

English Common Core State Standards

8th Grade

Gerunds, participles, infinitives, ellipses & dashes, active & passive voice, shifts in verb voice & mood, figures of speech & more!

VERBALS

A **verbal** is a word that is built from a verb but functions as an adjective, adverb, or noun. It's important to know how to identify verbals.

Three common types of verbals are **gerunds**, **participles**, and **infinitives**.

When a verbal is modified by other words, the verbal and its modifier together are known as a **verbal phrase**.

EX: The hall monitor asked us **to walk quietly** past the classrooms.

verbal adverb
verbal phrase

Gerunds

A **gerund** is a verb form that ends in **-ing** and functions like a noun. Just like other types of nouns, gerunds can function as the subject, the direct object, or the object of a preposition. Remember, gerunds end in **-ing**, not **-ed** or **-en**. (A verbal that ends in **-ed** or **-en** is a participle.)

Gerund as Subject

When a gerund acts as the **subject** of a sentence, it stands in as the person, place, or thing that performs the action. Just like any noun that serves as a subject, a gerund serving as a subject can stand alone or it can be part of a phrase.

EX: **Noun as subject:** Hockey impresses everyone who watches it.
Noun phrase as subject: Hockey shown on television impresses everyone who watches it.
Gerund as subject: Skating impresses everyone who watches it.
Gerund phrase as subject: Skating shown on television impresses everyone who watches it.

Telling Whether a Gerund Is a Subject or a Verb

A word ending in **-ing** is generally a verb when it expresses the action of the subject.

EX: Harry **was running** down the street.
noun verb

Running makes Harry feel alive.
noun verb

Gerund as Direct Object

A gerund is the subject of the sentence when it does the action of the verb, but it is the **direct object** of the sentence when it receives the action of the verb. Just like a noun or gerund that acts as a subject, a noun or gerund that serves as the object can be either a single word or part of a noun phrase or gerund phrase.

EX: **Noun as direct object:** I genuinely enjoy hockey.
Noun phrase as direct object: I genuinely enjoy hockey three times a week.
Gerund as direct object: I genuinely enjoy skating.
Gerund phrase as direct object: I genuinely enjoy skating three times a week.

Telling Whether a Gerund Is an Object or a Verb

Telling whether a gerund serves as a direct object or a verb can be difficult because a gerund that serves as the direct object is often placed immediately *after* the verb, making it look like it belongs to a verb phrase instead of the direct object. So, how can you tell them apart?

The word ending in **-ing** is part of the verb when it names an action being performed on something else in the sentence. For instance, in the following example, the apples receive the action of being bought. This makes the apples the direct object and the word "buying" part of the verb.

EX: Harry **was buying** apples.
verb direct object

The word ending in **-ing** is the object when it receives the action expressed by the verb. For instance, in the following example, "enjoyed" describes what Harry did to "running." This makes "running" a gerund that is the direct object and the word "enjoyed" the verb.

EX: Harry **enjoyed running**.
verb direct object

Gerund as the Object of a Preposition

The object of a preposition is a noun, noun phrase, or pronoun that follows a preposition. A gerund or gerund phrase can be the object of a preposition.

EX: **Noun as object of preposition:** I like to talk about hockey.
Noun phrase as object of preposition: I like to talk about professional hockey.
Gerund as object of preposition: I like to talk about skating.
Gerund phrase as object of preposition: I like to talk about skating three times a week.

Telling Whether a Gerund Is an Object of a Preposition or a Verb

Telling whether a gerund is acting as an object of a preposition or a verb is often easier than picking out a gerund that is acting as a subject or a direct object. Most of the time, if a word ending in **-ing** comes immediately after a preposition, it's a gerund, not a verb.

EX: She broke the silence **by talking**.
The team is selling T-shirts to raise money **for skating**.

Even if the word ending in **-ing** doesn't come directly after the preposition, it is still most likely a gerund if it is modified by the preposition.

EX: She broke the silence **with her excessive talking**.
The club is selling T-shirts to raise money **for competitive ice skating**.

If you can pick out the prepositions in a sentence, you can usually identify their objects—including any gerunds among them.

Participles

A **participle** is a verb form that ends in **-ing**, **-ed**, or **-en** and serves as an adjective. **Present participles** generally end in **-ing**, and **past participles** generally end in **-ed** or **-en**.

Because gerunds end in **-ing**, a verb form that ends in **-ed** or **-en** and does not describe the action of the sentence is generally a participle. However, if the word ends in **-ing**, it might be either a gerund or a present participle. To identify which it is, you must decide whether the word ending in **-ing** is functioning as a noun in the sentence (a gerund) or functioning as an adjective in the sentence (a present participle).

Present Participle

Present participles end in **-ing**, as gerunds do. However, a present participle functions like an adjective by describing a person, place, or thing named in the sentence. A present participle may stand alone, or it may be part of a participial phrase.

EX: **Adjective:** Don't touch the **hot** water on the stove.
Adjective phrase: Don't touch the **very hot** water on the stove.
Present participle as adjective: Don't touch the **boiling** water on the stove.
Present participle as adjective phrase: Don't touch the water **boiling on the stove**.

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