

Verbs + To-Infinitive & Gerunds: Patterns of Decision

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Verbs of decision, planning, promising, threatening; Negative Infinitives; Question Words + To-Infinitive; Gerunds (-ing)

In English, when one verb follows another, the second verb must take a specific form. The first verb determines whether the second verb is a **To-Infinitive** or a **Gerund (-ing)**.

1. Verbs followed by To-Infinitive

We use the **to-infinitive** (*to go, to buy, to see*) after verbs related to thinking, future plans, and decisions.

- **Decisions & Refusals:** *decide, refuse, agree, choose*
- **Planning & Hoping:** *plan, arrange, hope, expect, intend*
- **Promising & Threatening:** *promise, threaten, offer*

Examples:

- We **decided to leave** early.
- She **refused to eat** her dinner.
- They **arranged to meet** at 5:00 PM.

2. Negative Infinitives (Placement of 'Not')

To make an infinitive negative, we place **not** immediately before **to**. Do not use auxiliary verbs like *don't* or *didn't* in the second part of the sentence.

- **Structure:** Verb + **not** + **to** + verb
- **Examples:**
 - We decided **not to go** out. (Decision made not to act)
 - He promised **not to be** late. (Negative promise)

3. Question Words + To-Infinitive

After verbs of thinking or sharing information (*know, ask, learn, remember, decide, forget*), we can use a **Question Word** (how, where, what, when, who) followed by a **to-infinitive**.

- **Structure:** Verb + **Question Word** + **to** + verb
- **Examples:**
 - I don't **know how to cook** lasagna.
 - We haven't **decided where to go** on holiday.
 - He **forgot what to say**.

Instructions (Show/Tell):

When giving instructions, we often include an object (the person receiving the instruction).

- **Structure:** Verb + **Object** + **Question Word** + **to** + verb
- **Examples:**
 - Can you **show me how to use** this machine?
 - She **told him what to do**.

4. Verbs followed by Gerund (-ing)

Some specific verbs are always followed by the **-ing** form (Gerund), not the to-infinitive.

- **Verbs:** *enjoy, suggest, mind, finish, avoid, miss*
- **Examples:**
 - I **enjoy reading** books. (NOT: *enjoy to read*)
 - She **suggested going** to the park. (NOT: *suggested to go*)

Practice Exercises

Instruction: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs in parentheses.

- Pay attention to whether the first verb requires a **To-Infinitive** or a **Gerund (-ing)**.
- Watch out for **Question Words** and **Negative** forms (*not to...*).
- Change the tense of the first verb if necessary (e.g., Past Simple).

1. It was getting late, so we _____ (decide / take) a taxi home.
2. I am bored. I _____ (suggest / go) to the cinema tonight.
3. She was very angry and _____ (refuse / speak) to me.
4. _____ (you / know / how / fix) this printer? It is broken.
5. The thief _____ (threaten / hurt) the bank manager if he didn't open the safe.
6. We _____ (plan / not / go) on holiday this year because we are saving money.
7. _____ (you / enjoy / watch) horror movies, or do you prefer comedies?
8. Can you _____ (tell / me / where / buy) tickets for the concert?
9. I _____ (hope / see) you at the party next week.
10. He _____ (promise / not / tell) anyone my secret, but he told everyone!
11. The teacher _____ (show / us / what / do) for the science experiment yesterday.
12. Have they _____ (arrange / meet) the director yet?
13. I really _____ (miss / live) by the ocean.
14. Please _____ (not / forget / lock) the door when you leave.
15. We haven't _____ (decide / where / eat) dinner yet. Do you have any ideas?

Answer Key

1. **decided to take** (Past Simple + To-Infinitive)
2. **suggest going** (Present + Gerund)
3. **refused to speak** (Past Simple + To-Infinitive)
4. **Do you know how to fix** (Question + How + To-Infinitive)
5. **threatened to hurt** (Past Simple + To-Infinitive)
6. **planned not to go** (Past Simple + Negative Infinitive) *OR* **are planning not to go**
7. **Do you enjoy watching** (Question + Gerund)
8. **tell me where to buy** (Instruction + Where + To-Infinitive)
9. **hope to see** (Present + To-Infinitive)
10. **promised not to tell** (Past Simple + Negative Infinitive)
11. **showed us what to do** (Past Simple + Object + What + To-Infinitive)
12. **arranged to meet** (Present Perfect + To-Infinitive)
13. **miss living** (Present + Gerund)
14. **don't forget to lock** (Imperative + To-Infinitive)
15. **decided where to eat** (Past Participle + Where + To-Infinitive)