

## Focus: see/hear/watch, feel/smell/find, listen to, Complete actions vs. Actions in progress

In English, we use **Verbs of Perception** (words related to our senses) followed by an object and a second verb to describe what we experience. The form of the second verb changes the meaning of the sentence.

### 1. The Structure

Subject	Perception Verb	Object	Second Verb	Meaning
I	saw	him	drive away.	<b>Bare Infinitive</b> (without <i>to</i> )
I	saw	him	driving away.	<b>-ing Form</b> (Gerund / Participle)

The most common verbs used in this pattern are: **see, watch, hear, listen to, feel, smell, notice, observe, find.**

### 2. Pattern A: Completed Actions (Bare Infinitive)

We use the **Bare Infinitive** (the verb without *to*) when we want to emphasize that we experienced the **complete action**, from start to finish.

- *Structure:* Verb + Object + **Infinitive**
- **Examples:**
  - I **watched** the plane **land**. (I saw the whole event, from the sky to the ground.)
  - Did you **hear** the glass **break**? (You heard the sudden, complete noise.)
  - We **listened to** the band **play** a song. (We listened to the entire song.)

**Note:** We never use "to" in this structure.

- *Incorrect:* I saw him ~~to cross~~ the street.
- *Correct:* I saw him **cross** the street.

### 3. Pattern B: Actions in Progress (-ing Form)

We use the **-ing form** when we witness an action that is **in progress** or happening at that moment. We see *part* of the action, or we focus on the continuous nature of the experience.

- *Structure:* Verb + Object + **-ing**
- **Examples:**
  - I **saw** Tim **waiting** for the bus. (He was in the middle of waiting when I saw him.)
  - Can you **smell** something **burning**? (The smell is in the air right now.)
  - I **found** the cat **sleeping** on my bed. (I discovered it in that state.)

**Tip:** Verbs like **smell** and **find** are almost always used with **-ing** because they describe a sensation or a discovery of a state.

### 4. Summary: How to Choose?

- **Short, quick actions** (break, drop, slam, sneeze) → usually **Bare Infinitive**.
- **Longer actions seen partially** (walking, playing, cooking) → usually **-ing**.
- **Smell / Find** → usually **-ing**.

# Practice Exercises

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## Focus: Verbs of Perception

**Instructions:** Complete the sentences using the **Past Simple** for the perception verb (unless indicated otherwise) and the correct form (**Bare Infinitive** or **-ing**) for the second verb. Read the context carefully to decide if the action is complete or in progress.

### Cues:

- (+): Affirmative
- (-): Negative
- (?): Question

1. We sat on the beach for an hour and (+) \_\_\_\_\_ (watch / the sun / set) completely behind the mountains.
2. As I walked past the music room, I (+) \_\_\_\_\_ (hear / someone / play) a beautiful melody on the piano.
3. The thief was very quiet. The guard (-) \_\_\_\_\_ (not / hear / he / enter) the building.
4. (?) \_\_\_\_\_ (you / see / the accident / happen) yesterday morning? It was over in a second.
5. When I arrived home, I opened the door and (+) \_\_\_\_\_ (smell / a cake / bake) in the oven.
6. I looked for Tom everywhere, and finally, I (+) \_\_\_\_\_ (find / him / sleep) in the library.
7. He is a very private person. I (-) \_\_\_\_\_ (not / notice / he / leave) the party early.
8. (?) \_\_\_\_\_ (you / ever / watch / a bird / build) its nest? It takes a long time to finish.
9. Suddenly, the ground began to shake. We (+) \_\_\_\_\_ (feel / the earth / move) beneath our feet.
10. I was focused on my book, so I (-) \_\_\_\_\_ (not / see / you / wave) at me from the street.
11. (?) \_\_\_\_\_ (can / you / smell / gas / leak)? We should call the emergency services immediately.
12. The strict teacher (+) \_\_\_\_\_ (observe / the students / take) the test to ensure no one was cheating.
13. We stood in silence and (+) \_\_\_\_\_ (listen to / the rain / fall) on the tin roof for a few minutes.
14. I dropped the vase, but luckily my mother (-) \_\_\_\_\_ (not / hear / it / break).
15. (?) \_\_\_\_\_ (anyone / see / the man / take) the wallet, or did he do it secretly?

## Answer Key

1. **watched the sun set** (The context "completely" indicates a finished action.)
2. **heard someone playing** (The context "As I walked past" implies an action in progress.)
3. **didn't hear him enter** (Entering is viewed here as a complete event/fact.)
4. **Did you see the accident happen** (Accidents are usually viewed as complete, sudden events.)
5. **smelled a cake baking** (Smell + process usually takes -ing.)
6. **found him sleeping** (Find usually takes -ing as it describes a discovered state.)
7. **didn't notice him leave** (Leaving is a complete action here.)
8. **Did you ever watch a bird build / Have you ever watched a bird build** (Process from start to finish.)
9. **felt the earth move** (Or 'moving' is acceptable, but 'move' emphasizes the sudden event.)
10. **didn't see you waving** (Waving is usually continuous when someone is trying to get attention.)
11. **Can you smell gas leaking** (Smell + immediate sensation takes -ing.)
12. **observed the students taking** (Or 'take', but 'taking' emphasizes the duration of the test.)
13. **listened to the rain falling** (Emphasizes the continuous sound.)
14. **didn't hear it break** (Break is a short, complete action.)
15. **Did anyone see the man take** (Theft is viewed as a complete act here.)