

Verb + **-ing** forms and infinitives 1

Reminder → F4–F13

A Some verbs can be followed either by an **object + -ing** or a **possessive + -ing** with a similar meaning, although the **possessive + -ing** form is usually considered to be rather formal:

- I resented **Tom** winning the prize.
(*more formally* I resented **Tom's** winning the prize.)
- Mia recalled **him** buying the book.
(*more formally* Mia recalled **his** buying the book.)

Also: **detest, (dis)approve of, (dis)like, hate, love, object to** (= '(dis)liking' verbs); **forget, imagine, remember, think of** (= 'thinking' verbs)

Note that we only use a possessive form (Tom's, his) here to talk about a person or group of people:

- I remember **the horse** winning the race. (*but not* ... the horse's winning ...)

B Some verbs can be followed by **to + -ing** where **to** is a preposition:

- She **confessed to stealing** the money.
- You **don't object to working** late tonight, do you?

Also: **adapt, adjust, admit, look forward, own up, resort**

Note that these verbs can also be followed by **to + noun phrase**:

- She **confessed to the crime**.
- You **don't object to the work**, do you?

C Other verbs can be followed by different prepositions + **-ing**. For example:

- ☆ **by + -ing** (**begin, close, end, finish (off / up), open, start (off / out)**)
 - Can you **begin by cleaning** the floors, and then do the windows?
- ☆ **on + -ing** or **on + object + -ing** (**concentrate, count, depend, focus, insist, rely**)
 - Clare **insisted on (Jack) wearing** a suit to the party.
- ☆ **of + -ing** or **of + object + -ing** (**approve, hear, know, speak, talk, tell**)
 - Have you ever **heard of (anyone) getting** arrested for gossiping before?
- ☆ **object + from + -ing** (**deter, discourage, keep, prevent, prohibit, stop**)
 - The noise from next door **prevented me from sleeping**.

D Some verbs (**feel, hear, notice, observe, overhear, see, watch**) can be followed by an object and then either by an **-ing** form or **bare infinitive**, but the meanings may be slightly different. Compare:

- I **saw them playing** football from my window. (**-ing** indicates an action in progress) *and*
- I **saw him smash** the bottle. (**bare infinitive** indicates a completed action)
- I was able to **watch them building** the new car park from my office window. (**-ing** suggests that I watched, but not from start to finish) *and*
- I **watched him climb** through the window, and then I called the police. (**bare infinitive** suggests I watched the whole action from start to finish)

E After the verbs **dare** and **help** we can use either a **bare infinitive** or **to-infinitive**:

- I was angry with him, but I **didn't dare (to) say** anything.
- We hope the Twitter campaign will **help (to) raise** awareness of the problem.

When **dare** has an object, we can only use a **to-infinitive**. Compare:

- I **dared him to cross** the river. (*not* I dared him cross ...) *and*
- I **helped them (to) pack**.

After **have, let** and **make** we can use an **object + bare infinitive** but not **to-infinitive**:

- His exam results might **make him work** harder. (*not* ... might make him to work ...)
- I **had Irena clean up** her bedroom before I **let her go** out to play.

Exercises

30.1 If possible, rewrite these sentences using the possessive form of the object. If not, write X. **A**

- 1 I really hate you having to be away from home so much.
I really hate your having to be away from home so much.
- 2 We don't approve of the developer locating the factory so close to houses.
- 3 I have always detested the dog jumping up at me when I visit them.
- 4 No one heard the man shouting for help.
- 5 It is difficult to imagine him accepting the decision without any objection.
- 6 No one in the crowd that day will forget Ashe fighting so hard to win the match.
- 7 I remember them arguing a great deal when they were children.
- 8 The police investigated him stealing cars from the city centre.

30.2 Rewrite the italicised part of each sentence so that it has a similar meaning. Use one of the verbs from the box and an -ing form. **B & C**

adapt approve discourage end ~~own up~~ rely

- 1 In a survey, 65% of dentists *said that they had made* mistakes in treating patients.
owned up to making
- 2 I don't *think children should wear* jewellery in school.
- 3 I would like to *finish with a summary of* the main points of my talk.
- 4 My parents *said they thought I shouldn't go* to university.
- 5 You can't *trust Sophie to turn up* on time.
- 6 I grew up in the countryside, and I found it difficult to *get used to life* in a big city.

30.3 Underline the most likely verb form. Consider why it is the most likely. **A**

- 1 I heard the tyre *burst / bursting* and then the lorry skidded across the road.
- 2 Carl noticed someone *watch / watching* him from an upstairs window.
- 3 She felt the wasp *sting / stinging* her just before she brushed it off her arm.
- 4 With a good telescope you can see the eagles *feed / feeding* their chicks in the nest.

30.4 Match the sentence beginnings and endings, adding an appropriate object where necessary and write (to) where this might be included. **E**

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 When Lana thought of going on the roller-coaster it made ... | a prevent hay fever. |
| 2 The new course is intended to help ... | b feel quite ill. |
| 3 Scientists hope the new drug will help ... | c control the speed of the fan. |
| 4 We didn't agree with the decision, but we didn't dare ... | d wait outside my office. |
| 5 When Ethan arrives, have ... | e understand modern art. |
| 6 The dial on the left lets ... | f protest against it. |

1 + b *When Lana thought of going on the roller-coaster it made her feel quite ill.*

