

-ing forms

Types of gerunds

There are several types of -ing forms:

- simple -ing forms:
***Doing** freelance work has many advantages.*
- perfect -ing forms – having + past participle:
***Having spent** many years working in the hotel industry, two years ago she decided to return to full-time study.*
- passive -ing forms – being + past participle:
*I absolutely despised **being given** menial tasks with limited responsibility just because I was an intern.*
- negative -ing forms – not + -ing:
*Jack turned down the internship in Amsterdam, **not realising** what an interesting experience he was missing.*
- combinations (negative perfect, negative perfect passive):
***Not having had** previous experience in sales, I found my first day at work very challenging.*
*Many employees complained about **not having been informed** earlier about the changes to the company's structure.*

Functions of -ing forms

The -ing forms has many different functions. We can use it:

- as the subject of a sentence:
***Working** from home is very convenient and helps you save a lot of money.*
***Smoking** is not allowed in any enclosed workplace.*
***Not having** regular hours in an office has some pros and cons.*
- after some verbs:
*I really **enjoy being** in charge of a large group of people.*
*My mother **postponed handing in** her notice until the following week.*

Some other verbs that are followed by the -ing forms:
admit, appreciate, avoid, consider, continue, delay, deny, despise, detest, dislike, endure, escape, fancy, go (for activities), imagine, involve, mention, miss, practise, prevent, resent, resist, risk, quit, save, suggest.
- after the verbs feel, hear, overhear, listen to, see, notice and watch with an object to indicate an incomplete action:
*I **saw Bethany giving** her speech. (I saw part of it.)*
*I **saw Bethany give** her speech. (I saw all of it.)*
*I **heard them discussing** the new project. (I heard part of the discussion.)*
*I **heard them discuss** the new project. (I heard the whole discussion.)*
- after all prepositions.
Prepositions which come after certain adjectives and verbs are followed by the -ing forms:
*She was **keen on setting** up her own business in the next few years.*
*After a few weeks of my internship in the office, I grew **tired of making** coffee and **photocopying** documents for everyone else.*

*He's finally **succeeded in getting** hold of his line manager.*
*The majority of interns **complained about not receiving** any additional training.*

- after on at the beginning of a sentence in the meaning of as soon as:
***On entering** the room with the panel of three interviewers, she started to tremble with anxiety. (= As soon as she entered the room with the panel of three interviewers, she started to tremble with anxiety.)*
***On being told** the news about the company's closure, my father collapsed on the sofa. (As soon as he was told the news about the company's closure, my father collapsed on the sofa.)*
- in complex sentences where the subject is the same in both clauses, to show the sequence of events:
***Turning** left into Ashley Road, we saw our new office premises in central Bournemouth. (After we turned left into Ashley Road, we saw our new office premises in central Bournemouth.)*

We can also use the perfect -ing form when we want to emphasise that one activity finished before the other:

***Having finished** the report, Sarah switched off her computer and left the office. (= After finishing the report, Sarah switched off her computer and left the office.)*

This structure is also used to indicate cause and effect:

***Being** a new intern, I was a little unsure of what to do. (= I was a little unsure of what to do because I was a new intern.)*

***Not knowing** where to go, I asked the receptionist where the interview was supposed to take place. (= I asked the receptionist where the interview was supposed to take place because I didn't know where to go.)*

We can also use the perfect -ing form when the cause happened in the past:

***Having resigned** from his job, Ian couldn't afford to go on holiday abroad. (Ian couldn't afford to go on holiday abroad because he had resigned from his job.)*

- in complex sentences after with + subject when the subject is not the same in both clauses:
***With the economy continuing** to struggle, the unemployment figures are still very high. (two different subjects: the economy and unemployment)*
- after certain expressions.
Some expressions are followed by a verb ending in -ing, e.g. a waste of money/time, can't help, can't stand, have difficulty (in), it's (not) worth, it's no good, it's no use, spend/waste/lose time or money, there's no point (in):
***It's no good applying** for jobs you haven't got the relevant experience for.*
*For the first month, the new employee **had difficulty in fulfilling** his duties.*
*Robert **spent hours trying** to revise his CV.*