

4 Verb + *-ing* form or infinitive?

Some verbs can be followed by an *-ing* form or by *to* + infinitive, but there is a difference in meaning:

VERB	MEANING + <i>-ing</i> FORM	MEANING + <i>to</i> + INFINITIVE
<i>remember/forget</i>	think about an event or situation before the time of speaking: <i>Do you remember going to school for the first time?</i> <i>I'll never forget meeting him.</i>	think of something you have done or should do: <i>Did you remember to collect the dry cleaning this morning?</i> <i>Don't forget to lock the back door.</i>
<i>go on</i>	continue: <i>They went on playing despite the bad weather.</i>	stop one action and change to another: <i>After opening the hospital the Prince went on to meet the staff.</i>
<i>mean</i>	involves or will result in: <i>Flying to another continent usually means spending hours in a plane.</i>	intend to do something: <i>But this is their first long-haul flight and they mean to enjoy it!</i>
<i>need</i>	requires something to be done to it: <i>That floor is filthy. It needs washing.</i>	feel it necessary to do something: <i>I feel sick and I need to see a doctor.</i>
<i>regret</i>	feel sorrow about something you did/didn't do in the past: <i>I really regret not learning to swim when I was young.</i>	say sorry that something has/hasn't happened, in formal situations: <i>We regret to inform you of delays in today's service.</i>
<i>stop</i>	finish an action: <i>They stopped making fax machines about ten years ago.</i>	finish one action in order to do another one: <i>We stopped to get petrol.</i>
<i>try</i>	do something as an experiment (to see what will happen): <i>Try using a screwdriver to get the lid off.</i>	make an effort to do something difficult: <i>We tried to get tickets but the show was sold out.</i>



The verbs *advise*, *allow*, *forbid* and *permit* are followed by an *-ing* form when they have no object, but by an infinitive when they have an object:

✗ *The doctor advised him taking a course of antibiotics.*

✓ *The doctor advised taking a course of antibiotics.*

✓ *The doctor advised him to take a course of antibiotics.*

5 Sense verbs

Sense verbs (► Unit 25.3) can be followed by an object + *-ing* form when we are describing an action in progress or an action that is repeated:

As I walked past the house I heard someone playing Brahms' Lullaby on the piano.

(The person was in the middle of playing when I walked past.)

I saw a young mother slapping her child. (She slapped him several times.)

However, when we are describing a single action or the action is complete, we use an object + infinitive (without *to*) after sense verbs:

We saw a young mother slap her child in the supermarket. (She slapped once.)

Last week I heard them play the fifth symphony. (I heard the complete symphony.)

With this meaning we use *to* + infinitive if the sense verb is passive:

The young mother was seen to slap her child.

Note we use an object pronoun, not a possessive adjective, after sense verbs:

✗ *Have you seen our performing yet?* ✓ *Have you seen us performing yet?*