

UNIT 26

Gerunds and Infinitives PROCRASTINATION

OUTCOMES

- Use verbs that can be followed by gerunds or infinitives
- Use prepositions/phrasal verbs + gerunds
- Identify key points in an article and in an interview
- Discuss solutions to common problems
- Give an opinion in response to a literary quote
- Write several paragraphs about how to achieve one's goals

STEP 1 GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

BEFORE YOU READ

Look at the cartoon and at the title of the article. Discuss the questions.

1. What is procrastination?
2. What types of things do you put off doing?
3. Why do people procrastinate?

READ

Read this excerpt from a magazine article about procrastinating.

Stop Procrastinating—Now!

It's a beautiful day. Eva doesn't *feel like studying* for her test. She goes to the park instead. She *keeps telling* herself she'll work better the next day.

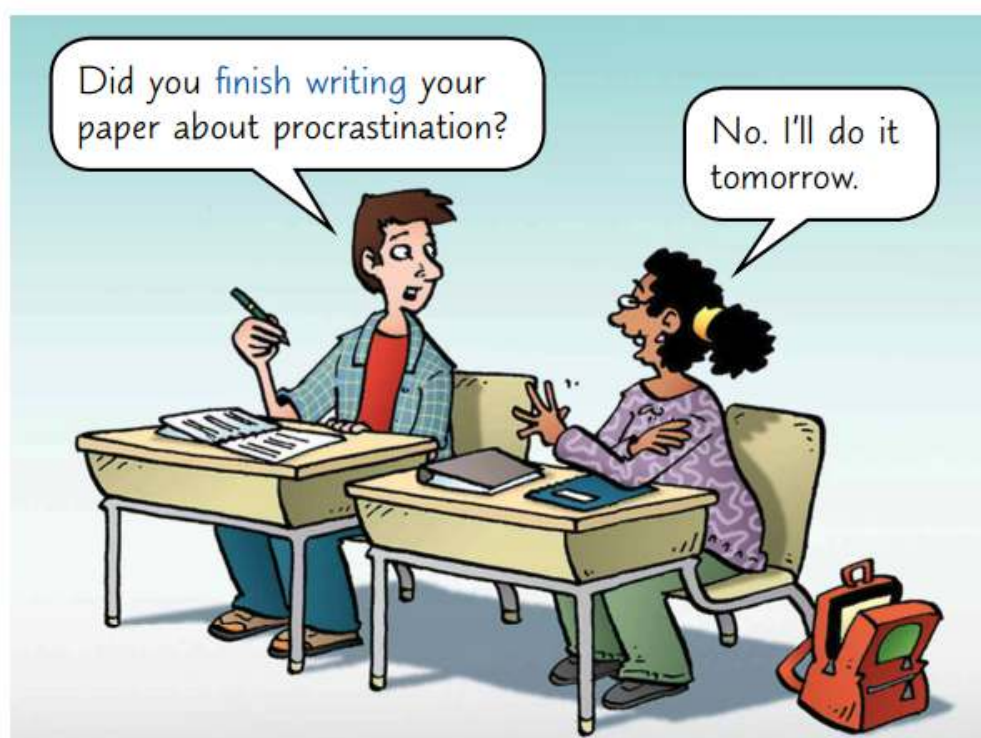
Todd *planned to make* an appointment with the dentist, but he *decided to wait* another week, or maybe two.

Procrastinating—*putting off* until tomorrow things you *need to do* today—is a universal problem. College students are famous *for procrastinating*, but we all do it sometimes. Why do people put off important tasks? Read what the experts say.

Unpleasant Tasks It's not always fun *to do* a lot of the things on our "To Do" lists. Most people *prefer to do* enjoyable things.

Poor Time Management¹ *Having* too little time for a task is discouraging. It's hard *to get* started on a project when you feel that you can't finish it.

¹ *time management*: the skills for using your time well when you are trying to reach a goal



Fear An important test can make you feel so anxious that you **put off studying**.

Perfectionism The belief that you must do a perfect job can prevent you **from starting or finishing** a task.

As you can see, people often procrastinate because they **want to avoid** bad feelings. This tactic, however, usually fails because procrastinators **end up feeling** even worse as a result of their procrastination. It's a vicious cycle.² The only solution to the problem is to **stop procrastinating**—now!

² *vicious cycle*: a situation where one problem causes another problem that then causes the first problem again

AFTER YOU READ

A VOCABULARY Complete the sentences with the words from the box.

anxious discouraging project tactic task universal

1. Have you finished your class _____ yet?
2. Procrastination is a _____ problem. People all over the world do it.
3. I get very _____ before a test.
4. Shopping for dinner is my least favorite _____ on my "To Do" list.
5. The problem is _____, but I won't give up hope!
6. Do you know a good _____ for solving this problem?

B COMPREHENSION Check (✓) the reasons the article gives for procrastination.

- 1. being lazy
- 2. not enjoying the task
- 3. not understanding something
- 4. not having enough time
- 5. feeling anxious about the task
- 6. not getting enough sleep
- 7. feeling depressed
- 8. thinking your work has to be perfect

C DISCUSSION Work with a partner. Compare your answers in B. Why did you or didn't you check each item?

STEP 2 GRAMMAR PRESENTATION

GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES

Gerunds
Eva enjoys going to the park.
She prefers taking long breaks.
She stopped studying .
Starting a project is hard.
She's worried about finishing her paper.

Infinitives
Eva wants to go to the park.
She prefers to take long breaks.
She stopped to study .
It's hard to start a project.

GRAMMAR NOTES

1 Verb + Gerund

Some verbs are followed by a **gerund** (base form + *-ing*).

These are some common verbs followed by a gerund:

<i>avoid</i>	<i>deny</i>	<i>keep</i>	Eva avoids doing her work. She doesn't enjoy studying . She delays getting to work.
<i>consider</i>	<i>enjoy</i>	<i>postpone</i>	
<i>delay</i>	<i>finish</i>	<i>quit</i>	

2 Verb + Infinitive

Some verbs are followed by an **infinitive** (*to* + base form).

These are some common verbs followed by an infinitive:

<i>agree</i>	<i>decide</i>	<i>need*</i>	<i>promise*</i>	Todd decided not to work late. He arranged to leave early. He plans to meet some friends. We expect to start the project soon. We expect them to start the project soon.
<i>arrange</i>	<i>expect*</i>	<i>offer</i>	<i>want*</i>	
<i>choose*</i>	<i>fail</i>	<i>plan</i>	<i>would like*</i>	

*These verbs can also be followed by:
object + infinitive

USAGE NOTE We usually do not repeat *to* when there is more than one infinitive.

He plans to watch TV, read the paper, and call his friends. (<i>more common</i>) He plans to watch TV, to read the paper, and to call his friends. (<i>less common</i>)
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3 Verb + Gerund or Infinitive

Some verbs are followed by a **gerund** or an **infinitive**. They have the same meaning.

These are some common verbs that are followed by a gerund or an infinitive:

<i>begin</i>	<i>hate</i>	<i>prefer</i>
<i>can't stand</i>	<i>like</i>	<i>start</i>
<i>continue</i>	<i>love</i>	<i>try</i>

Jeff **hates studying**. or Jeff **hates to study**.
 He **likes reading**. or He **likes to read**.
 He **loves dancing**. or He **loves to dance**.

USAGE NOTE When two or more verbs follow another verb, we use the same form of the verb. (In writing, this is called *parallel structure*.)

He **hates studying** and **doing** homework.
NOT He hates studying and ~~to do~~ homework.
 He **hates to study** and **do** homework.
NOT He hates to study and ~~doing~~ homework.

BE CAREFUL! Some **verbs**, such as the ones below, can be **followed by a gerund or an infinitive**, but they have a very different meaning:

<i>stop</i>	<i>remember</i>	<i>forget</i>
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Eva **stopped taking** breaks.
(She doesn't take breaks anymore.)
 Eva **stopped to take** a break.
(She stopped an activity in order to take a break.)
 Todd **remembered reading** the story.
(First he read the story. Then he remembered that he did it.)
 Todd **remembered to read** the story.
(First he remembered. Then he read the story. He didn't forget.)
 Jeff **forgot meeting** Dana.
(Jeff met Dana, but afterwards he didn't remember the event.)
 Jeff **forgot to meet** Dana.
(Jeff had plans to meet Dana, but he didn't meet her because he forgot about the plans.)

4 Preposition or Phrasal Verb + Gerund

A **gerund** is the only verb form that can **follow a preposition or a phrasal verb**.

- **preposition + gerund**

PREPOSITION
 He's worried **about writing** it.
 PREPOSITION
 He's looking forward **to finishing** it.
 PREPOSITION
 Jeff doesn't feel **like working** on his paper.

- **phrasal verb + gerund**

PHRASAL VERB
 He won't **put off starting** it anymore.

5 For General Statements

To make **general statements**, you can use either:

- **gerund as subject**
- **it + infinitive**

They have the **same meaning**.

Writing a paper is hard.
 or
It's hard to write a paper.

REFERENCE NOTES

For a list of **verbs followed by a gerund**, see Appendix 13 on page 459.

For a list of **verbs followed by an infinitive**, see Appendix 14 on page 459.

For a list of **verbs followed by a gerund or an infinitive**, see Appendix 15 on page 459.

For more information on **gerunds after prepositions**, see Unit 23 on page 320, and Appendices 17 and 18 on pages 459 and 460.

Go to [MyEnglishLab](#) to watch the grammar presentation.

STEP 3 FOCUSED PRACTICE

EXERCISE 1 DISCOVER THE GRAMMAR

A GRAMMAR NOTES 1-5

Read this paragraph.
Underline the gerunds.
Circle the infinitives.

Like many students, Eva is a procrastinator. She keeps putting off her schoolwork. When she studies, she often stops to go for a walk in the park. She wants to improve her study habits, but she isn't sure how. Eva decided to make a list every day of tasks she needs to do. She always remembers to make her list, but she often forgets to read it. It's very discouraging, and Eva is worried about getting bad grades. Last night, Eva remembered reading an article in the school newspaper about a support group for procrastinators. She thinks being in a group is a good idea. It's difficult to try to change on your own. She likes sharing ideas with other students. Maybe it will help.

B Now read the statements. Check (✓) True or False. Correct the false statements.

- | | True | False |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Eva ^{puts off doing} never does her schoolwork. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. She quit going for walks in the park. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. She'd like to be a better student. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Eva makes a list every day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. She always reads her list. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. She read about a support group. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. She thinks it's good to be in a group. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. She doesn't like to share ideas with others. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

EXERCISE 2 GERUND OR INFINITIVE

GRAMMAR NOTES 1-4
Read the quiz. Circle the correct form of the verbs. In some cases, both forms are correct.

Are You a Procrastinator?

- When I don't feel like to do / **doing** something, I often put off to start / starting it. 1. 2.
- I sometimes start to study / studying the night before a test. 3.
- I sometimes start a job but then postpone to finish / finishing it. 4.
- I often delay to make / making difficult decisions. 5.
- I find excuses for not to do / doing things I dislike. 6.
- When a task seems too difficult, I often avoid to work / working on it. 7.
- I prefer to do / doing easy tasks first. 8.
- I often promise myself to work / working on a project but then fail to do / doing it. 9. 10.
- I worry about to make / making mistakes or about not to be / being perfect. 11. 12.
- I often choose to do / doing other tasks instead of the most important one. 13.
- I want to improve / improving, but I keep to put / putting it off. 14. 15.

EXERCISE 3 GERUND OR INFINITIVE

GRAMMAR NOTES 1-4 Complete these tips from a website. Use the correct form of the verbs in parentheses.

Some Tips for Stopping Procrastination

1. (stop)

- If you have a large project to work on, break it into small tasks. Finish _____ 2. (do) one small task before _____ 3. (start) the next.
- Choose _____ 4. (do) the hardest task first. You'll get it out of the way, and you'll feel better about yourself.
- Promise yourself _____ 5. (spend) at least fifteen minutes on a task even if you don't really feel like _____ 6. (do) it. You'll be surprised. You can get a lot done in fifteen minutes—and you'll often keep _____ 7. (work) even longer.
- Stop _____ 8. (take) short breaks—but for no longer than ten minutes at a time.
- Arrange _____ 9. (give) yourself a reward when you succeed in _____ 10. (finish) a task. Do something you enjoy _____ 11. (do).
- Consider _____ 12. (join) a support group for procrastinators.

EXERCISE 4 GENERAL STATEMENTS

A GRAMMAR NOTE 5 Complete these conversations. The people talking agree on everything. Read one person's opinion and write the other's. If the first person uses a gerund, use an infinitive. If the first person uses an infinitive, use a gerund.

- EVA:** It's hard to start a new project.
TODD: I agree. *Starting a new project is hard.*
- PAT:** Taking short breaks is helpful.
LEE: You're right. *It's helpful to take short breaks.*
- UTA:** It's difficult to work on a long project.
KAY: That's true. _____
- LEV:** Completing a job on time feels great.
JEFF: You're right. _____
- PAT:** Rewarding yourself for finishing a project is a good idea.
LEE: I agree. _____
- UTA:** Being in a support group is very helpful.
KAY: Yes. _____
- EVA:** It's good to meet people with the same problem.
TODD: I feel the same way. _____

B LISTEN AND CHECK Listen to the conversations and check your answers in A.

EXERCISE 5 GERUND OR INFINITIVE

GRAMMAR NOTES 1-3 Read these conversations that took place at a procrastinators' support group meeting. Complete the summary statements. Use a gerund or an infinitive.

- SARA:** Hi, Todd. Did you bring the soda?
TODD: Yes. Here it is.
Summary: Todd remembered *to bring the soda*
- CHO:** Eva, do you remember Todd?
EVA: Oh, yes. We met last year.
Summary: Eva remembers _____
- EVA:** Todd, will Miriam be here tonight? I haven't seen her in ages!
TODD: Yes, she's coming later.
Summary: Todd expects Miriam _____
- SARA:** You take too many breaks.
TODD: No, I don't!
Summary: Todd denied _____

5. EVA: What do you do in your free time, Aki?
AKI: I listen to music a lot.

Summary: Aki likes _____.

6. UTA: I'm tired. Let's go home.
AKI: OK. Just five more minutes.

Summary: Uta wants _____.

7. UTA: Eva, can we give you a ride home?
EVA: Thanks, but I think I'll stay a little longer.

Summary: Uta offered _____.
Eva decided _____.

8. DAN: Good night. Please drive carefully.
UTA: Don't worry. I will.

Summary: Uta promised Dan _____.

EXERCISE 6 EDITING

GRAMMAR NOTES 1-5 Read Eva's blog entry. There are eight mistakes in the use of gerunds and infinitives. The first mistake is already corrected. Find and correct seven more.

Eva's Blog

The Test of Time

For months I was thinking about ^{going}~~to go~~ to a support group for procrastinators, but I kept putting it off! Last night, I finally decided going, and I'm glad I did. I'm not alone! There were a lot of people there with the same problem as me. I expected them being boring, but they were really quite interesting—and helpful. I even knew some of the other students there. I remembered to meet a few of them at a school party last year. I really enjoyed to talk to Todd, and before I left I promised coming again.

I have a math test tomorrow, so I really should stop to write now and start studying. See, I've already learned some helpful tactics from to be in this group! I have to stop making excuses and start my work! NOW!

STEP 4 COMMUNICATION PRACTICE

EXERCISE 7 LISTENING

A The school newspaper is interviewing Eva about her study habits. Listen to the interview. Then read the list of activities. Listen again and check (✓) the things Eva *Does* or *Doesn't Do* now when she is studying for a test.

	Things Eva Does	Things Eva Doesn't Do
1. clean her work area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. start studying the night before the test	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. study the hardest thing first	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. make a "To Do" list	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. take long breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. do relaxation exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. reward herself for finishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B Listen to the interview again. Then work with a partner. Compare your answers to the questions in A. For each answer, give the reason why Eva does or doesn't do the activity.

EXAMPLE: A: So Eva cleans her work area.

B: Yes. She says it's distracting to work at a messy desk. What about number 2?

EXERCISE 8 TAKE A BREAK!

A BRAINSTORMING Taking short breaks can help you work more effectively. Work in a group. Brainstorm ideas for ten-minute work breaks.

EXAMPLE: A: I enjoy ...

B: It's relaxing ...

C: You could consider ...

A: I prefer ...

B Share your ideas with the rest of your classmates.

EXAMPLE: A: We all think it's relaxing to go for a short walk every few hours.

B: A few of us think it's a good idea to ...

EXERCISE 9 THE UPSIDE OF PROCRASTINATION?

CONVERSATION Work in a group. Is there a positive side to procrastination? Talk about it.

EXAMPLE: A: I think there can sometimes be an advantage to procrastinating.

B: Really? Can you give an example?

A: Yes. I once wanted to buy a leather jacket, but I couldn't decide which one to buy. I kept putting off the decision. When I finally went back online to buy the jacket, I discovered it was on sale! Because of my procrastination, I was able to buy it for half price.

C: Something similar once happened to me. I wanted to ...

EXERCISE 10 QUOTABLE QUOTES

DISCUSSION Work with a partner. Read the quotes about procrastination. Choose three quotes and discuss them. What do they mean? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?

- Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
—Lord Chesterfield (British politician, 1694–1773)
EXAMPLE: A: Lord Chesterfield advises doing things right away.
B: I think that’s not always possible because . . .
- Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday.
—Don Marquis (U.S. author, 1878–1937)
- Procrastination is the thief of time.
—Edward Young (British poet, 1683–1765)
- When there is a hill to climb, don’t think that waiting will make it smaller.
—Anonymous¹
- Putting off an easy thing makes it hard, and putting off a hard one makes it impossible.
—George H. Lorimer (U.S. magazine editor, 1868–1937)
- Procrastination is like a credit card: It’s a lot of fun until you get the bill.
—Christopher Parker (British actor, 1983–)

¹ anonymous: The writer’s name is not known.

EXERCISE 11 IT’S A PROBLEM!

PROBLEM SOLVING Look at the picture. Like procrastination, clutter is a universal problem. What are some solutions to the problem? Work in a group. Think of ways of stopping clutter. You can use the verbs from the box.

avoid decide don’t forget keep need plan remember start stop



EXAMPLE: A: You need to put away your things every night. You really can’t put it off.
B: Plan on . . .
C: Remember to . . .

EXERCISE 12 AT THE SUPPORT GROUP

A INFORMATION GAP Work with a partner. Student A will follow the instructions below. Student B will follow the instructions on page 488.

STUDENT A

- Look at the picture. Ask your partner questions to complete what people said at the support group meeting.

EXAMPLE: A: What does Eva remember doing?
 B: She remembers meeting Todd.

- Answer your partner's questions.

EXAMPLE: B: What does Todd hope to do?
 A: He hopes to see Eva again.



B Now compare pictures with your partner. Are they the same?

Go to [MyEnglishLab](#) for more communication practice.

FROM GRAMMAR TO WRITING

A BEFORE YOU WRITE Writing a goals worksheet is a good way to help prevent procrastination. First, complete the worksheet. List three goals for this month in order of importance (1 = the most important goal). Include a complete-by date for each goal.

This Month's Goals

Goal 1: _____ Complete by: _____

Goal 2: _____ Complete by: _____

Goal 3: _____ Complete by: _____

B WRITE Use your worksheet to write three paragraphs (one for each goal) on how you plan to accomplish your goals. Try to avoid the common mistakes in the chart.

EXAMPLE: My first goal is to finish writing my English paper by March 28. First, I plan to ...
 Then I ... Next, I ... Finally, I ...
 My second goal is to ...
 My third goal is to ...

Common Mistakes in Using Gerunds and Infinitives

<p>Use the correct verb form, gerund or infinitive, after another verb or after a preposition.</p>	<p>I need to get a part-time job. NOT I need getting a part time job. I enjoy working. NOT I enjoy to-work. I'm worried about finding a good job. NOT I'm worried about to-find a good job.</p>
<p>When two or more verbs follow another verb, use the same form of the verb for parallel structure. Do not use different verb forms.</p>	<p>I hate sitting and working at a messy desk. NOT I hate sitting and to-work at a messy desk. I hate to sit and work at a messy desk. NOT I hate to sit and working at a messy desk.</p>

C CHECK YOUR WORK Read your paragraphs. Underline the gerunds and circle the infinitives. Use the Editing Checklist to check your work.

Editing Checklist

Did you use ...?

correct verbs + gerunds

correct verbs + infinitives

prepositions + gerunds

parallel structure

D REVISE YOUR WORK Read your paragraphs again. Can you improve your writing? Make changes if necessary.

UNIT 26 **REVIEW**

Test yourself on the grammar of the unit.

A Circle the correct words to complete the sentences.

1. Don't put off start / starting your project.
2. I expect you to finish / finishing on time.
3. I keep to try / trying to improve my study habits.
4. Did you decide to join / joining our study group?
5. I look forward to see / seeing you there.
6. Don't forget to call / calling me the night before.
7. To study / Studying together can help.

B Complete the conversation with the correct form of the verbs in parentheses.

A: Have you finished _____ your homework?
1. (do)

B: No, not yet. I decided _____ a break.
2. (take)

A: Already? You just started _____.
3. (work)

B: I know. But I'm tired of _____ at my desk.
4. (sit)

A: Well, _____ a short break is OK, I guess.
5. (take)

B: Don't worry. I promise _____ it done before dinner.
6. (get)

A: OK. I know you hate _____, but it's important.
7. (study)

B: I agree.

C Find and correct six mistakes.

I hate clutter. But before now, I wasn't able to prevent it from to happen. I even put off going home because seeing the mess made me feel bad. Then I remembered recently to read an interesting magazine article about clutter. I decided trying one of the recommended tactics. I learned that I need cleaning up every night before I go to bed. Just ten minutes can make a big difference. I've stopped to avoid going home now, and I enjoy being in my nice, neat apartment. To clean up every night isn't always easy, but it's really worth it!

Now check your answers on page 481.