## **46** Verb -ing forms; verb + -ing form or infinitive?

Flying to another continent usually means spending hours trapped in a plane, bored stiff. But this is their first long-haul flight and they mean to enjoy it.



## 1 Verb -ing forms

Sometimes -ing forms can have their own subjects and objects:

- subject + -ing form: I'm looking forward to my wife returning.
- -ing form + object: Meeting new people is one benefit of taking evening classes.

We can use determiners, possessives, possessive adjectives or object pronouns before -ing forms:

All this complaining won't get you anywhere, you know. (determiner) Peter's complaining didn't do him any good. (possessive) Exorbitant tax rates led to him leaving the country. (object pronoun)

**FORMALITY CHECK** In formal English we prefer to use possessive adjectives rather than object pronouns before *-ing* forms: *Exorbitant tax rates led to his leaving the country.* 

When we use the + -ing form and we want to link it with an object, we use of:

X The giving presents is a traditional part of the naming ceremony.

✓ *The giving of presents* is a traditional part of the naming ceremony.

Many adjectives and nouns are followed by a preposition + -ing form (➤ Unit 65): Lara isn't capable of lying and she has no reason for not telling the truth.

## 2 Verb + -ing form

The verbs below can be followed by an -ing form, but NOT by an infinitive:

admit appreciate\* avoid\* burst out can't help\* consider contemplate defer delay deny detest\* dislike\* endure\* enjoy\* escape excuse\* face\* fancy\* feel like finish give up imagine\* involve\* justify\* keep (on) leave off mention\* mind\* miss\* postpone practise prevent\* put off put sb off recall\* recommend resent\* resist\* risk\* save suggest tolerate\* understand\*

\* With these verbs we can also put an object before the -ing form. Compare: Can you imagine wearing that dress! (verb + -ing form) Can you imagine Jemima wearing that dress! (verb + object + -ing form)

X I avoid to travel in the rush hour. ✓ I avoid travelling in the rush hour.

Certain verbs (particularly sense verbs) are only followed by an -ing form when they have an object:

catch discover feel find hear leave notice observe see spot watch

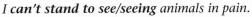
X In 'Hamlet' the prince discovers hiding behind the curtains.

✓ In 'Hamlet' the prince discovers Polonius hiding behind the curtains.

## 3 Verb + -ing form/infinitive

Some verbs can be followed by an -ing form or an infinitive, with no difference in meaning:

attempt begin bother can't bear can't stand cease continue deserve fear hate intend like (= enjoy) love prefer start



A

We usually avoid putting two infinitives or two -ing forms together: [He intended starting taking lessons.] ✓ He intended to start taking lessons.