

# 67 Verb + infinitive or -ing form

## 1 Infinitive or -ing form with similar meanings

After the verbs *begin*, *continue*, *hate*, *intend*, *like*, *love*, *prefer* and *start*, we can use an infinitive or an -ing form with little difference in meaning:

*Oh no! It's just started to rain. /*

*Oh no! It's just started raining.*

Notice this small difference in British English with *like*:

*We like inviting friends to dinner at the weekend. (= We enjoy this.)*

*I like to save a little bit of money every month. (= It's a good habit and I choose to do it.)*



## 2 Infinitive or -ing form with different meanings

VERB	+ -ing FORM	+ to + INFINITIVE
<i>forget/remember</i>	for an event or situation in the past: <i>I'll never forget riding my first bike.</i> <i>Do you remember learning to swim?</i>	for something you should do/should have done: <i>Don't forget to lock the back door!</i> <i>Did you remember to bring the CDs?</i>
<i>go on</i>	continue an activity: <i>They stopped, but we went on walking.</i>	change from one action to another: <i>After a slow start, she went on to win the race.</i>
<i>regret</i>	feel sorry about something you did/didn't do: <i>I regret not studying harder at school.</i>	say sorry, particularly in formal letters: <i>We regret to inform you that you have not been called for interview ...</i>
<i>stop</i>	finish an action: <i>Have you stopped practising now?</i>	finish an action in order to do something else: <i>No, we've just stopped to take a break.</i>
<i>try</i>	do something as an experiment: <i>Try turning it off and on again.</i>	attempt to do something difficult: <i>I'm not an electrician, but I'll try to mend it.</i>

## 3 feel, hear, see, etc. + infinitive or -ing form

After sense verbs (e.g. *feel*, *hear*, *see*) we can use

- object + infinitive without *to*
- object + -ing form.

The meaning is slightly different:

*We were watching the runway and saw your plane arrive.* (= We saw the plane as it came down and landed.)

*We saw your plane arriving as we parked the car.* (= We saw the plane in the sky, but we didn't see it land.)

## 4 need, help and can't help + -ing form

The verbs *need* and *help* have different meanings, depending on their form:

*I need to drink some water.* (+ infinitive with *to* = physical necessity)

*This room needs cleaning.* (+ -ing form = someone should clean it)

*I help (to) run the local charity shop.* (+ infinitive with *to* = assist, aid)

*I couldn't help laughing.* (+ -ing form = couldn't avoid doing it)

More on *need* + -ing form ➤ Unit 85.4    *need to* ➤ Unit 50