaning, e.g. *profectus*, 'having set out', *cōnātus* 'having tried'.

The verb *sum* 'I am' has no Present or Perfect participle, but only the Future participle *futūrus* 'going to be'.

The Romans themselves[[186]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-186) considered the gerundive (see below) also to be a participle, but most modern grammars treat it as a separate part of speech.

**Uses of participles**

**Adjectival participle**

Participles have endings like those of adjectives, and occasionally they are used as though they were adjectives. If so, they refer to the state or condition that a thing or person is in:[[187]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-187)

* *aquā ferventī ... perfunditur* (Cicero)[[188]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-188)

'he was doused with boiling water'

* *occīsōs sepelīvit* ([Eutropius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eutropius_%28historian%29))[[189]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-189)

'he buried the dead (those who had been killed)'

**Participle as a verb**

More frequently, however, a participle is more like a verb, and if one action follows another, it can often replace the first of two verbs in a sentence:

* *Caesar Cascae bracchium arreptum graphiō trāiēcit* ([Suetonius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suetonius))[[190]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-190)

'Caesar grabbed [Casca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servilius_Casca)'s arm and stabbed it with his writing instrument'

Literally, 'Caesar with his writing instrument (*graphiō*) stabbed the arm (*bracchium*), which had been grabbed, for Casca' (*Cascae* here is probably Dative of the Person Affected.)

Participles can frequently be translated into English using a clause with 'when':

* *quaerentique viro 'satin salve?' 'minime!' inquit*.[[191]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-191)

'and when her husband asked "Are you all right?", she said "No!"

* *cōnātusque prōsilīre aliō vulnere tardātus est* (Suetonius)[[192]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-192)

'and when he tried to leap forward he was slowed down (*tardātus*) by another wound'

'-ing' and 'who' are other possible translations:

* *currēns Lepta vēnit* (Cicero)[[193]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-193)

'Lepta came running'

* *strīctō gladiō, ad dormientem Lucrētiam vēnit* (Livy)[[194]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-194)

'drawing his sword, he came to Lucretia, when she was sleeping / who was sleeping'

Apart from 'when' and 'who', other translations are possible, such as 'if', 'since', or 'although':[[195]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-195)

* *oculus sē nōn vidēns, alia cernit* (Cicero)[[196]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-196)

'although it can't see itself, the eye discerns other things'

A participle phrase can also stand for a noun clause, as in the following example:[[197]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-197)

* *captī oppidī signum ex mūrō tollunt* (Livy)[[198]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-198)

'they raised a sign from the wall that the town had been captured' (lit. 'of the town having been captured')

Normally a Present participle represents an action which is simultaneous with the main event ('he came running'), and a Perfect participle represents one which has already happened ('after drawing his sword'). In the following example, however, the Perfect participle represents the result following the main action:

* *crīnīs scindit ... solūtōs* (Virgil)[[199]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-199)

'she tore her hair, making it loose'

Participles are much commoner in Latin than in English. Sometimes multiple participles can be used in a single sentence:

* *noctū lūmine appositō experrēcta nūtrīx animadvertit puerum dormientem circumplicātum serpentis amplexū. quō aspectū exterrita clāmōrem sustulit.* (Cicero)[[200]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-200)

'in the night, in the light of a lamp placed nearby, the nurse, who had woken up, noticed that the boy, while he was sleeping, had been wrapped around with the coils of a snake; terrified by this sight, she raised a cry'

**Ablative absolute**

The phrase *strīctō gladiō* (lit. 'with drawn sword') above is an example of a common idiom in which a noun and participle are put in the Ablative case to represent the circumstances of the main event. This idiom is referred to as an "ablative absolute" and is comparable to the Greek [genitive absolute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genitive_absolute) or the English [nominative absolute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nominative_absolute).[[201]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-201) Other examples are:

* *in hostēs signō datō impetum fēcērunt* (Caesar)[[202]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-202)

'when the signal was given (lit. 'with signal given'), they made an attack on the enemy'

* *at pater Aenēas, audītō nōmine Turnī, dēserit mūrōs* (Virgil)[[203]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-203)

'but Father Aeneas, on hearing Turnus's name, immediately deserted the walls'

The present participle can also be used in an ablative absolute:

* *at illa audientibus nōbīs 'ego ipsa sum' inquit 'hīc hospita'* (Cicero)[[204]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-204)

'but she, while we were listening, said "I am just a guest here myself!"'

* *nec imperante nec sciente nec praesente dominō* (Cicero)[[205]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-205)

'without their master ordering it, or knowing, or even present'

The verb *sum* ('I am') has no participle, except in the compound forms *absēns* 'absent' and *praesēns* 'present'. To make an ablative absolute with 'to be', the words are put in the ablative, and the verb is simply omitted:

* *puerulō mē* (Nepos)[[206]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-206)

'when I was a little boy'

* *hīs cōnsulibus Fīdēnae obsessae, Crustumeria capta* (Livy)[[207]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-207)

'when these men were consuls, Fidenae was besieged and Crustumeria captured'

**The gerundive**

Further information: [Latin tenses § Periphrastic tenses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_tenses#Periphrastic_tenses)

The gerundive is a verbal adjective ending in *-ndus* (*-nda* etc. if feminine). It is usually passive in meaning (although a few [deponent verbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deponent_verb) can form an active gerund, such as *secundus* 'following' from *sequor* 'I follow').[[208]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-208) The usual meaning of the gerundive is that it is necessary for something to be done. Often the word 'must' is a suitable translation:

* *nunc est bibendum* ([Horace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace))[[209]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-209)

'now it is necessary to drink' (i.e. 'now we must celebrate')

* *Catō inexpiābilī odiō dēlendam esse Carthāginem ... prōnūntiābat* ([Florus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florus))[[210]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-210)

'[Cato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cato_the_Elder) with implacable hatred used to declare that [Carthage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carthage) must be destroyed'

If a word is added to show by whom the action must be done, this word is put in the dative case (e.g. *nōbīs* 'for us').[[211]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-211)

Because it is passive in meaning, the gerundive is usually formed from transitive verbs. However, intransitive verbs such as *eō* 'I go' and *persuādeō* 'I persuade', which can be used passively in an impersonal construction, can also have an impersonal gerundive, ending in *-um*:[[212]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-212)

* *mihī Arpīnum eundum est* (Cicero)[[213]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-213)

'It is necessary for me to go to Arpinum' / 'I have to go to [Arpinum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arpino)'

* *persuādendum iūdicī est* ([Quintilian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintilian))[[214]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-214)

'the judge has to be persuaded'

The gerundive after *ad* can also be used to express purpose (a use which it shares with the gerund, see below):[[215]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-215)

* *L. Septimium tribūnum militum ad interficiendum Pompeium mīsērunt* (Caesar)[[216]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-216)

'they sent the military tribune Lucius Septimius to kill [Pompey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompey)'

* *hunc Dātamēs vīnctum ad rēgem dūcendum trādit Mithridātī* (Nepos)[[217]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-217)

'[Datames](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datames) handed this man over in chains to Mithridates for him to be led to the King'

**The gerund**

The gerund is a verbal noun ending in *-ndum* (accusative), *-ndī* (genitive), or *-ndō* (dative or ablative). Although identical in form to a neuter gerundive, and overlapping the gerundive in some of its uses, it is possible that it has a different origin.[[218]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-218)

Gerunds are usually formed from intransitive verbs,[[219]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-219) and are mainly used in sentences such as the following where the meaning is 'by doing something', 'of doing something', or 'for the purpose of doing something'. A gerund is never used as the subject or direct object of a verb (the infinitive is used instead).

* *veniendō hūc exercitum servāstis* (Livy)[[220]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-220)

'by coming here, you have saved the army'

* *aqua nitrōsa ūtilis est bibendō* (Pliny the Elder)[[221]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-221)

'alkaline water is good for drinking'

* *idōneam ad nāvigandum tempestātem* (Caesar)[[222]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-222)

'weather suitable (*idōneam*) for sailing'

* *sacrificandī causā, Delphōs ēscendī* (Livy)[[223]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-223)

'for the sake of sacrificing, I climbed up to [Delphi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphi)'

Occasionally a gerund can be made from a transitive verb and can take a direct object:[[224]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-224)

* *subabsurda dīcendō rīsūs moventur* (Cicero)[[225]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-225)

'by saying incongruous things laughs (*rīsūs*) are raised'

They can also be formed from deponent verbs such as *ingredior* 'I enter':

* *aliīs timor hostium audāciam flūmen ingrediendī dedit* (Livy)[[226]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-226)

'for others fear of the enemy gave them the boldness (*audāciam*) to enter (lit. of entering) the river'

However, if the verb is transitive, a phrase made of noun + gerundive is often substituted for the gerund:[[227]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-227)

* *lignum āridum māteria est idōnea ēliciendīs ignibus* (Seneca)[[228]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-228)

'dry wood (*lignum*) is a suitable material for striking fire'

**The supine**

The supine is a rarely used part of the verb ending in *-tum* or (in some verbs) *-sum*. Although it is identical with the accusative case of verbal nouns such as *adventus* 'arrival', *mōtus* 'movement', etc., it differs from them in that it is a verb as well as a noun, and can sometimes take a direct object.

**Supine in -um**

The supine is normally used to express purpose, when combined with a verb of movement such as *eō* 'I go' or *mittō* 'I send':

* *lūsum it Maecenās, dormītum ego Vergiliusque* (Horace)[[229]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-229)

'[Maecenas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maecenas) goes to play a game, Virgil and I to sleep'

* *spectātum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsae* (Ovid)[[230]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-230)

'(the girls) come to watch, but they also come so that they can be looked at themselves'

In the following example it takes a direct object:

* *lēgātōs ad Caesarem mittunt rogātum auxilium* (Caesar)[[231]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-231)

'they send ambassadors to Caesar in order to ask for help'

The accusative of the supine is also used to make the rare future passive infinitive *captum īrī* 'to be going to be captured', which can be used in indirect statements referring to the future (see above):[[232]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-232)

* *ante reditum eius negōtium confectum īrī putō* (Cicero)[[233]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-233)

'I think the business will be completed before his return'

**Supine in -u**

There is another form of the supine, an Ablative in *-ū*, found with certain verbs only. But this cannot take an object.[[234]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-234) It is used in phrases such as *mīrābile dictū* 'amazing to say', *facile factū* 'easy to do':[[235]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-235)

* *dictū quam rē facilius est* (Livy)[[236]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_syntax#cite_note-236)

'it is easier in the saying than in reality'

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  Pliny, *Ep.* 1.13.1

  "a clausula of cretic plus cretic, a favorite with Pliny": Selatie E. Stout, *Scribe and Critic at Work in Pliny's Letters* (1954), p. 150. (The symbol – stands for a long syllable, and u for a short one.)

  Matt. 17.5

  Matt. 26.26

  Virgil, *Ec.* 9.1

  Kennedy (1930) [1871], pp. 14-15.

  The appendix of Kennedy's *Revised Latin Primer*, pp. 221-225, has a series of rhymes to assist in learning the rules for gender.

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  Cicero, *Inv.* 1.50

  Walker (1918), p. 651-2.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 267, note 1

  Horace, *Car.* 1.22.9

  Livy, 9.37.11.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 88.

  See Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), pp. 154-167.

  Caesar, B.G. 4.12.6

  Livy, 9.24

  Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.520.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 152.

  Livy, 1.12

  Woodcock (1959), p. 43.

  Virgil, *Aen.* 6.179

  Livy, 26.42

  Cicero, *Q.Rosc.* 51.

  Livy, 3.49.2.

  Seneca, *Ep.* 9.6.

  Cicero, *Att.* 4.2.4.

  Virgil, *Aen.* 2.250

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), pp. 110-114.

  Caesar, *B.G.* 3.35.2

  Nepos, *Alc.* 10.5

  Caesar, B.G. 7.18.2.

  Woodcock (1959), p. 83.

  Woodcock (1959), p. 89.

  Cicero, *Ver.* 2.5.7.

  Cicero, *de Inventione* 2.140.

  Cicero, *Verr.* 2.4.94.

  Woodcock (1959), p. 87.

  Cicero, *Fam.* 11.25.2

  Cicero, *In Cat.* 2.4.

  Woodcock (1959), p. 85.

  Catullus, 5.1.

  Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.98.

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 223ff.

  Nepos, *Hann.* 12.3

  Catullus 85

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), pp. 370-373.

  Cicero, *Cat.* 1.21

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 187ff.

  Cicero, *Ver.* 2.4.32.

  Livy, 45.12.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), pp. 374-5.

  Cicero, *Dom*. 142 et passim

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 375.

  Cicero, *Att.* 9.13.8

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 108ff.

  Nepos, *Hann.* 9.1.

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 101ff.

  Nepos, *Hann.* 12.4

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 114ff.

  Nepos, *Hann.* 12.3

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 392.

  Cicero, *Sest*. 49

  Cicero, *Fin.* 4.22.61; cf Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 384.

  Nepos, *Paus.* 5.2.

  Caesar, *B.G.* 4.9.1

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 144-147.

  Nepos, *Hann.* 9.1

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 367.

  Livy 4.21.10

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 368.

  Accius, quoted in Cicero, *Off.* 1.28.97

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), pp. 369-370

  Caesar, *B.C.* 1.54.4

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 141-4; Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), pp. 356-357.

  Cicero, *Fam.* 5.8.1

  Cicero, *Flacc.* 64

  Cicero, *Fam.* 10.24.1 (letter from Plancus)

  Cicero, *Ac.* 2.4.12

  Cicero, *Att.* 7.15.1

  Caesar, *B.C.* 3.55.3

  Cicero, *Verr.* 5.104

  Caesar, *B.C.* 2.35.4

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 353.

  Cicero, *Leg.* 3.2.5

  Woodcock (1959), p. 109.

  Livy, 5.35.4

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 406.

  Cicero *Fam*. 7.30.1

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 402.

  Cicero, Att. 2.1.12

  Catullus 5.

  Livy 1.58.7

  Cicero, *Cat.* 1.10

  Terence, *Hec.* 793

  Seneca the Elder, *Controv.* 7.7.2

  Virgil, Aen. 12.875

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 173.

  Cicero, *Att.* 4.17.4.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 174.

  Cicero, *Att.* 10.1.3

  Terence, *Eunuchus*, 592.

  Cato, *de Agri Cultura* 156.

  Martial, 2.28.2.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 174.

  Cicero, *de legibus* 3.6.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 176.

  Cicero, *Att.* 6.3.9.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 162.

  Cicero, *Att.* 16.6.4.

  e.g. Allen & Greenough (1903), p. 262

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 167; Woodcock (1959), p. 14.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 334, note 3.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 331, note 3.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 334.

  Kennedy, p. 162.

  Cicero *Tusc.* 5.111

  Cicero, *Off.* 1.18

  Horace, *Carm.* 3.2

  Cicero, *Att.* 7.2.7

  Cicero *Att.* 1.18.6

  Cicero, *Fam.* 10.31.4

  Woodcock (1959), p. 15.

  Cicero, *Verr.* 2, 2, 188

  *Bellum Africanum* 24.2.

  Cicero, *Att.* 14.15.2

  Terence, *Ph.* 286

  Livy 1.58.5

  Cicero, *Att.* 12.51.1.

  Seneca, *dē Cōnsōlātiōne* 11.16.1.

  Woodcock (1959), p. 235.

  Cicero, *prō Milōne* 47.

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 355.

  Nepos, *Hann.* 12.1

  Gildersleeve & Lodge (1895), p. 329.

  Cicero, *Cluent.* 66.188

  Woodcock (1959), p. 23.

  *Bellum Hispaniense* 36.1

  Woodcock (1959), p. 71.

  [Donatus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aelius_Donatus) *Ars Minor: de participio*; Quintilian 9.3.9.

  Woodcock (1959), p. 77.

  Cicero, *Ver*. 2.1.67

  Eutropius, 2.11

  Suetonius, *Jul.* 82.2

  Livy, 1.58.7

  Suetonius, *Jul.* 82.2

  Cicero, *Fam.* 3.7.4

  Livy, 1.52.8

  Woodcock (1959), p. 73.

  Cicero, *T.D.* 1.67

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 75-6.

  Livy, 4.34.1

  Virgil, *Aen.* 12.870

  Cicero, *Div.* 1.79

  Woodcock (1959), p. 73-4.

  Caesar, *Gal.* 1.52.3

  Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.697.

  Cicero, *ad Att.* 5.1.3.

  Cicero, *in Milonem* 29.

  Nepos, *Hannibal* 2.3

  Livy, 2.19.2

  Woodcock (1959), p. 158.

  Horace, *Carm.* 1.37

  Florus 1.31.15.4

  Woodcock (1959), p. 158.

  Woodcock (1959), p. 159.

  Cicero, 13.9.2

  Quntilian, 7.3.15

  Woodcock (1959), p. 164.

  Caesar, *Civ.* 3.104.2

  Nepos, *Dat.* 4.5

  Woodcock (1959), p. 159

  Woodcock (1959), p. 159.

  Livy, 7.35; *servāstis* is a contraction of *servāvistis*.

  Pliny *N.H.* 31.32.59

  Caesar, *B.G.* 4.23.1

  Livy, 42.42

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 161-2

  Cicero, *de Or.* 2.289

  Livy, 22.56

  Kennedy, p. 165.

  Seneca, *N.Q.* 2.22.1

  Horace, *Serm.* 1.5.48

  Ovid, *Ars* 1.1.99

  Caesar, *B.G." 1.11.2*

  Woodcock (1959), pp. 112-3

  Cicero, *Att.* 11.16.1.

  Kennedy, p. 167

  Woodcock (1959), p. 112.

 Livy, 40.35.13