

## Verbs followed by –ing or infinitive

Adapted from “First Certificate Language Practice” by Michael Vince

### 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 **reclected 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>I felt the train moving.</i>	(continuing action)
<i>I felt the train move.</i>	(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.  
See **that** you lock up when you leave.*

(receive news)  
(make sure)