

-ing Phrases (*Feeling tired, I went to bed early.*)

A

Study these situations:

Jim was playing tennis. He hurt his arm.

You can say:

- Jim hurt his arm **playing tennis**.

You were feeling tired. So you went to bed early.

You can say:

- **Feeling tired**, I went to bed early.

Playing tennis and **feeling tired** are **-ing** phrases.

If the **-ing** phrase is first (as in the second example), we write a comma (,) after it.

B

When two things happen at the same time, you can use **-ing** for one of the verbs:

- Carol is in the kitchen **making coffee**. (= she is in the kitchen and she is making coffee)
- A man ran out of the house **shouting**. (= he ran out of the house and he was shouting)
- Do something! Don't just stand there **doing nothing**!

We also use **-ing** when one action happens during another action. We use **-ing** for the longer action. The longer action is the second part of the sentence:

- Jim hurt his arm **playing tennis**. (= while he was playing)
- Did you cut yourself **shaving**? (= while you were shaving)

You can also use **-ing** after **while** or **when**:

- Jim hurt his arm **while playing tennis**.
- Be careful **when crossing** the road. (= when you are crossing)

C

When one action happens before another action, we use **having done** for the first action:

- **Having found** a hotel, we looked for someplace to have dinner.
- **Having finished** her work, she went home.

You can also say after **-ing**:

- **After finishing** her work, she went home.

If one short action follows another short action, you can use the simple **-ing** form (**doing** instead of **having done**) for the first action:

- **Taking** a key out of his pocket, he opened the door.

These structures are used more in written English than in spoken English.

D

You can use an **-ing** phrase to explain something or to say why somebody does something.

The **-ing** phrase usually comes first:

- **Feeling tired**, I went to bed early. (= because I felt tired)
- **Being unemployed**, he doesn't have much money. (= because he is unemployed)
- **Not having a car**, she finds it difficult to get around. (= because she doesn't have a car)
- **Having already seen the movie twice**, I didn't want to go to the movies. (= because I had already seen it twice)

These structures are used more in written English than in spoken English.

Exercises

65.1 Join a sentence from Box A with one from Box B to make one sentence. Use an *-ing* phrase.

A

- ~~1. Carol was in the kitchen.~~
2. Amy was sitting in an armchair.
3. Sarah went out.
4. Linda was in London for two years.
5. Mary walked around the town.

B

- She looked at the sights and took photographs.
- She said she would be back in an hour.
- She was reading a book.
- ~~She was making coffee.~~
- She worked as a teacher.

1. *Carol was in the kitchen making coffee.*
2. Amy was sitting _____.
3. Sarah _____.
4. _____.
5. _____.

65.2 Make one sentence from two using an *-ing* phrase.

1. Jim was playing tennis. He hurt his arm. *Jim hurt his arm playing tennis.*
2. I was watching TV. I fell asleep. I _____.
3. The man slipped. He was getting off a bus. The man _____.
4. Margaret was driving to work yesterday. She had an accident.
5. Two kids got lost. They were hiking in the woods.

65.3 Make sentences that begin with *Having*.

1. She finished her work. Then she went home.
Having finished her work, she went home.
2. We bought our tickets. Then we went into the theater.
3. They continued their trip after they'd had dinner.
4. After Lucy had done all her shopping, she stopped for a cup of coffee.

65.4 Make sentences beginning with *-ing* or *Not -ing* (like those in Section D). Sometimes you need to begin with *Having (done something)*.

1. I felt tired. So I went to bed early.
Feeling tired, I went to bed early.
2. I thought they might be hungry. So I offered them something to eat.
3. She is a foreigner. So she needs a visa to stay in this country.
4. I didn't know his address. So I wasn't able to contact him.
5. Sarah has traveled a lot. So she knows a lot about other countries.
6. The man wasn't able to understand English. So he didn't know what I wanted.
7. We had spent nearly all our money. So we couldn't afford to stay in a hotel.