
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

Verb patterns



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NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Alice

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Alice.

Finn

And me, Finn. Hello.

Alice

Today we're talking about verb patterns.

Finn

Yes: we're looking at what happens when we use two verbs together in English.

Alice

We'll be looking at four verb patterns – and there's a quiz at the end of the programme – so listen carefully!

Finn

So, on with the show! Our first pattern is: **verb plus gerund**.

Alice

A **gerund** is the **i-n-g** form of a verb – words like **seeing**, **complaining** and **giving** are all gerunds.

Finn

And here's Catherine to give us some examples of the pattern verb plus gerund. Catherine.

Catherine

I really **enjoyed seeing** Rachel again last night.
Jackie **kept complaining**, so I went home.
Would you **mind giving** me a lift to the station?

Finn

Thanks Catherine. So we had the verb **enjoy** plus the gerund **seeing**...

Alice

We had **keep** plus **complaining**...

Finn

And the verb **mind** plus the gerund **giving**.

Alice

Good. **Enjoy seeing; keep complaining; mind giving**. Other verbs that can be followed by gerunds include: **finish, practise, suggest, and recommend**.

Finn

So I can say: I **suggest keeping** a list of verbs that take gerunds.

Alice

Haha, good example.

Finn

Thank you.

Alice

Now for the second pattern: **verb plus infinitive**. An infinitive is the word **to** plus a base verb, for example: **to see, to drive, to study**. Some examples please Catherine?

Catherine

I really **want to see** the football tonight.

My brother's **learning to drive**.

Mario's **hoping to study** medicine.

Finn

So that's: **want to see, learning to drive, hoping to study**... Other verbs in this group are **agree, decide, choose** and **learn**. Now for the third pattern: these verbs can be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive - without changing the meaning. Some examples please Catherine.

Catherine

I've **started learning** Arabic - and my boyfriend's **started to learn** French.

Finn

So **started learning** and **started to learn** have more or less the same meaning. Now, another example please?

Catherine

Snow will **continue to fall** in the mountains and temperatures will **continue falling** throughout the night.

Finn

So **continue to fall** and **continue falling** have the same meaning.

Alice

OK. Time for pattern 4.

Finn

Yes - and this one's a bit tricky. With some verbs, you can use either a gerund or an infinitive afterwards, BUT...

Alice

...and it's a big but...

Finn

Yes... the meaning changes from gerund to infinitive.

Alice

So if I say... I **stopped drinking coffee** last week.

Finn

Well, I probably wouldn't believe you...

Alice

Yes, well... this means I drank coffee regularly in the past, but last week, I decided to give up coffee. I completely stopped and now I never drink coffee.

Finn

But, if I say, on my way home yesterday, I **stopped to have** a cup of coffee...

Alice

This means that yesterday you interrupted your journey and you went into a cafe for a cup of coffee.

Finn

So, very different meanings.

Alice

Yes. Here's an example, with the verb **remember**:

Catherine

We **remembered closing** the door.

We **remembered to close** the door.

Finn

OK, in the first one, we formed a picture in our mind of us closing the door. The second example means we didn't forget to close the door.

IDENT

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Alice

And it's time for a quiz. Question one. Which is correct: a) They **decided taking** the train – or b) They **decided to take** the train.

Finn

OK, so this is: b) They **decided to take** the train. After decide, we need the infinitive.

Alice

Number 2: a) Catherine **hates cooking** in the evening. b) Catherine **hates to cook** in the evening.

Finn

And that's a trick question. They are actually both correct, because after hate, you can use either a gerund or an infinitive.

Alice

Yes you can. Finally, number 3: is it a) Do you **want to go** for a coffee? Or b) Do you **want going** for a coffee?

Finn

This one is: a) Do you **want to go** for a coffee? Because after want you need the infinitive... but Alice?

Alice

Yes?

Finn

You said you'd stopped drinking coffee?!

Alice

Oh yes I did. Never mind. Thanks for listening and don't forget - there's more about this on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

Both

Bye.

Finn

Time for a coffee?

Alice

Maybe later.

Both

Bye.