

What's the Difference Between Infinitive and Gerund?

Worksheet

An infinitive is the 'to' form of a verb (to run); a gerund is the -ing form (running). Some verbs take only infinitives, others only gerunds, and some accept both—each carrying a subtle meaning shift.

Questions

1. Choose: I can't imagine ____ here.
A) to live
B) living
C) to living
D) live
2. He promised ____ on time.
A) arriving
B) to arrive
C) arrive
D) for arriving
3. Which verb takes ONLY gerunds?
A) want
B) hope
C) enjoy
D) plan
4. I suggest ____ early.
A) to arrive
B) arriving
C) you arrive
D) arrives
5. I want to learn Spanish (infinitive) vs I enjoy learning Spanish (gerund). Explain the nuance.
6. He started coding / He started to code. Do both work? What's the difference?
7. She avoided asking for help vs She avoided to ask for help. Which is correct?
8. Define: What's the difference between infinitive and gerund?
9. Define: Verbs that take only infinitives?
10. Define: Verbs that take only gerunds?

Answer Key

1. B) living — 'Imagine' takes a gerund. 'Living' is correct.
2. B) to arrive — 'Promise' takes an infinitive. 'To arrive' is correct.
3. C) enjoy — 'Enjoy' takes only gerunds. The others take infinitives.
4. B) arriving — 'Suggest' is followed by a gerund or (with 'that') a clause, not infinitive.
5. Infinitive 'to learn': expresses intention, desire, or future plan. Gerund 'learning': expresses the action itself, pleasure in the activity. 'Want to learn' = goal; 'enjoy learning' = appreciation of the activity.
6. Yes, both work with 'start' (it accepts both). 'Started coding' emphasizes the action beginning naturally. 'Started to code' suggests he began with the intention, perhaps didn't finish. Nuance: -ing = ongoing; to-infinitive = intention.
7. 'Avoid' only takes gerunds, so 'avoided asking' is correct. 'Avoided to ask' is grammatically wrong. Rule: verb + gerund is mandatory after 'avoid'.
8. Infinitive = to + base verb (to run). Gerund = -ing form (running). Used after different verbs.
9. Want, hope, plan, decide, seem, appear, manage, etc.
10. Enjoy, avoid, finish, stop, consider, suggest, etc.

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