

Explanations

- Verbs followed by *-ing* or a noun

Some verbs can be followed either by another verb in an *-ing* form or a noun.

Try to **avoid walking** as much as possible.

I managed to **avoid an argument**.

Verbs in this list include:

avoid, be worth, dislike, enjoy, fancy, help, keep, mind, miss, practise, risk, can't stand

*It's not worth **waiting** for a bus at this time of day.*

*I **dislike having** to get up early.*

*Do you **enjoy meeting** people from other countries?*

*I don't **fancy going out** this evening.*

*George can't **help laughing** when he sees you!*

*I wish you wouldn't **keep interrupting**.*

*I don't **mind helping** you do the washing-up.*

*Jane **misses going** for long country walks.*

*You should **practise introducing** yourself.*

*We can't **risk starting** a fire in the forest.*

*I can't **stand going** to office parties.*

- Verbs followed by *-ing*, or a noun, or a *that*-clause

Some verbs can be followed either by another verb in an *-ing* form, or a noun, or a *that*-clause.

Jack **admitted stealing** the money.

When accused of stealing the money, Jack **admitted it**.

Jack **admitted that** he had stolen the money.

Verbs in this list include:

admit, consider, deny, imagine, recollect, report, suggest

*Have you **considered taking up** jogging?*

*You must **consider that** Jim has never driven abroad before.*

*Peter **denied stealing** the money.*

*Can you **imagine living** in California?*

*I don't **recollect meeting** you before.*

*Suddenly I **recollected that** I had another appointment.*

*Helen **reported losing** her watch to the director.*

*I **suggested going** to the beach.*

*I **suggested that** we went to the beach.*

- Verbs followed by *-ing* or infinitive: little change of meaning

Some verbs can be followed either by an *-ing* form or an infinitive and there is little or no change in meaning. Verbs in this list include:

attempt, begin, continue, dread, not bear, hate, intend, like, love, prefer, start

*I **attempted to leave/leaving** but the police stopped me.*

The forms *would like*, *would love* and *would prefer* are followed by an infinitive.

*I'd **like to come** to your party, but I'll be away then.*

Like to can have its normal meaning of something that gives pleasure. But it has a second meaning which is to talk about a habitual action, whether or not it gives us pleasure.

*On Sundays I **like to get up** early and go for a swim.*

- Verbs followed by *-ing* or infinitive: change of meaning

Some verbs can be followed either by an *-ing* form, or by the infinitive, and there is a change in meaning. Study the examples below carefully and check more examples in a dictionary.

forget and *remember*

We use *forget/remember doing* for memories of the past (the action happens before the remembering). We use *forget/remember to do* for actions someone is/was supposed to do (the remembering happens before the action).

*I won't **forget meeting** you.* (meet → forget)

*I **forgot that I had invited** ten people to lunch.* (invite → forget)

*I **forgot to buy** any coffee.* (forget → buy)

*I won't **forget to go** there.* (forget → go)

*I **remember locking** the door.* (lock → remember)

*I **remembered that I had left** my keys behind.* (leave → remember)

*Please **remember to lock** the door.* (remember → lock)

go on

We use *go on doing* when we continue doing something. We use *go on to do* when we move on to do something else.

*Diana **went on working** all night.* (did the same thing)

*The director **went on to say** that the strike was over.* (did something else)

mean

We use *mean doing* when one thing results in or involves another. We use *mean to do* to express an intention.

*This **means leaving** at 6.00.* (involves)

*This **means that** we will have to leave at 6.00!* (has a result)

*I **meant to phone** you but I forgot.* (intended)

regret

We use *regret doing* when we are sorry about something that happened in the past.

Kate regretted not buying the house.

Kate regretted that she hadn't bought the house.

We use *regret to inform/to tell* when we are giving bad news. This use is formal.

I regret to tell you that you have failed.

stop

We use *stop doing* when we end an action. We use *stop to do* when we give the reason for stopping.

I stopped going to evening classes. (gave up going)

I stopped to buy some coffee. (in order to buy)

try

We use *try doing* when we do something and see what happens. We use *try to do* when we make an effort to do something, but don't necessarily succeed.

Why don't you try getting up early? (suggesting an action)

I tried to get up early, but I couldn't. (try and fail)

- Verbs followed by the infinitive

Some verbs can only be followed by the infinitive. These include:

afford, appear, ask, choose, fail, happen, help, long, manage, offer, prepare, refuse, tend, wait, want

I can't afford to go on holiday abroad this year.

The car appears to have broken down.

David asked me to give this to you.

I chose not to go to university.

Gerry failed to arrive on time.

I happened to be passing so I dropped in.

- Verbs followed by the infinitive, or a *that*-clause

Some verbs can be followed by the infinitive or a *that*-clause. These include:

agree, arrange, decide, demand, desire, expect, hope, intend, learn, plan, pretend, promise, seem, threaten, wish

Tom agreed to meet us outside the cinema.

Tom agreed that he would meet us outside the cinema.

We arranged that we would leave at 5.30.

John decided to take the bus.

John decided that he would take the bus.

- Verbs followed by *-ing*, or infinitive without *to*

Some verbs can be followed by an object + *-ing*, or an infinitive without *to*. There is a change in meaning. These verbs are sometimes called 'verbs of perception' and include:

feel, hear, listen to, notice, see, watch

If we see or hear only part of the action, or it continues, we use the *-ing* form. If we see or hear the whole action from beginning to end, we use the infinitive without *to*. Compare:

I felt the train moving. (continuing action)

I felt the train move. (one completed action)

Some of these verbs can be used with a *that* clause with a change of meaning.

I feel that you should look for another job. (believe)

I've just heard that the match is off. (receive news)

See that you lock up when you leave. (make sure)

Practice

1 Complete each sentence with a suitable form of the verb in brackets.

- a) I really miss (play) *playing* tennis like I used to.
- b) I'm sorry. I meant (write) to you, but I've been busy.
- c) Martin failed (pay) the rent on time yet again.
- d) It's not worth (buy) a return ticket.
- e) Have you ever considered (work) as a teacher?
- f) I promise I won't forget (feed) the cat.
- g) We've arranged (meet) outside the school at 4.30.
- h) If you've got a headache, try (take) an aspirin.

2 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

- a) Jack said that he hadn't cheated in the exam.
cheating
Jack *denied cheating* in the exam.
- b) It was difficult for me not to laugh at Wendy's letter.
help
I at Wendy's letter.
- c) I'm sorry but you have not been appointed to the post.
regret
I you have not been appointed to the post.
- d) I needed a drink of water and so I stopped running.
to
I stopped running water.
- e) I think it would be a good idea to take the train.
taking
I the train.
- f) Don't forget the lights when you leave.
off
Don't forget when you leave.
- g) I think Derek has forgotten the meeting.
appears
Derek the meeting.
- h) My neighbour said he would call the police!
threatened
My neighbour the police.

3 Complete each sentence with a suitable form of the verb in brackets.

- a) Pauline couldn't manage (eat) *to eat* all the ice cream.
- b) I've decided (not sell) my bike after all.
- c) A witness reported (see) Terry at the scene of the crime.
- d) William pretended (not notice) the 'No Parking' sign.
- e) I suppose I tend (buy) more books than I used to.
- f) Sometimes I regret (move) to this part of the country.
- g) Did you notice anyone (wait) outside when you left?
- h) Mark expects (finish) work round about 6.00.

4 Complete each sentence with a suitable form of one of the verbs in brackets.

- a) Mary was so angry that she *demanded* to see the manager.
(demand, hope, risk, stop)
- b) The weather is so awful that I don't going out this evening.
(fancy, like, try, want)
- c) The children could hardly to leave their pets behind.
(bear, forget, regret, seem)
- d) John to let his children go to the concert.
(afford, avoid, refuse, stop)
- e) If I give you the information, I losing my job!
(expect, mean, prepare, risk)
- f) What do you to be doing in ten years time?
(begin, expect, remember, suggest)
- g) Do you to tell the police about the missing money?
(admit, confess, deny, intend)

Key points

- 1 Check new verbs in a good dictionary as it will show how they should be used.
- 2 Note that some verbs can be used in different ways with changes of meaning.

→ SEE ALSO

Grammar 30: Consolidation 6