

# The Use of Participles and Gerunds

Wenyuan Gu

West Career&Technical Academy

Las Vegas, Nevada

July 3, 2020

The English verb has two major forms, *finite* and *non-finite*. How to use them correctly is very important to English language learners (ELL), whose native language is not English when they study English. The writer tried to summarize and describe the various use of *the participles and gerunds*, two of the three non-finite forms - *the infinitive*, *the participles* (which have two forms, *the present participle* and *the past participle*), and *gerunds*, on the basis of his extensive reading and review of different English grammar books, reference books, magazines, newspapers, books, and English dictionaries, etc., in order for English language learners to further understand how to use *the participles* and *gerunds* properly in the English language. Some contemporary grammarians do not like to have a clear distinction between present participles and gerunds. They called both the *-ing* form or *-ing* participle or the *-ing* clause, but the writer still wants to follow the traditional way of English grammar, because this would be beneficial to those whose native language is not English when they are studying English. A gerund is a form of verb functioning as a noun. For this reason, we can say “*I don’t mind him/John smoking here*” or “*I don’t mind his/John’s smoking here*”, in which *smoking* is a gerund (used as a noun) rather than a present participle. We can say “*I always see him/John going there*”, in which *going* is a present participle rather than a gerund. But we cannot say “\**I always see his/John’s going there*”, because *going* in this sentence is not a gerund. The correct use of participles and gerunds is a matter of usage and cannot be explained by all rules. Therefore, the writer used a wide variety of examples cited or given to describe the use of participles and gerunds so that learners further understand how to use them appropriately.

The symbol\*(asterisk) means that the phrase or sentence is unacceptable. The question mark? is used for forms that are doubtful. / means the choice of items. A cross-reference, (see 8.2), means “see 8.2” in this article. NP means a noun phrase. AmE means American English, and BrE, British English. SVO means subject + verb + object; SVC, subject + verb + complement; SVOiOa, subject + (indirect) object + (direct) object; SVOC, subject + verb + object + complement; SVOA, subject + verb + object + adverbial; SVOCA, subject + verb + object + complement + adverbial.

## 1 The finite verb vs. the non-finite verb

A finite verb phrase is one that can be the main verb of a sentence. A non-finite verb phrase is an infinitive, participles (present or past), and a gerund. In the sentence “*Many people stay up late at night*”, we have “*stay up late at night*” as its predicate, in which the verb “**stay up**” is a finite verb. In “*He went to see his father yesterday,*” *went* is a finite verb. A finite verb is one which predicates something of the subject of the sentence or clause in which it is. A verb is not necessarily, however, always used as a finite verb. It can be used as a non-finite verb as well. In fact, the whole predicate including the verb may be transplanted into other sentences, where it is to have the function not of a predicate but of *a subject, an object, a predicative, a complement, an attributive, an adverbial, an apposition, or an independent element*, as the case may be. In that case, it will be non-finite, i.e., *a gerund* (if it is tantamount to a noun) or *an infinitive* (if it is tantamount to a noun, an adjective or an adverb) or *a participle* (if it is tantamount to an adjective or an adverb).

## 2 The Participles

### Forms of the participles

		Transitive Verb <i>Write</i>		Intransitive Verb <i>go</i>
		Active	Passive	
Present	Indefinite	writing	being written	going
Participle	Perfect	having written	having been written	having gone
Progressive	Perfect	having been writing	having been being written (?)	
Past	Participle		written	gone

Like the finite verb, the non-finite verbs can be put into the passive voice, if the meaning requires. If the subject or the understood subject of the sentence is also the logical object of the non-finite verb, then a passive participle is used if its action is in progress.

For example:

*The houses now **being built** will be quarters for scientific workers.*  
 (The logical object of the non-finite verb, *built*, is *the houses*.)

***Being encouraged** by this discovery, the researchers went on working with all the more application and fortitude.*

(The logical object of the non-finite verb, *encouraged*, is *the researchers*. Here the present participle phrase *Being encouraged by this discovery* is adverbial in function, in which the word *being* can always be omitted. Then the phrase becomes the normal past participial adverbial denoting passive voice.)

*She heard the door **being closed**.*

(The logical object of the non-finite verb, *closed*, is *the door*.)

*The houses now **being built** will be our new school.*

(The logical object of the non-finite verb, *built*, is *the houses*.)

### 3 Participles used as part of the finite-verb

#### 3.1 Present participles

The present participle expresses an action that is in progress or taking place at the same time with or immediately before the action indicated by the main (or principal) verb, e.g.

*They are **having** lunch now.* (present progressive tense)

*Jean is **reading** a book now while Sandy is **using** her computer.*

(present progressive tense, indicating two actions are happening at the same time)

***Seeing** the bus coming, he ran for the bus-stop.*

=As soon as/When/After he saw the bus coming, he ran for the bus-stop.

(present participle, *seeing*, to show simultaneous action with that of *ran*)

*Beibei came to visit us, **bringing** her elder sister with her.*

(present participle, *bringing*, to show simultaneous action with that of *came*)

#### 3.2 Perfect participles

The perfect participle expresses an action completed before that indicated by the main verb, e.g.

***Having graduated** from West Career&Technical Academy (West CTA), she began to study accounting in college.*

=After/When she had graduated from West CTA, she began to study accounting ....

(perfect form to show prior action to that of *began*)

***Having been despised/ Despised /Being despised/** by all, he felt ashamed to see his father.*

(perfect form to show prior action to that of *felt*)

***Having been married**, they moved to Las Vegas. (*married* first and *moved* second)*

***Having been reminded** of his doubtful personality, I was ever on the lookout in my dealing with him.*

= After/When I had been reminded of his doubtful personality...  
(perfect form to show prior action to that of **was** in the main clause)

**Having seen the movie, he wrote a comment.**

=After/When/As/Because he had seen the movie, he wrote a comment on it.  
(perfect form to show prior action to that of **wrote** in the main clause)

### 3.3 Present or past

In the finite form the verb agrees in person and number with its grammatical subject and has tense distinction, i.e. *He **studies/studied/can/will study** English. He **is/was/has been/had been studying** English. She **is/was seen** in Las Vegas. I **am/was** here, etc.* The following are some examples of the participles used in the finite verb phrases, as in

*What **are** you **doing** here?* (present continuous/progressive tense)

*They **were working** on the project when I came.* (past progressive)

*The house **was built**.* (past tense with passive)

*The house **is being built**.* (present progressive with passive)

*The house **was being built**.* (past progressive with passive)

*He **was being examined**.* (past progressive with passive)

*He **was killed** by a car accident last week.* (past tense with passive)

*They **have been** partners for years.* (present perfect)

*John **has worked** hard.* (present perfect)

*Sandy **had completed** the project by yesterday.* (past perfect)

*They **have been working** for five hours.* (present perfect progressive)

*They **had been working** for five hours.* (past perfect progressive)

*He **has been examined**.* (present perfect with passive)

*He **had been examined**.* (past perfect with passive)

*He **has been being examined**.* (present perfect progressive with passive, rarely used)

*He **had been being examined**.* (past perfect progressive with passive, rarely used)

### 3.4 Used with modal auxiliary verbs

The finite verb phrase also has mood and can be used with modal auxiliaries. We use **may** as an example, and the verb, **examine**, as participles (present or past) to illustrate the following:

*He **may be examining**.*

*He **may be being examined**.*

*He **may be examined**.*

*He **may be being examined**.*

*He **may have examined**.*

*He may **have been examining**.*

*John may **have been working** hard.*

*He may **have been examined**.*

*He may **have been being examined**.* (R. Quirk et al., 1972)

*He'll **be being examined**,* while we are there. (F.R. Palmer, 1978)

## 4. Tenses

Traditionally, we have sixteen tenses, most of them containing present participles and past participles as you can see some examples above.

## 5 Participles used as premodifiers and postmodifiers

The participles (present or past) can be used as adjectives to modify a noun or noun phrase. They can be placed before or after a noun. They are called premodifiers (before a noun) and postmodifiers (after a noun), respectively.

## 6 Premodifiers (modifiers placed immediately before NP)

The present or past participles can be used as adjectives to premodify NP, as in

*I was always awakened by the **coming** ambulance at night.*

(the *coming* ambulance = the ambulance that/which was coming)

***The dying** soldiers were removed immediately before the enemy came.*

(The *dying* soldiers = the soldiers who were dying ....)

*Ms. Roden told us that the experiment had to be done under **controlled** conditions.*

*I had a **reserved** seat. (= a seat which/that was/had been reserved)*

*The **running** machine we saw the other day was made in USA.*

(the *running* machine = the machine that was running)

*They used a **stolen** car to run away.*

*They discovered a **sunken** ship last week.*

*The lady often ordered **undercooked** meat.*

***The wounded** soldiers were rescued before the enemy came.*

(The *wounded* soldiers = the soldiers who were wounded ...)

Generally speaking, a present participle when used as adjective usually donates the characteristics of the modified noun rather than its verbal action. A past participle when used as adjective indicates the state of the modified noun with passive meaning. From the examples above, we can see that a present participle or a past participle is used as an adjective to premodify a noun or a noun phrase. Besides, adverbs or compounds with adverbs or nouns or

adjectives are used before the participles, all of which are used to premodify the noun or the noun phrase. They are used as adjectives. Some of the examples are:

*We were welcomed by **fanatically cheering** crowds.*

(*cheering* premodified by the adverb *fanatically*)

*USA is a country with a **fast-growing** economy.*

(a compound word, *fast-growing*, formed by an adverb + present participle, see 2) in 20.1)

*She always gave me some **handwritten** notes before I left the office.*

(a compound word, *handwritten*, formed by a noun + past participle, see 1) in 20.2)

*We have **properly trained** staff all the year round.*

(*trained* premodified by the adverb *properly*)

*The **badly injured** man was taken to hospital.*

*The house is installed with a **wood-burning** stove.*

(a compound word, *wood-burning*, formed by a noun + present participle, see 1) in 20.1)

*USA owns a lot of **nuclear-powered** submarines.*

*Do you know the **dark-haired** man at the corner? (= a man with dark hair)*

(a compound word, *dark-haired*, formed by an adjective + a noun-*ed*, see 4) in 20.2)

*He always wears a **short-sleeved** shirt regardless of any weather, hot or cold.*

(= a shirt with short sleeves)

More examples for past participles used as premodifiers:

*an abandoned city, a broken window, changed condition, a chained slave, a clenched fist, a closed shop, a crowded place, controlled vocabulary, a defeated army, a depressed man, a devoted friend, diseased lung, distinguished guests, an experienced doctor, a faded flower, a finished article, a fixed habit, an honored guest, hurried retreat, improved status, an injured man, a locked door, a lost property, a murdered man, an organized attempt, planned economy, a recorded talk, retarded development, a ruined city, scrambled eggs, shared view, sighted people, the spoken word, a spoiled child, a sprained ankle, a talented painter, a trained dog, an unbroken record, an unheard-of story, an undetermined boundary, an unfinished problem, an uninvited guest, untold sufferings, a walled city (a city with a wall), etc.*

It is to be noted that when the present participle is used to premodify a noun, it has the meaning of active voice while the past participle has the meaning of passive voice. Let us see the following:

*The **exploiting** class is rich while **the exploited** class is poor.*

From the example above, *the exploiting class* means the class exploits people, while *the exploited class* means the class is exploited.

*US is a developed country while Mexico is a developing country.*

Generally speaking, the transitive present participle is active, while the transitive past participle is passive in its adjective use, in meaning. They have nothing to do with tenses at all, but its time reference may be to the present, to the past or to the future, and must be interpreted according to the context. For example:

<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
<i>a box containing tea</i>	<i>tea contained in a box</i>
<i>a delighting speech</i>	<i>the delighted audience</i>
<i>the exploiting class</i>	<i>the exploited class</i>
<i>trees lining a street</i>	<i>a street lined with trees</i>
<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>

From the examples above it is seen that the transitive present participle loses its verbal construction i.e. its object, when used as a premodifier, and forms the attributive by itself, in the same way as it does when used as a predicative.

### **6.1 Intransitive present participles vs. intransitive past participles as a premodifier (adjective/attributive)**

As is known to all, intransitive verbs as a rule have no passive voice; however, their past participial forms can be used as adjectives. But just as is the case with the predicative, some (though a very limited number) do have forms as premodifier, in which case, they do not, as transitive past participles do, connote any passiveness, but refer to the past of the action. The past participle of an intransitive verb (see 6.2) is active in use and expresses a state of completion. The present participle, on the other hand, shows the action to be in progress. The following are a few pairs for comparison:

*falling* leaves/trees (leaves/trees that *are falling*)  
*fallen* leaves/trees (leaves/trees that *have fallen* on the ground)  
*faded* flower/rose (the flower/rose that *has faded*)  
*growing* boy (a boy who *is still growing*)  
*grown* boy (a boy who *has already grown up*)  
*rising* sun (the sun in the process of *rising*)  
*risen* sun (the sun in the state of *having risen*), *etc.*

More examples:

*The children are gathering the **fallen** leaves.*

= The children are gathering the leaves which have fallen.

*The only persons in the room were **grown** men.*

= The only persons in the room were men who had grown up.

*They turned their faces toward the **risen** sun.*

= They turned their faces toward the sun, which had risen.

A few more instances of the intransitive past participles used as premodifiers are given below:

*a collapsed tire, the deceased statesman, a departed guest, escaped prisoners, an expired certificate, a faded rose, a failed candidate, fallen leaves, fallen rocks, a fallen tree, fallen soldiers, a grown-up daughter, the newly-arrived guest, the recently-fallen city, a retired officer, a returned student, vanished civilizations, a withered flower, etc.*

Some intransitive past participles seem to require the prop of a premodifying adverb, before they can be used as premodifiers themselves. For instance, we can say *the newly-arrived guest*, but not simply *\*the arrived guest* (see 7.3).

## 6.2 Past participles deriving from intransitive verbs used as premodifiers

The intransitive present participle after the linking verb *be* (e.g. *He is coming*) can be the finite progressive tense and not the predicative, but we have only the predicative use of the intransitive past participle to consider. Such a use, however, is a matter of usage, and is limited to only a few intransitive verbs as non-finites (see 8.3). In “*He is come/gone*,” they are not passive (but often active) content. Although a distinction has been made between *he is come/gone* and *he has come/gone* to the effect that the former emphasizes the resultant state of *come/go* and the latter the activity or occurrence of *come/go*, yet, generally, it seems to be the present tendency for the perfect form to oust the predicative form. When a past participle is used as adjective, the participle usually derives from the transitive verb rather than an intransitive verb, but there are a very few past participles that derive from intransitive verbs can be used as adjectives. Examples of possible predicative intransitive past participles are those of the verbs: *arrive, collapse, come, expire, fade, fall, go, grow (up), return, retire, rise, etc.* They do not express passive meaning, but complete action, and these intransitive participles usually indicate a transitional event, process, or activity, etc., as in

*an escaped prisoner* (= a person who has escaped),

*an escaped convict* (= a convict that has escaped, but not \*a convict is escaped.)

*an expired lease* (= a lease that has expired)

*a faded flower/curtain* (= a flower/curtain that has faded)



*fallen leaves/trees* (= leaves/trees that have fallen)  
*the gone days* (= the days that have gone)  
*a grown man* (= one who has grown to a man's size)  
*a grown boy* (= a boy who has grown (up))  
*the risen sun* (= the sun that has risen)  
*a retired worker* (= a worker that has retired)  
*the returned student* (= *the student who has returned*)  
*the vanished temple* (= the temple that has vanished)  
*the withered leaves/flowers* (the leaves/flowers that have withered), *etc.*

Such participles whose corresponding verbs are intransitive verbs. We usually do not say *an arrived girl, a departed friend, etc.*, because they come from their intransitive verbs. However, a past participle deriving from such an intransitive verb can be used as adjective as long as it is premodified by an adverb or adverbial phrase (see 7.3), as in

*The newly arrived girl from New York is waiting for you downstairs.*  
*The gentleman recently arrived in Las Vegas is my former professor, Dr. Palmer.*  
*The train just now arrived at the station is from New York.*  
 (Not: \*The arrived train at the station is from New York, but we can say, "The train which/that arrived at the station is from New York.")  
*I will miss the recently departed friends.*  
*Her husband recently returned from USA is an engineer.*  
 (Not: \*Her husband returned from USA is an engineer.)  
*The properly started engine just broke down.*

### 6.3 Used as a noun generally with the definite article *the*

Just like the present participle, some of the past participles followed by the definite article, *the*, can be regarded as a noun phrase (NP) to be used as subject or object. In such cases, we think that the head noun (e.g. *people, person, etc.*) is omitted from NP i.e. *the wounded* (people/person, etc.). *The wounded* can be a collective noun (i.e. *people*) or a noun (i.e. *a person*) with singular meaning or a plural noun, according to context or the meaning required, as in

*The accused have been acquitted.* (= *the accused* people – a collective noun)  
*The accused was saved from the gallows.* (= *the accused* person – a singular noun)  
*The bullied were shot to death.* (= *the bullied* people)  
*They came to rescue the dying and heal the wounded/the injured.*  
*The deceased is her mother.* (= *the deceased* woman – a singular noun)  
*The deceased are cremated.* (= *the deceased* people – a collective noun)  
*The human race has a great thirst for the unknown.*  
*The wounded were carried to cross the enemy line.* (= *the wounded* soldiers/people)

*She worked hard as a volunteer to help **the wounded and the dying**.*  
(= *the wounded people and the dying people*)

The past participles used like this are: ***the accused, the bullied, the condemned, the deceased, the departed, the disabled, the disadvantaged, the exploited, the handicapped, the inexperienced, the injured, the last named, the middle-aged, the oppressed, the privileged, the underprivileged, the unemployed, the undersigned, the unexpected, the unknown, the wounded, etc.***

## 7 Postmodifiers (modifiers placed immediately after NP)

The present participial and past participial postmodifiers are all comparable to relative clauses in function (see 7.1). They have nothing to do with tenses at all, but its time reference may be to the present, to the past, or to the future, and must be interpreted according to context. They can be either restrictive or non-restrictive: “The girl ***sitting near the corner*** is my sister.” “*The dog **killed by police*** belonged to our neighbor.” “*The apple, **swaying gently in the breeze***, had a good crop of fruit.” “*The substance, **discovered by accident***, has been used to treat patients with coronavirus,” etc.

### 7.1 The present participial phrases

When a present participial phrase is used as postmodifier, it is tantamount to a relative clause:

*The shop assistant **attending** to customers will give you all the information you want.*

= The shop assistant ***who’s attending*** to customers will....

*The gentleman **coming** (= **will come**) to meet us next Monday is our former professor Dr. Palmer.*

*The matter **being discussed** (= **which is being discussed**) now is very important.*  
(passive)

*The girl **reading** (= **who was reading**) a book in the library just now is my girlfriend.*

*The car hit the boy **running** across the street.*

= The car hit the boy ***who was running*** across the street.

*The girl **working** there is my younger sister.*

= The girl ***who is working*** there is my younger sister.

The boys ***shouting*** (= who have shouted/who have been shouted) loudest are the winners.

The boys ***shouting*** (= who shouted/who were shouting/who had shouted/who had been shouting) the loudest were the winners. (Zhang et al.,1981)

*The person, **standing over there**, is my brother, who just came from Las Vegas.*

= The person, ***who is standing over there***, is my brother, who just came from Las

Vegas.

When a present participle is used to postmodify NP, it is either a restrictive or non-restrictive just like a restrictive or non-restrictive relative clause, as we can see the last sentence above. To express a non-progressive meaning, we use a relative clause, as in

*The boy **who delivered** pizza to us has got coronavirus.*

\*The boy **delivering** pizza to us has got coronavirus.

The man **who threw** the bomb was arrested.

\*The man **throwing** the bomb was arrested. (Swan, 1980)

When a present participle is used as postmodifier, it is usually in progress in a relative clause if the present participle refers to a present moment or a particular action now in the past, i.e. “*The man **sitting** (= who is sitting) there is my brother.*” “*The girl **talking** (=who was talking) to me just now used to work in our building.*” When a present participle is used to postmodify a noun or a noun phrase, it is only used for both actions happening at the same time, i.e. “*I notice the students **doing** their assignments attentively in the room.*” “*Do you see the girl **standing** over there?*” **Notice** and **doing** and **see** and **standing** above happen at the same time. “*The man **working** (= who were working) on the site were in some danger.*” **Working** and **were in some danger** happen at the same time. When a present participle is used as postmodifier, it is usually not in progress in a relative clause if the present participles refers to a specific future time (Wang et al., p.114,1981), i.e. “*The man **visiting** (= who will visit) us tomorrow is my former professor.*” When a present participle is used as postmodifier, it is usually a simple tense in a relative clause if the present participle comes from a momentary verb or when a postmodified noun has a more general, less specific meaning, a simple tense is said to be used in a relative clause, i.e. Women **working** (= who work) as waitresses in restaurants get more tips than men waiters (general). **Start**, for example, is a momentary verb. We can say “*In our desire to modernize, the seven years **starting** (= which starts) from now are crucial ones*” (Wang et al., 1981).

When a noun has a generic reference, either a participle or a relative clause can be used, but when a noun has more general reference, a relative clause is preferred rather than a participle. Compare:

Any window **that faces** south has more sunlight. (general)

Any window **facing** south has more sunlight.

It must be also noted, however, that the present participle form does not necessarily carry the meaning of the progressive tense, especially if it comes from a state verb, which, of course, is not used in the progressive form, or forms a verb which shows or is intended to show, a general or repeated time reference, e.g.

Anyone **wishing** to apply is to write to the following addresses.

= Anyone who **wishes** to apply/\*Anyone who **is wishing** ..., where the verb **wish** is a state verb.

Everything **belonging** (= that **belongs**/\*that **is belonging**) to you should be clearly marked with your own name. (**Belong** is a state verb.)

Anyone **knowing** (= who **knows**/\*who **is knowing**) anything about the crime calls the police, please. (**Know** is a state verb.)

The man **owning** that car will be fined for illegal parking. (**Own** is a state verb.)  
(\*The man who **is owning** that car will be fined for illegal parking.)

Sandy is talking to the gentleman **resembling** Casey. (**Resemble** is a state verb.)  
= Sandy is talking to the gentleman who **resembles** Casey/\*who **is resembling** Casey.

Generally speaking, a perfect progressive form is usually not used as postmodifier, but it is used to postmodify the noun preceded with an indefinite pronoun or the like, as in

\*The man **having written** that book is a scholar of history.

Cf. The man who has written that book is a scholar of history.

\*The girl **having won** the race is my sister.

Cf. The girl who has won the race is my sister.

\*The food **having been eaten** belonged to someone else. (R. Quirk et al., 1972)

Cf. The food which has been eaten belonged to someone else.

Any man **having done** such a fine job should be praised.

Any student **having handed** in his paper must leave the classroom.

Any man **having witnessed** the attack is under suspicion.

From the sentences above with the symbol\*, they are unacceptable. We do not use a perfect participial phrase postmodifying the head nouns (*i.e. the man, the girl, and the food*) as part of the subject of the main clause, but there is no problem if it is used as a non-finite clause or in a relative clause. We can say “**The food which is being eaten/is eaten/has been eaten belongs to someone else.**” “**The food having been eaten, the movie started.**” “**The food being eaten, an earthquake startled everyone.**” The last two sentences are the absolute construction of the participles (see 14). **The food having been eaten** is only regarded as a non-finite clause in “**The food having been eaten, the movie started.**”

In rare occasions, a present participle is used alone without anything attached, as in

The student obtained straight A's for three years **running**.

Beibei lives here for the time **being**.

On the day **following** Sandy left for New York.

Oh, it's the cake **burning**.

*There are clear signs of great changes **impending**.*  
*Dr. Palmer is the greatest writer **living** (= alive).*

## 7.2 The past participial phrases

Just like present participles, the past participles are used to postmodify a noun or noun phrase, as in

*The man **killed** in a car accident is a friend of mine.*  
=The man *who was killed* in a car accident is a friend of mine.

The past participle used as a postmodifier expresses passive in meaning and the action is usually (but not always) completed. Then, like the present participial phrases above, the past participial phrase may have different time reference, which can be more clearly stated by a corresponding relative clause, e.g.

*The ship **battered** by the storm made the harbor at last.*  
= The ship *which had been battered* by the storm made the harbor at last.  
*He asked for a cup of **iced boiled** water.*  
= He asked for a cup of water that *had been boiled* and then *iced*.  
*The letter **sent** by Beibei yesterday relates to this very matter.* (passive meaning)  
= The letter *which was sent* by Beibei yesterday relates to this very matter.  
*The letter **sent** by me relates to this very matter.* (passive meaning)  
= The letter *which has been sent* by me relates to this very matter.  
*Energy **stored** (that/which is stored) in fuel is chemical energy.* (passive meaning)  
*This novel about the undersea war is the best of its kind ever **written**.*  
= This novel about the undersea war is the best of its kind *that has been ever written*.  
*The letters in the drawer **written** in English are all from Dr. Kang.*  
= The letters in the drawer *which were written* in English are all from Dr. Kang.  
*We visited Las Vegas, **grown prosperous and beautiful**.*  
*The first person I saw was Roden herself, **seated in a corner**, staring out of the window.*  
*The letters in the drawer, **written in English**, are all from Dr. Kang.*  
= The letters in the drawer, *which were written* in English, are all from Dr. Kang.  
*The wild flowers, **washed by rain**, were swaying in the gentle breeze.*  
= The wild flowers, *which were washed by rain*, were swaying in the gentle breeze.

When a past participle is used to postmodify a noun or a noun phrase, it is either a restrictive or non-restrictive just like a restrictive or a non-restrictive clause. The last two sentences above are non-restrictive. They can express adverbial of time or cause, it depending on the context. For

instance, “*The wild flowers, washed by rain, were swaying in the gentle breeze*” can be regarded as the interpretation of time or cause (see 12).

To express some action in progress, we usually prefer the passive present participle to the past participle itself. Thus:

*The letter now **being sent** relates to this very matter.*

= The letter *which is now being sent* relates to this very matter.

*The houses now **being built** will be quarters for teachers.*

=The houses *which are now being built* will be quarters for teachers.

*The house **being built** (= that was being built) would be our lab when I visited last month.*

**Being** is not used alone to postmodify a noun, except in passive verb constructions as seen from the examples above. For example, “*Anybody **who is** outside after ten o'clock will be arrested.*”  
“\**Anybody **being** outside after ten o'clock will be arrested.*”

Likewise, to express a future meaning of an action, we usually prefer to use the passive infinitive rather than the past participle itself. Thus:

*The questions **to be discussed** tomorrow relate to this very matter.*

= The questions *that will be/are to be discussed* tomorrow relate to this very matter.

*Please mark out all the sections **to be explained** by me.*

= Please mark out all the sections *which are to be explained/will be explained* by me.

But, for a particular action or a past action, we prefer the past participle itself. Thus

*Please make a record of all letters **sent**.*

= Please make a record of all letters *which are sent/have been sent*.

*The impression **created** is that the task is very easy to accomplish.*

= The impression *that has been created* is that the task is ....

*The examples **chosen** give an unduly simple picture.*

= The examples *that have been chosen* give an unduly simple picture.

*She made a detailed description of everything **found** (= that was/had been found).*

*The language **used** is not appropriate.*

In spite of all this, the use of participial postmodifiers in the perfect form, whether active or passive, are altogether unidiomatic. Therefore, we do not say the following:

\**Those **having never seen** a tiger had better go to the zoo.*

\**The letter **having been sent** by me relates to this very matter.*

*\*The food **having been eaten** belonged to someone else.*

But we can say:

*Those **who have never seen** a tiger had better go to the zoo.*

*The letter **which has been sent** by me relates to this very matter.*

*The food **which/that has been eaten** belonged to someone else.*

The perfect participle is generally not used as attributive unless its antecedent is premodified by a non-assertive **any** as seen in 7.1, e.g. “**Any student having handed** in his paper must leave the classroom.” We have already seen that as a rule, past participles of transitive verbs alone can be used as postmodifiers. When past participles such as *concerned*, *involved*, etc., are used to premodify or postmodify a noun or a noun phrase, they have different meaning, i.e. *involved*, when used as premodifier, means “complicated”, while used as postmodifier, it means “connected with in some way”; *concerned*, when used as premodifier, means “worried”, while used as postmodifier, it means “interested” or “taking part” or “affected”, as in

*We'd like to meet all the students **concerned/interested**. (= who are concerned/interested)*

*All parties **concerned** are present. (Concerned means interested or taking part)*

*The affair is greatly regretted by everyone **concerned**.*

*All **concerned** very much enjoyed their afternoon visit to the country.*

*The **concerned** (=worried) mothers anxiously waited for their children.*

***Concerned** parents approached the school with the problem.*

*She sat there with a **concerned** look on her face. (concerned = worried)*

*We'd like to see all the people **involved** (= who are involved).*

*That is an **involved** (=complicated) sentence.*

*Will the students **interested** please come to sign their names here? (=who are interested)*

*Sandy was standing there with an **interested** look.*

*The **interested** parties should attend the meeting.*

*She did that out of **interested** motives.*

*This email should be sent to the people **interested/concerned/involved***

*The iPad **given** to me is out of order. (given = offered)*

*We solved a **given** problem. (given = specified or stated)*

*I have a **used** iPhone. (Used is an adjective = second-hand)*

*The method **used** is very efficient. (= Used means “put something into service.”)*

### 7.3 Intransitive past participles used as postmodifiers

It must be noted that unlike the transitive past participle, the intransitive past participle cannot be used as a postmodifier, except very occasionally when it is itself premodified by an adverb of

time. For example, the following sentence containing an intransitive past participle as a postmodifier would be wrong:

*\*The guests **arrived** in Las Vegas yesterday are from Canada.*

The remedy is to make the participial phrase into a relative clause, as in

*The guests **who arrived** in Las Vegas yesterday are from Canada.*

But when a premodifier of time is used before the participle (see 6.2), the sentence becomes acceptable. Thus, there is nothing objectionable in the following sentence:

*The guests **recently arrived** in Las Vegas are from Canada.*

The whole participial phrase, **recently arrived**, is used as a postmodifier to the noun phrase, **the guests**, in the sentence above.

## 8 Used as predicative or attributive (adjective)

When the participles (present or past) are used predicatively, they are adjectives in SVC construction, expressing the condition or state of the subject, and they are also used attributively, expressing quality or characteristics of the modified noun or noun phrase.

### 8.1 Present participles

*This is a very/more **interesting** story.*

*The book is very **interesting**.*

*That was a very **illuminating** example.*

*He is a **promising** young boy. (expressing quality)*

*That was **shocking** news.*

*That **sleeping** child at the corner is my son.*

*Our achievements in technology are very **striking**.*

*These are the most **striking** features of the book. (expressing characteristics)*

*His sudden resignation is quite **surprising**.*

Occasionally, a present participle can be used in the imperative sentence with the verb **be**, as in

***Be preparing** the dinner when he comes in.*

***Be being** dressed. (possible, but rarely used)*

***Do be reading** when I arrive. (F. R. Palmer 1978)*



*Be being taken.* (possible, but rarely used)  
*Do be being taken.* (possible, but rarely used)  
*Don't be reading when I come in!*

It is to be noted that a present participle, when used as adjective, is sometimes with the empty *it* used as subject followed by a *that*-clause to express personal feelings (happiness, sadness, anxiety, etc.), in which a modal auxiliary verb, *should*, is often used (see 8.2). This use of *should* does not carry any sense of obligation; it does not express a subordinate statement of fact, but a “putative idea” (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.784), as in

*It is annoying that the meeting should be put off.*  
=It is the very idea of putting off the meeting that annoys me.  
*It is perplexing that they should make a nasty decision not to attend the meeting.*

Here are some of the present participles used as adjectives deriving from certain verbs:

*alarming, amazing, amusing, annoying, appalling, appealing, arresting, astonishing, becoming, boring, charming, completing, comforting, confiding, confusing, convincing, damaging, daring, deafening, demanding, deserving, disappointing, discouraging, disgusting, disturbing, embarrassing, enchanting, encouraging, enterprising, entertaining, exacting, exciting, fascinating, fleeting, flourishing, forgiving, frightening, frustrating, grasping, heartening, humiliating, illuminating, imploring, interesting, insulting, inviting, lasting, loving, maddening, menacing, misleading, missing, moving, obliging, overwhelming, pleasing, penetrating, perplexing, pressing, promising, provoking, puzzling, reassuring, refreshing, retiring, revealing, rewarding, satisfying, shocking, stimulating, striking, surprising, tempting, terrifying, thrilling, thriving, tiring, touching, understanding, vexing, willing, winning, worrying, etc.*

When they are used predictively, they are present participles used as adjectives rather than gerunds. R.A. Close (1975) called these present participles “full adjectives.” Because they are full adjectives, they can be modified by *very*, as in

*That is a very amusing/entertaining/exciting/interesting story.*  
*His views were very alarming.*

Besides, we have some of the present participles with such pre-suffixes as *non* and *un* to denote negative meaning, e.g. *nonvoting, unbending, unfailing, unflagging, unswerving, untiring, etc.*

## 8.2 Past participles

When a past participle is used as adjective, it indicates a subject being in the state of what is described. The main verb is usually the linking verb, *be*, but there are other linking verbs: *appear, become, come, feel, get, go, grow, look, remain, run, seem, sound, etc.*, as in

*They **are grown** boys.*

*We **are firmly opposed** to bullying.*

*The afternoon **was already half spent**.*

*Sandy **was both stunned and scared**.*

*What he's done **is spoilt** the whole thing. (R. Quirk at el., 1972)*

*The lady **is quite surprised**.*

*When I got there, the market **was closed**.*

*I'm **surprised** that Sandy should resign.*

*We **became acquainted**.*

(When *become* is followed by a past participle, it expresses a change from one condition to a new condition.)

*You'd better **go armed**.*

*They **appeared confused** about how to solve the problem.*

*Marlowe **was delighted** with the result of his recent surgery.*

*Sandy **looked delighted/annoyed/tired**.*

*He **seems (to be) disappointed**. (Hornby, 1977)*

*She **got relieved** when she heard her husband was safe and sound in a car accident.*

*Jean **felt depressed** at her husband's leaving.*

*How many people **got killed**?*

(*Get* is often used in colloquial speech as passive auxiliary verb.)

*Marlowe **became known** as a horticulture expert.*

*Beibei **seemed (to be) surprised** at the news.*

*You **sound surprised**.*

*So far the boss **seemed unconcerned**.*

*The issue **remains unsolved**.*

As mentioned earlier, when a past participle, used as adjective followed by a *that*-clause, expresses personal feelings (happiness, sadness, anxiety, etc.), a modal auxiliary verb, *should*, is usually used (8.1). This use of *should* does not carry any sense of obligation; it does not express a subordinate statement of fact, but a “putative idea” (R. Quirk at el., 1972, p.784). In “*I'm surprised that Sandy should resign*” above, the very idea of resignation surprises me. Of course, we can use *will* or *is* in “*I am surprised that Sandy will resign*” and “*I am surprised that Sandy is resigning*.” When *will* is used in the first sentence, it asserts the resignation as a fact, and assumes that the plan will be carried out; in the second sentence, it is the resignation itself, as an assumed *fact*.

The verb **come** and **go** are intransitive verbs. They can be followed by a past participle or an adjective and it is SVC construction. The past participle is usually ending in **un-**, which denotes an undesirable or unhappy condition, as in

*That little boy's shoelaces always **came undone**.*  
*The buttons on my coat **came unfastened**.*  
*The door **came unhinged**. (Hornby, 1977)*  
*The seam **came unsewn**.*  
*The seam **came unstitched**.*  
*Your shoelace **is coming untied**.*  
*Her absence **went unnoticed**.*  
*Police are worried that many crimes **go unreported**.*  
*The nail has **come loose**. (adjective)*  
*The bottle **came open** in my bag! (adjective)*  
*Don't worry. Everything will **come right** in the end. (adjective)*  
*Beibei's dream has **come true** of becoming a doctor. (adjective)*  
*He often **went hungry**. (adjective)*

Occasionally, a past participle can be used in the imperative sentence with the verb **be**, as in

***Be prepared**.*  
***Be seated**.*  
***Be reassured** by me, etc.*  
***Be dressed**.*  
***Do be taken**.*  
***Don't be taken**.*  
***Do be being taken**. (possible, but rarely used)*  
***Be being dressed**. (F. R. Palmer, 1978, p.33)*

Here are some of the past participles used as adjectives deriving from certain verbs:

***accomplished, accustomed, agitated, alarmed, amazed, amused, ashamed, astonished, balanced, bored, broken, burst, celebrated, civilized, chosen, closed, completed, complicated, conceited, confined, confused, connected, contended, contented, covered, crowded, decided, dedicated, delighted, depressed, deserted, deserved, determined, devoted, disappointed, discontented, discouraged, disgusted, distinguished, disturbed, divided, done, dressed, drunk, embarrassed, enlightened, excited, exhausted, experienced, faded, fatigued, fascinated, finished, fixed, flattered, flushed, frightened, gone, grieved, guarded, harassed, hurried, hurt, illustrated, inexperienced, injured, interested, killed, known, learned, limited, lined, loaded, lost, marked, married, mispronounced, misspelt, neglected, noted, offended, overgrown, painted, paved,***

*pleased, posted, proven, puzzled, qualified, recovered, relaxed, relieved, repeated, reserved, satisfied, saved, shocked, shut, soaked, spent, surprised, surrounded, terrified, tinged, tired, translated, tried, troubled, typed, undressed, unexpected, unknown, unloaded, unsettled, upset, won, worried, etc.*

These adjectives come from corresponding past participles. They can be used as predicative or premodifiers. More examples:

*The supermarket was a very **crowded** place.  
Jean was too **upset** to talk.*

Let's consider the following:

*I am very **annoyed** with you. (adjective)  
I was very much **annoyed** by what you just said.  
(passive voice, obviously because of *by*)*

Some of the past participles (gradable adjectives) above can be modified by **very**; **very much** is used as intensifier. More examples:

*She was **very** surprised when she heard of the bad news.  
He is **very much** loved (by her).  
He is loved **very much** (by her).  
\*He is **very** loved.  
The man was **very** offended.  
I am **very** annoyed with you  
The man was **very** offended.  
They are **very** relieved to find her at home.  
We are **very much** appreciated.*

R. Quirk et al. (1972) pointed out “if the corresponding verb allows (say) **very much** while the participle form disallows **very**, ... the form in question is a participle rather than an adjective.” As shown above, when the past participle is used as predicative, it can be modified by **very** or **very much**, but when the adjective derives from its participle, (**very**) **much** is usually used, especially it expresses degree of adverbial, as in

*\*He was **very** loved. (Because *loved* is a past participle, *very* cannot be used to modify a pure past participle. *Very much* should be used.)  
Cf. He was **very much** loved (by her).  
\*The child was **very** frightened by the noise. (past participle)  
The child was **much** frightened by the noise.*

*The girl was **very** shocked/surprised. (Shocked/Surprised is a gradable adjective.)*  
*She greeted me with a **very** shocked/surprised expression.*  
*She is **very** pleased.*  
*We are **very** worried about your health.*  
*They were **very** relieved to find the girl at home.*  
*The lady was **very** offended.*  
*They were **very** upset when they parted.*  
*I'm **very much** pleased.*  
*You are **very much** appreciated.*  
*She's **very much** changed.*  
*Her performance was (**very**) **much** admired.*  
*She was **very** irritated **by** the man in the yellow shirt.*  
*The girl was **very** shaken **by** the news.*  
*She was **very** surprised **by** your resignation from the club.*  
 (Occasionally, **very** is used when a **by**-agent is followed, as seen above.)

The following past participles can be followed by *very* or *much* or *very much* or *too*: **admired, alarmed, amazed, amused, annoyed, balanced, badly-behaved, bored, conceited, confused, contented, depressed, determined, disappointed, distressed, distinguished, disturbed, divided, embarrassed, encouraged, excited, experienced, fascinated, frightened, interested, irritated, limited, mistaken, offended, pleased, relaxed, relieved, reserved, satisfied, shocked, surprised, tired, unexpected, unsettled, upset, used, well-balanced, well-built, well-defined, well-dressed, well-educated, worried, etc.**

Besides *very* or *very much*, we can use **completely, extremely, greatly, well, etc.**, as in

It's a **well/hardly/half** finished job. (But not: \*It's a *very* finished job.)  
*They were **greatly** surprised at hearing the news.*

The past participles commonly modified by **greatly, much, well, etc** are as follows:

<b>Participles</b>	<b>Modifiers used include</b>
admired	greatly, much
amazed	absolutely
amused	highly
annoyed	extremely, thoroughly,
astonished	absolutely
attended	well
based	broadly, soundly, well
bored	completely, utterly
broken	completely, badly

built	badly, soundly, well
changed	completely, entirely, greatly
confused	completely, highly
controlled	completely, severely, strictly
cooked	badly, well
covered	entirely, completely, fully
damaged	badly, slightly
delighted	highly
depressed	deeply, utterly
determined	absolutely, thoroughly
disappointed	bitterly, deeply
distressed	deeply
disturbed	deeply
dressed	badly, fully, well
educated	well
encouraged	greatly
exaggerated	greatly, much
excited	highly, thoroughly
exhausted	completely, thoroughly
experienced	completely, fully
fed	badly, well
forgotten	entirely, completely
frightened	badly, thoroughly
furnished	badly, well
grieved	deeply
hurt (physically)	badly, seriously, slightly
hurt (feelings)	deeply
injured	badly, seriously, slightly
insulted	thoroughly
insured	completely, fully
interested	keenly
justified	completely, entirely, thoroughly
known	well, widely
limited	severely, strictly
mistaken	completely, entirely, greatly
moved	deeply
offended	deeply
opposed	completely, entirely, utterly
organized	badly, well
overcome	completely
qualified	highly, well

relieved	greatly
shocked	deeply
trained	highly, well
treated	badly, well
upset	thoroughly
used	much, well. Widely
worried	seriously
written	badly, well
etc.	

### 8.3 Come and go

The past participle of intransitive verbs used as predicative in (SVC) are very few (see 6.2). They are not passive (often active) content. They are usually the verbs used after the linking verb, *be*. These verbs indicate the transitional movement or activities, with resultant state of *com/go*, as in

*He is come.* (denoting the state rather than an action.)  
 Cf. *He has come.* (perfect tense, denoting the action.)  
*The sun is set. Let's go home.* (in reference to state)  
*Gone forever are the days when he bullied us.* (inversion sentence)  
*He is far gone.* (in reference to state)  
*My money is gone!* (in reference to state)

## 9 A verb may have two forms of past tenses and past participles

In English there are a few verbs that may have two forms of past tenses and past participles. They are old past participles that survive as adjectives. They are used in different contexts. The best way to know their different use is look up the word in a good English dictionary. A few examples are described as follows:

Verb	Past tense	Past participle
<i>bless</i>	<i>blessed/blest</i>	<i>blessed/blest</i>

*Bless the name of the Lord!*  
*The priest **blessed** the ship before it left port.*  
*The villages lived their lives in **blessed** calmness.*  
*There came a few moments of **blessed** silence.*  
*I'm **blest** if I know.*

Verb	Past tense	Past participle
<i>rot</i>	<i>rotted</i>	<i>rotted/rotten</i>

*This cheap wine will **rot** your stomach.*  
*The rain **has rotted** the roof of beams,*  
*You can't eat **rotten** eggs.*  
*What a **rotten** thing to do to her!*  
*Wood that **has rotted** is **rotten** (F. T. Wood, 1981).*

Verb	Past tense	Past participle
<i>sink</i>	<i>sank</i>	<i>sunk/sunken</i>

*This rubber won't **sink**.*  
*The enemy **sank** the ship.*  
*A ship **has sunk**.*  
*I've **sunk** all my money into buying a new house: I hope I won't be sorry.*  
*There is a **sunken** ship near the island.*  
*That gentle man has **sunken** eyes.*  
*The old man has **sunken** cheeks.*  
*There used to be a **sunken** garden at the foot of the mountain.*

Verbs of this type whose participles are used as adjectives are: **bend** (bent, bent/bended), **bless** (blessed/blest), **bind** (bound, bound/bounded), **burn** (burned, burned/burnt), **drink** (drank, drunk/drunken), **light** (lit, lit/lighted), **melt** (melted, melted/molten), **prove** (proved, proved/proven), **rot** (rotted, rotted/rotten), **shave** (shaved, shaved/shaven), **shrink** (shrunk, shrunk/shrunken), **sink** (sunk, sunk/sunken), **sow** (sowed, sowed/sown), **spill** (spilt/spilled, spilt/spilled), **spoil** (spoiled/spoilt, spoilt/spoiled), **strike** (struck, struck/stricken), **strew** (strewed, strewn/strewed), **swell** (swelled, swollen/swelled), **wake** (woke, waked/awoken), *etc.*

More examples:

*All the **burnt** wood would mean "wood with a **burnt** appearance."*  
*All the **burned** wood would mean "wood that has been consumed."*  
*I met a **drunken** man that day.*  
*A crowd of **drunken** teenagers smashed the shop windows during the riots.*  
*I am unable to repair the **broken** windows because I am broke.*  
*I found her dead **drunk** before I left the party.*  
*The fire is **lit/lighted**.*  
*Cf. The fire was caused by a **lighted** match.*  
*I had **proved** my point.*  
*She **proved** you wrong.*  
*That's a **well-proven** method.*



Honey is a **proven** remedy for a sore throat.  
 (Note: **Proven** is usually used as an adjective.)  
 A clean-**shaven** man is one who has been **shaved**.  
 Marlowe is a tall, clean-**shaven** man.  
 That man **has shaved** with a **shaven** chin.  
 She has a **shaven** head.  
 It's no use crying over **spilt** milk.  
 She is a **spoilt** girl. (spoilt, BrE)  
 They were papers **strewn** all over the floor.  
 They saw the ground **strewn** with enemy dead.  
 He was desolated, utterly **stricken**.

**Stricken** often used with other nouns becomes compound words, e.g. *fever-stricken*, *poverty-stricken*, *sorrow-stricken*, *terror-stricken*, but also *horror-struck*, *thunder-struck*, etc. Moreover, **stricken** is used with afflictions or illness: *stricken by grief*, *sorrow*, etc., *stricken with fever*.

*Her face has swollen/swelled.*  
*He has a swollen head after a car accident.*  
*She has a swelled (= conceited) head. (K. Schibsbbye, 1979)*  
*There was a swollen river after the storm.*  
*My swollen eyes bothered me too much last week.*  
 (Note: The past participle of *swell* is *swelled*.)  
*Has she waked the patient for meds?*  
*I was woken by the thunder.*  
*What time do you want to be waked?*  
*He often slept at 8 and waked at 5.*  
**burnt** toast/bread/umber  
 on **bended** knees (= kneeling)  
 my **bounden** duty (Note: The past participle of *bind* is *bound*.)  
**cloven** hoof (Note: The past participle of *cleave* is *cleft*.)  
 a **lighted** match/candle/torch  
**molten** lava/lead/steel  
**molten** rock/metal, but **melted** chocolate/ice, etc.  
 (Note: **Molten** is used for things that melt at a very high temperature; **melted** for a low temperature.)  
 a small, **shrunk** body (but "The garment **has shrunk** in the wash.")  
 a **sown** seed  
**stricken** area (Note: the past participle of *strike* is *struck*.)  
 a **sunken** eyes/garden/ship (cf. The past participle of *sink* is *sunk*)

In most cases, the *-en* forms have only an adjectival function (e.g. *drunken, molten, shrunken, stricken, etc.*). Some of the past participles ending in *-en* are totally adjectives to denote state or condition. As mentioned earlier, the best way is look up the word in a dictionary or reference books in order to know how to use these verbs correctly with different past participles.

## 10 Used as part of complex object

The participles (either present or past) just like adjectives can be used in complex object (object + participles). A present participle means active, but the past, a passive. When the participle is the object complement in complex object constructions, it belongs to **SVOC** (subject + verb + object + complement) pattern. The relationship between the object and complement is that of subject and verb, i.e. *I saw him leaving*. It means “*He was leaving*” not “*I was leaving*.” A present participle is often used after the verbs denoting physical perception of hearing, seeing, smelling, listening, and touching. These verbs are *feel, find, hear, listen to, look at, notice, observe, see, watch, etc.* We also have the verbs denoting “*cause ( ... ) to do...*” such as *catch, get, have, keep, leave, set, etc.*

### 10.1 Present participles used in complex object

*She found him dozing in a chair.* (= She found that he was dozing in a chair.)  
*I found/noticed her talking to her boyfriend.* (I found/noticed that she was talking....)  
*When I went home, I found my friend waiting for me.*  
*I heard the students/them singing the song.*  
*I used to listen to the birds singing in the morning when I was a boy.*  
*Look at the rain smashing on the windows; it's raining cats and dogs.*  
*She didn't notice me passing by.*  
*I observed them working on the computers.*  
*They saw Beibei leaving the house with a bag in hand.*  
*This set me thinking.*  
*Do you smell something burning?*  
*Can you start/set the engine running?*  
*I want you sitting at the corner while I am working here.*  
Cf. *I want you to sit at the corner while I am working here.*  
*I watched my daughter swimming.*  
*I can't get the clock going again.*  
*We'd better get these people moving.*  
*I got them working hard at the project.*  
Cf. *I got working hard at the project.*  
*I am sorry I have kept you waiting.*  
*The news left me wondering what would happen next.*

As shown above, when a present participle is used as complex object or object complement, a possessive pronoun cannot be used if the object is a pronoun, so we do not say “\**This set my thinking*”; instead, we can say “*That set me thinking*” because *thinking* is a present participle rather than a gerund (see 23). Verbs of this type used with the objective case are: ***catch, discover, feel, find, get, have, hear, keep, leave, listen to, notice, observe, see, set, smell, start, stop, watch, want, etc.***

It is to be noted again that a present participle cannot take a possessive pronoun/noun. Instead, we use its object case because a participle is not a gerund. Let us consider the following:

*I saw **him** going there just now.*  
(\**I saw **his** going there just now.*)  
*I watched **him/John** looking at the picture.*  
(\**I watched **his/John's** looking at the picture.*)

But we can say ***I don't mind him/his/John/John's coming early***, because ***coming*** here is a gerund rather than a present participle, and “***him/ his/John/John's coming early***” is regarded as a whole object of the verb, ***mind***.

Sometimes we use the pronoun ***it*** in **SVOC** construction to represent the real object, as in

*We found **it** a pity **not inviting her to the party**.*  
*You must find **it** exciting **working in our school**.*

## 10.2 Present participles used in passive voice in complex object

We say, “*I saw him leaving the house.*” When the object (i.e. *him*) in the main verb (i.e. *saw*) becomes the subject of the sentence in passive, we keep the present participle, as in

*He was seen leaving the house.*

More examples:

*Police found the littler girl sleeping when they arrived at the house.*  
*The little was found sleeping when police arrived at the house.*  
*The stolen statue was left standing in the field.*  
*Sandy was observed performing her experiment.*

### 10.3 Have + noun + bare infinitive or present participle

When **have** means *wish, experience* or *cause* (someone to do something), it is usually followed by bare infinitives (Hornby, 1977, p.66), and **get** a *to*-infinitive (Eastwood, 2002, p.140), as in

*What would you **have** me do?*

(meaning *wish* or *want*; more usual: *What do you want me to do?*)

*I **had** a very strange thing **happen** to me yesterday.* (experience)

*I **had** John **find** me a house.* (caused John to find me a house)

*We like to **have** our friends **visit** us on Sundays* (Hornby, 1977). (Here *have* means *wish*.)

*What would you **have** that girl do?* (wish)

*I'll **have** Hudson **show** you to your room.*

(L. Quirk et al., 2004)

*I **had** the garage **service** my car.*

*I **am having** my daughter **help** you with the work.*

*I **got** the garage **to service** my car.* (Eastwood 2002)

(*Get* is informal)

When the verb **have** means “making someone start doing something” or “persuade or order someone to do something,” or “experience (*i.e.* in the sense of “have something happening to you.”), it is usually followed by a present participle.

*Within minutes he **had** the whole audience **laughing and clapping**.* (L. Quirk, 2004)

*She suddenly realized that she **had** a dog **following** her.* (experience)

*Dr. Kang **won't have** people **treating** this house like a hotel.* (experience)

*While he **had** this threat **hanging** over him, he was quite unable to work.*

(Hornby, 1977)

= Because of this threat which was hanging over him, he was quite unable to work.

**Have** takes either a bare infinitive (an infinitive without *to*) or a present participle when it indicates a *result* or *outcome* or *experience* or causes *someone to do something*, according to implication:

*He soon **had** them all **laughing**.* (= Soon they were all laughing as a result of what he had said, done, etc.)

*I **had** them all **laughing** at my jokes.* (caused them to laugh)

*I'll **have** you all **speaking** English well within a year.* (result/outcome)

(Hornby, 1977)

*We shall soon **have** the mists **coming** down to us.*

*While he **had** this threat **hanging** over him, he was quite unable to work.*

= Because of this threat which was hanging over him, he was ....

Eastwood (2002, p.174) pointed out that after *have*, *get*, and *leave* we can use an infinitive for an action seen as a whole while the participle means action for a period of time, as in

*The trainer **has the players running** round the field.*  
*The trainer **has the players run/got the players to run** round the field*  
*We soon **got the machine working** again.*  
*The trainer **got the players to run** round the field*  
*Dr. Kang is rather slow. She often **keeps her patients waiting**.*  
*The driver **left us standing** at the side of the road.*  
*Cf. The driver **left us to find** our own way home.*  
*I **caught the student cheating** in the test yesterday.*

It is to be noted that when *won't* or *can't have* means *don't allow/permit/agree* (Hornby, 1977) or *have* (used in questions or negatives), it usually takes a present participle. For example:

*I **can't/won't have** you **doing** that.*  
= I can't/won't allow/permit you to do that.  
*We **can't have** them **wasting** their time in this matter.*  
*I **wouldn't have** you **walking** home all by yourself.*  
*Dr. Kang **won't have** people **treating** this house like a hotel.*  
= Dr. Kang won't allow people to treat this house like a hotel.)  
*I **am not having** you **running** all over the place.*  
= I am not willing to allow you to run all over the place.

#### 10. 4 Passive voice in complex object

When the logical object of the present participle is also the object of the main verb in sentence, a *passive voice* is often used in complex object, especially in the verbs such as *catch*, *feel*, *find*, *hear*, *notice*, *observe*, *see*, *watch*, *etc.*, as in

*She **felt herself being embarrassed**.*  
*She **found** herself **being looked after** by her ex-boyfriend when she woke up.*  
(*Herself* is the logic object of the phrasal verb *look after* and is also the object of the main verb *found*.)  
= She found her ex-boyfriend was looking after *her* when she woke up.)  
*I **heard** the door **being closed** with a great bang.*  
= I heard *someone closing the door with a great bang*.  
*I **saw** him **being beaten** by a stranger.*  
Cf. I saw a stranger *beating him*. He was seen *being beaten* by a stranger.  
*I **saw** him **beaten** by a stranger.*  
Cf. He was seen to *be beaten*.

*\*He was seen beaten.*

We **watched** the pig **being killed**.

= We watched *them/people* killing the pig.

It seems that the present participle shows progression of action, but not implied in the infinitive, which shows rather completion of action (see 11.1).

### 10.5 Past participles used in complex object

When **have** has the meaning of “**cause (something) to be done (by someone)**”, it may have the past participle, as shown from the examples below. The pattern, **have + object + done**, the causative use of the verb **have**, indicates what the subject of the sentence experiences (something unpleasant), undergoes, or suffers (Hornby, 1977). The action is caused by the subject of the sentence or somebody or something else. In such a case, **have** can be used in progress, as in

*He's **had** his iPhone X **stolen**.* (suffering/experiencing)

*He's **having** his eyes **tested**.* (undergoing)

*She doesn't **have** money **left**.* (experiencing)

*I **had** my car **broken down** on the way home.* (suffering/experiencing)

*The pilot **had** his plane **hijacked**.* (caused by somebody else)

*We shall **have** the room **painted**.* (painted by us or by someone else)

*I will **have** my hair **cut** tomorrow.* (undergoing)

*I am going to the dentist to **have** my bad tooth **pulled out**.*

*Let's **have** the most difficult question **answered** first.*

*We will **have** these computers **repaired** tomorrow.*

*Do you have to **have** these problems **discussed**?*

*We're **having/getting** a new kitchen **fitted**.* (*Get* is more informal than *have*.)

Sometimes we use **get** in such a construction but is not *have got* (F. R. Palmer, 1978). Besides, we have verbs such as **get, help, make, etc.**, as in

*Would you like me to **get** the work **done** before we go fishing?*

*I must **get/have** my bad tooth **pulled out** at the dentist's this afternoon.*

*It's about time we **got** the kitchen **repainted**.*

(Subjunctive mood is used in a *that*-clause after “it's about time ...”)

*Why don't we **have/get** the house **painted**?*

*He must **have/get** his hair **cut** this weekend.*

*Sandy **got** the work **done** in a day.*

*I **get** my hair **cut** once a month.*

(\*I *have got* my hair cut once a month.)

*He is **getting** a new house **built**.*  
*We will **have/get** the matter **seen to**.*  
*Can I **make** myself **understood**?*  
*Please help us **informed** of the latest development.*

Past participles are used after the verbs denoting senses, feeling or perception, etc., when the object of the main verb is also the logical object of the verb with that past participle indicating change, experience, happening, undergoing, etc. They are *feel, find, hear, see, think, watch, etc.*, as in

*I **found** her greatly **changed** when I saw her the second time.*  
*We **found** the door (to be) **unlocked**.*  
*She **felt** her eyes **dazzled** by the bright light.*  
*Beibei has never **heard** a word of Chinese **spoken** here.*  
*I **found** myself greatly **shaken** after I met with her the other day.*  
*Sandy **saw** the door safely **locked**.*  
*Everyone **thought** the battle **lost**.*

Intransitive verbs of past participles are seldom used in complex object (e.g. *I saw him gone*). We usually have the following transitive verbs used in a complex object construction (SVOC or SVOCA). They are *allow, ask, behold, conceive, consider, depict, desire, eat, expect, fancy, feel, get, have, hear, imagine, keep, leave, like, make, observe, order, perceive, permit, prefer, remember, request, require, see, urge, want, watch, wish, etc.*, as in

*We **eat** our meal **cooked**.*  
*When he woke up, he **found** her **gone**. (Go is an intransitive verb.)*  
*We **found** the house **deserted**.*  
*I **heard** my name **called**.*  
*I never **heard** the song **sung**.*  
*It's better to **leave** some things **unsaid**. (Hornby, 1977)*  
*This **left** her/Casey **shocked**.*  
*She doesn't **like** the work (to be) **done** immediately.*  
*That job **made** me **tired**.*  
*You must **make** yourself **respected**.*  
***Have** you ever **seen** the mountains **covered** in snow? (Hornby, 1977)*  
*I'll **see** you **damned** first.*  
*Sandy **wants** the work **finished** by tomorrow.*  
*Beibei **wants** the work **completed** by Friday.*  
*I don't **want** any one of you (to be) **involved** in this matter.*  
*You don't **want** her **caught**, do you?*

When they are changed into passive voice, the object complement becomes subject complement, as in

*The door **was found locked** when I came. (SVC)*

Cf. *When I came, I **found the door locked**. (SVOC)*

*The poor woman **was left uncared for**. (SVC)*

Cf. *They **left the poor woman uncared for**. (SVOC)*

In such a pattern not all the main verbs can be converted into passive, i.e. “*I don’t want him caught.*” \**He is not wanted caught.*” “\**The work was got done in a day.*”

Sometimes we use the pronoun *it* in SVOC construction (10.1), as in

*I felt **it** working here **bored**.*

## 11 Present participles vs. the bare infinitive in complex object construction

### 11.1 Either the participles (present or past) or the bare infinitive with slight difference in meaning

Examples:

*She can **feel her heart beating/beat quickly**.*

(*Beating/Beat* is the complement. It is SVOC.)

*I **heard him giving/give orders**.*

(*Giving/Give orders* is the complement. It is SVOC.)

*We **listened to the band playing/play in the park**.*

(*Playing/Play in the park* is the complement, which is made up of the present participle, *playing* or the bare infinitive, *play*, and the adverbial of place, *in the park*. It is SVOCA.)

*We **looked at the rain coming/come down**.*

(*Coming/Come down* is the complement. It is SVOC.)

*Did you **notice anyone standing/stand there**?*

(*Standing/Stand* is the complement. It is SVOC.)

*I **saw the thief running/run away**.*

(*Running/Run away* is the complement to the object, *the thief*. *Running* is the present participle and *run* is a bare infinitive. It is SVOC.)

*I **saw the drunkard cross the road**.*

(*Cross* is the bare infinitive. *Cross the road* is the complement, which is made up of the bare infinitive, *cross*, and its object, *the road*. It is SVOC.)

*Do you **smell something burning now**? (SVOC)*

*We **watched the ship steaming/steam past**.*



(*Steaming/Steam past* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

*I watched Dr. Kang playing/play football.*

(*Playing/Play football* is the complement. It is **SVOC**.)

There is no practical difference in meaning between the bare infinitive and the participles, except that in general the former suggests a completed activity and the latter an activity in progress. To make the point clear, let's consider the following:

*I saw the drunkard cross the road.*

= I saw the whole journey from one side to the other (completed activity). *Cross* is the bare infinitive. It is **SVOC**.

Note that when the sentence is converted into a passive voice with the bare infinitive, the infinitive with *to* should be used, e.g. "*The drunkard was seen to cross the road.*"

*I saw the cat fed.* (I saw the whole action of someone feeding the cat.)

*I saw the drunkard crossing the road.*

= I saw the drunkard at a moment while he was crossing or in the middle of the road.

*Crossing* is the present participle and the complement is *crossing the road*. It is **SVOC**.

In passive, "*The drunkard was seen (to be) crossing the road.*"

*I saw the cat being fed.* (It means "I saw the cat. Someone was feeding the cat.")

But if the present participle comes from a verb denoting a transient (momentary) action, the present participle in such a case indicates the action is repeating, as in

*I heard the door slamming.* (repeating action)

*I heard the door slam.* (one action)

*I watched the frog jump/jumping in the jar.* (Note we can use either participle or bare infinitive with reference to a short action.)

Such verbs of perception as *feel, glance, glimpse, hear, listen to, look at, notice, observe, see, smell, watch, etc.*, can be followed by participles (active or passive) as seen from above. As mentioned early, their logical subjects cannot be in possessive forms, therefore, we do not say, "*\*I saw John's/his leaving the house.*" With the bare infinitive, we are more interested in the fact of the completion of the action while with the present participle we are more interested in the continuity or the performance of the action.

## 11.2 Either the present participles or the infinite, but with marked distinction of meaning

As examples, the verbs *have, leave, and find* may be cited, for the following sets of sentences:

*Would you **have me believe** that?* (Here, “Would /will have” means “want” or “wish” or “like”. It is **SVOC**.)

*We like to **have** (meaning “let”) our friends **come to stay with us**.* (It is **SVOC**.)

*We cannot **have you wasting** (meaning “cannot allow you to waste”) **time**.*  
(It is **SVOC**.)

*We shall soon **have the fog rising**.*

(The sentence means “The fog will soon be rising.” It is **SVOC**.)

*The news **left me wondering** (meaning “caused me to wonder”) **what would happen next**.*  
(It is **SVOC**.)

*I will **leave** (meaning “trust”) you **to settle all the business**.* (It is **SVOC**.)

*I **found the box to contain** odds and ends.* (It is **SVOC**.)

*I **found him lying** in bed.* (It is **SVOC**.)

Here it seems that all depends whether the verb forming the verbal complement can or cannot have the progressive form. If it can, the present participle should be used; if it cannot, the infinitive. “**Contain**”, a state verb, for example, has no progressive or **-ing** form, here the infinitive in “*I found the box to **contain** odds and ends*”; “**lie**” can have its progressive form, hence the participle in “*I found him **lying** in bed*”. In fact, the infinitive “**to be**” may be inserted before “**lying**” in the sentence: “*I found him **to be lying** in bed*.” It is noted that when the object used in the complex object construction becomes the subject of the sentence, the sentence is no longer a **SVOC** construction, but it is **SVC** construction, as in,

*I saw her **leaving** the house.* (**SVOC**)

*She was **seen to leave** the house.* (**SVC**)

As stated earlier, it is very important that we cannot use a possessive followed by the present participle, because the present participle is not a gerund; therefore, we do not say: \**I saw his/John’s leaving the house*; instead we say, “*I saw **him/John** leaving the house*,” but “*I dislike his/John’s/him/John leaving early*,” where *leaving* is a gerund, and *his/John’s/him/John leaving early* can be considered as a whole noun phrase; the whole sentence, *I (S) dislike (V) his/John’s/him/John leaving (O) early (A)* is **SVOA** construction. In such a case, the logical subject of the gerund cannot be converted into passive, i.e. \**He is not minded smoking here* (see 23).

## 12 Participles (present or past) used adverbially

### 12.1 Present participles to express time

The present participles are usually placed before the main clause. The action in the main clause begins immediately after the action of the present participle finishes or begins at the same time

with the action of the present participle; that is, more or less simultaneous. However, “when placed after the finite verb they are not limited in time in this way. Compare: **arriving** in London at ten, I’ll go by train ... and I’ll go by train, **arriving** in London at ten” (K. Schibsbye, 1979, p.59).

For example:

**Coming** up the steps, I fell over. (more or less simultaneous)

She hailed a taxi, **leaving** the building. (less simultaneous)

**Turning** on the light, I found what had happened in the room.

(one action happening after another)

Ms. R hurt her hand **playing** the basketball. (At the same time)

**Walking** along the street, I met a friend.

= While/When/As I was walking along the street, I met a friend.

The perfect tense is usually placed before the main clause to emphasize the action in the perfect participial phrase that happens earlier than that in the main clause, as in

**Having completed** my project, I drove home.

= After/When I had completed/completed my project, I drove home.

**Having met** my friend (=After/When I had met/met my friend), I went with her to her house.

They left the lab, **having spent** two hours for the experiment.

As seen from above, the perfect participial form can be placed either at the beginning or at the end of, the sentence. But normally, they are placed before the main clause. We use a perfect participle to emphasize the completion of the action which last for some time before another action happens. If the action is short before another action happens (or two actions are very close in time), we do not use a perfect participle. When the first action is not short, we must use the perfect to indicate the duration of the first action. More examples:

**Having completed** the project, she went home.

(It takes time to complete the project, and the action is not short, so a perfect participle is preferred.)

**Having cut** the hard wood into twenty pieces, she went back to her house.

Not \***Cutting** the hard wood into twenty pieces, she went back to her house.

(It is not a short time for her to cut the wood into twenty pieces, so a perfect is used.)

**Having sat** in the sun for one hour, we are very thirsty.

= We have sat in the sun for one hour and we are very thirsty.

**Walking** along the street, I met a friend of mine.

(The actions of *walk* and *meet* happened at the same time, so a perfect participle is not necessarily used.)

When no ambiguity arises, either a perfect participle or a simple participle is used, as in

***Having filled** her glass, Sandy took a long drink.*

***Filling** her glass, Sandy took a long drink.*

When the two actions happen close to each other or at the same time, its function is tantamount to a compound sentence introduced by **and**, as in

***Sitting down**, Dr. Kang began to write her report.*

= *After/When she sat down, Dr. Kang began to write her report.*

= *Dr. Kang sat down **and** began to write her report.*

Cf. *Dr. Kang sat down, beginning to write her report.*

*Sandy picked up where she left off **and** talked for another five minutes.*

Cf. *Sandy picked up where she left off, talking for another five minutes.*

We also use a conjunction followed by a participle to indicate the time reference. We usually have conjunctions: **after, as, before, on, since, when, while, etc.** Both actions happen nearly at the same time or one after another when **after, before, when, while, etc.**, is followed by the present participle or gerund according to the meaning, as in

***After having** (=After she had) *the meal, she went shopping.**

***After staying** (=After he stayed) *at home for 14 days due to coronavirus, he had been in much better health.**

***After having left** the office, he went home by car.*

(perfect gerund), (G. Leech et al., 1974)

***After/Since being invited**, I have been told that the party was cancelled. (passive)*

***Before leaving** (= Before he left) the room, Marlowe turned off all the lights.*

***On being told** the party was cancelled, the girl burst into tears.*

=As soon as she was told the party was cancelled, the girl burst into tears.

***Since leaving** (= Since I left) school, I haven't seen her.*

*She's been quite different **since coming** from China.*

***Since being** (= Since he was) in the school for ten years, Martin has known every one.*

***When** (= When/While/As I was) **going** home, I met Dr. Kang.*

***While walking** (= While/As she was walking) along the street, Sandy answered her phone from her daughter.*

***While being flown** (= While it was being flown) by a champion amateur cyclist in 1963, the plane crashed on a field.*

It is noted that after the logical subject is omitted from the clauses introduced by **after, before**, and **since** when they are used to express time, the **-ing** form is a gerund rather than a present participle because they become prepositions rather than conjunctions, but when **since** is used to

express reason, we cannot use *since* to be followed by the *-ing* form. For example, *Since you know the answer, why didn't you speak up?* But it's incorrect to say, “\**Since knowing the answer, why didn't you speak up?*”

## 12.2 Past participles

The past participle can be also used to express time, but it has *passive meaning* because the subject of the main clause is also the logical object of the past participle, as in

*Asked whether or not he would stay, he gave a non-committed answer.*

= When/After he was asked whether or not he would stay, ....

= When/After we/they/you/anyone asked *him* whether or not he would stay, he gave ....

(*Him* is the logical object of *ask*, so passive is used.)

*Thrown to the floor, Jean regained her footing and rushed into the street.*

*United, we stand; divided, we fall.*

= When/If we are united, we stand; when/if we are divided, we fall.

*Cleared, the site will be valuable.* (G. Leech et al., 1974)

= When cleared/When it is cleared, the site will be valuable.

*I will like your house painted white.*

= I will like your house when/after/if it is painted white.

*I will gladly come to visit you when/whenever/if invited.*

= I will gladly come to visit you when/whenever/if I am invited.

*Having been experimented many times, this new medicine will be put into mass production.*

*Having been invited to speak, I'll start making preparations tomorrow.*

We can also retain the conjunctions such as *once, until, unless, when, whenever, while, etc.*, followed by a past participle, as in

*(Once) appointed supreme commander, he took the stern measures expected of him.*

(R. Quirk, et al., 1972)

*Once opened, the contents should be consumed within four days.*

*When finished (= When it is finished), the project will be great.*

*I will gladly come to visit you when/whenever/if invited.*

## 12.3 Cause or reason

### Present participles used to express cause or reason

*Living near the sea, they enjoy a healthy climate.*

*Meeting with cold reception at his son's house, the old man went away in a rage.*

*Not feeling well, Casey decided to sit in the chair for a while.*

*Not having a telephone, I will have to write to her.*  
*Not knowing what to say, he kept silent.*  
*The little girl, not knowing what to do, began to cry. (placed after the subject)*  
*(Being) tired (= Because/As/Since he was tired) with the work, he sat down to rest.*  
*(Being) amiable and sincere, he is welcome everywhere.*  
 = Because/As/Since he is amiable and sincere, he is welcome everywhere.  
*Being done in a hurry, the exercises were full of mistakes.*  
*Being a professor, you should know.*  
*Not being an expert, I cannot explain it.*  
*Not being prepared for the tragic news, he fainted.*

The participle *being* is omissible in an adverbial participial phrase, as shown in the examples above. Perfect participles are also used just like the use in expression of time clauses, as in

*Having lost my iPhone X, I had to buy another one.*  
*Having lived in Las Vegas since 2005, Sandy knows the city very well.*  
*The old man was hungry, not having eaten since yesterday.*  
 The lady, *having lost most of her fortune*, decided to sell her estates.  
*Having been working for four hours in the lab, Dr. Kang was very tired, but she refused to take a break.*  
 (Perfect progressive tense used to express her continuation of her work)

Sometimes we use an *as*-clause preceded by a present participle to emphasize the meaning of the cause or reason, as in

*Sitting at the back as we are, we can't hear a word.*  
 = Because we are sitting at the back, we can't hear a word.  
*Shouting loudly as they were, the boys got quite hoarse.*  
 = Because the boys shouted loudly, they got quite hoarse.  
*Wanting a ticket as I do, I will apply for one at once.*  
 = Because/Since I want a ticket, I will apply for one at once.  
*Standing as it does on a high hill, the temple commands a fine view.*  
*I feel it to be a rare occasion, occurring as it does only once in many years.*  
*Realizing as I do that I shall be very much occupied in the afternoon, I must send off all these letters this morning.*

### **Past participles used to express cause or reason**

*Destroyed by Hurricane Sandy, the city had to be rebuilt.*  
 = Because/As the city was destroyed by *Hurricane Sandy*, the city had to be rebuilt.  
*Taken by surprise, the enemy surrendered.*

**Tired** (= Because/As/Since he was tired) *with the work, he sat down to rest.*  
*She left the room, discouraged.*  
**Not/Never having been** *to China, I can't tell you what it looks like.*  
*The children, exhausted, fell asleep immediately.*  
 = As/Because the children were exhausted, they fell asleep immediately.  
**Not allowed** *to use a calculator, he fell in his math test last week.*  
 = As/Because he was not allowed to use a calculator, he fell in his math test....  
**Never seen** *before, the machine working so fast surprised people at the exhibition.*  
**Having been addressed** (= Because/As/Since it had been addressed) *to a wrong house, the letter never reached me.*  
**Having been informed** *that his father was seriously ill, he left the office at once.*  
 = He left the office at once because/as/since he was informed that his father was seriously ill.  
**Having been laid up** *with a broken back for years, he lost all hope of recovery.*  
**Not having been told** *what to say, she kept quiet.*  
*Kayla Yao, having been to Las Vegas many times, knows the city very well.*  
*The professor of virology, not having slept a wink the whole night, felt very tired.*  
*Jean, having been consoled by a large inheritance, wept few tears of remorse over her father's grave.*  
 = Since she had been consoled by a large inheritance, Jean wept few tears of ....

It is to be noted that the last three sentences above have a perfect tense and whose present participles are inserted between the subject and the main verb. They are used to express reason rather than used as postmodifiers to modify the subjects: *Kayla Yao, the professor of virology,* and *Jenny,* respectively, because a present perfect tense is usually not used as a postmodifier. Besides, we can use a non-restrictive relative clause to express cause or reason according to context. Let's consider the following sentences:

*The girl, who was upset by the activities of the ghost, decided to leave.*  
 = *Because/As she was upset by the activities of the ghost, the girl decided to leave.*  
 = *Upset by the activities of the ghost, the girl decided to leave. (initial)*  
 = *The girl, upset by the activities of the ghost, decided to leave. (middle)*  
 = *The girl decided to leave, upset by the activities of the ghost. (final)*  
 = *The girl was upset by the activities of the ghost and decided to leave.*

It is noted that "Unlike relative clauses, however, non-finite and verbless clauses can occur freely in initial, medial, or final positions" (R. Quirk et al., 1972. p.760), as seen from above.

Sometimes we use an *as*-clause preceded by a past participle to emphasize the meaning of the cause or reason and the *as* can be replaced by *that*, as in

*Absorbed as she was in a mathematical problem, she did not notice me entering the room.*

*Situated as it was at the foot of the mountain, the house was very quiet.*

= As/Because the house was situated at the foot of the mountain, it was very quiet.

*Unaccustomed as/that he was to public speaking, he required himself rather ill in that speech.*

= Since/Because he was unaccustomed to public speaking, he required ....

*Unarmed as/that he was, he couldn't resist them for long.*

= Since/Because he was unarmed, he couldn't ....

Moreover, we can use a past participle, especially ending in **-ed**, followed by an infinitive or infinitive phrase to express reason or cause, as in

*I am pleased to meet you.*

= I am pleased *because/as I meet you*. (The two actions happen at the same time.)

*She was disappointed to find that all people left the party without saying a good-bye to her.*

Here are some of the **-ed** participles that are used in such a case are: **annoyed, ashamed, astonished, bored, concerned, delighted, destined, determined, disappointed, disconcerted, disgusted, displeased, distressed, embarrassed, excited, fascinated, inclined, overjoyed, overwhelmed, perturbed, pleased, prepared, puzzled, qualified, surprised, worried, etc.**

Besides, a participle can be followed by a **that-clause** to express reason or cause, too, as in

*I am surprised that Sandy will come to see me this afternoon.*

= I am surprised *because Sandy will come to see me this afternoon*.

*Marlowe seemed pleased that his greenhouse was prolific last year.*

*Dr. Kang was upset that her computers in the lab were out of order.*

Some of the past participles of this kind are: **alarmed, amazed, amused, annoyed, astonished, depressed, disappointed, distressed, disturbed, frightened, horrified, irritated, pleased, shocked, upset, etc.**

## 12.4 Concession

### Present participles used to express concession

*Granting the achievements to be great, we have no reason to be conceited.*

*Although working (=Although he works) very hard, he still cannot make both ends meet.*



*(Al)though/While impressing the examiners, he nevertheless failed.*  
*Although knowing Chinese, she attended the course.*  
 (\*Although she was knowing Chinese, she attended the course.)  
*Though (being) well over eighty, she can walk a mile faster than I can.*  
*Although expecting the news, I was shocked by it.*  
*Although having slept more than eight hours, she still felt dog-tired.*  
*They talked as if intending to prevent war.*  
*Even if still operating, the factory was still unable to produce as many face masks as we needed during the coronavirus outbreaks.*

As seen above, followed by a present participle, the conjunctions can be retained such as **although, even though, as if, as though, even if**. A state verb can have the present participle in non-finite, but it does not mean progressive. Therefore, we can say, “*Although knowing Chinese, she attended the course,*” but we do not say, “\**Although she was knowing Chinese, she attended the course.*”

### **Past participles used to express concession**

We use a conjunction followed by a past participle to indicate the concession. We usually have such conjunctions as **although, though, as if, as though, even if**, as in

*Although covered by insurance, Jean was annoyed by the accident.*  
*Though warned (=Though he was warned) of the danger, he still went skating on the thin ice.*  
*Though tortured many times by the enemy, he did not say a word about his secret.*  
*Though (she was) already middle-aged, she was very pretty.*  
*Even though tortured many times, the agent never surrendered.*  
*He threw himself down from his horse, as if shot (= as if he had been shot).*  
*Even if invited (= Even if I am invited), I won't go.*

Sometimes we use an **as**-clause preceded by a past participle to emphasize the meaning of the concession and the **as** here can be replaced by **that**, as in

*Naked as/that I was, I braved the storm.*  
 = Even though I was naked, I braved the storm.

### **12.5 Condition used to express condition**

#### **Present participles used to express condition**

*Heating water, you can change it into steam.*

= If you heat water, you can change it into steam.

**Meeting** (=If we had met) *anywhere else, we wouldn't have recognized each other.*

(subjunctive mood)

*You'd be warmer **walking** (=if you walked).*

**Turning to the left** (=If/When you turn to the left), *you will find the house you want.*

Sometimes we use the present participles after the conjunctions, **if, unless, even if, whether, etc.**, as in

**If/unless arriving** by taxi, *please let me know.*

= If/Unless you arrive by taxi, please let me know.

### Past participles used to express condition

**Cleared**, *this site would be very valuable.*

= If /When cleared or If/when it is cleared, this site would be very valuable.

**Criticized by his colleagues**, *he will feel unhappy.*

*What would she have done **confronted** (= if she had been confronted) with a similar situation?* (subjunctive mood)

**Everything considered** (= If everything is considered), *the city is the most exciting of the world.* (absolute construction)

**Given due consideration** (=If it is given due consideration), *the question should be easy to settle.*

**Given more time**, *Kayla would have done much better.* (subjunctive mood)

**Given** (= Considering) *their inexperience, they've done a good job.*

**Heated** (= if it is heated), *water changes into steam.*

**Taken daily**, *Vitamin C can help to reduce your catching cold.*

= If Vitamin C is taken daily, it can help to reduce your catching cold.

**United**, *we stand; **divided**, we fall.*

= If/When we are united, we stand; if/when we are divided, we fall.

We can retain the conjunction **if** or **unless** followed by a past participle, as in

*I will gladly come to visit you **if invited** (=if I am invited).*

*The book will be returned to Kayla **if found** (= if it is found).*

*We won't attack **unless attacked** (= unless we are attacked).*

*We'll counterattack **if attacked** (= if we are attacked).*

*Don't come **unless told to** (= unless you are told to come).*

*The virus will be killed **if kept** (= if it is kept) in a close container.*

## 12.6 Place

Used after *where* or *wherever*:

*Where(ver) known, such facts have been reported.* (R. Quirk et al., 1972., p.745)

## 12.7 Purpose

*Chamberlain and his like pursued an appeasement policy toward Hitler, vainly **attempting** to divert the disaster eastward.*

*I went out **shopping**.*

## 12.8 Result

When a participle is used to express result, it is usually an active participle and sometimes preceded by such adverbs as *so*, *thus*, or *thereby*, as in

*The movie star made a dramatic entrance, **attracting** everyone's attention.*

*Marlowe gave a penetrating analysis of some of the questions, **clarifying** much of the confusion.*

*They pumped waste into the river, **killing** all the fish.*

*Dr. Palmer wrote me a letter of recommendation, **so keeping** a promise he had made last month.*

*We hope the new machine will work faster, **thus reducing** our costs.*

*The train stopped suddenly, **thus causing** the delay.*

*Ms. Rine fell ill, **thus/thereby making** it necessary for us to find a substitute for her.*

*She picked up great support from the union, **thereby guaranteeing** that she would win the election.*

When *so*, *thus*, and *thereby* is used, a comma is usually inserted as seen from above. In such a case, a participle phrase is tantamount to a relative clause. The relative pronoun, *which*, represents the whole content of the main clause, and *which* acts as a sentential relative clause, as in

*The train stopped suddenly, **which caused** the delay.*

(The antecedent of *which* is "the train stopped suddenly.")

*Ms. Rine fell ill, **which made** it necessary for us to find a substitute for her.*

(The antecedent of *which* is "Ms. Rine fell ill".)

## 12.9 Manner/accompaniment (or attending circumstances)

### Present participles used to express manner/accompaniment (or attending circumstances)

A participial phrase showing accompaniment cannot well be converted into an adverbial clause. But beyond doubt, it has an adverbial function, and can be regarded as an adverb of manner, or of attending circumstances, so to speak. We usually use a participle to indicate manner after such verbs as *arrive, come, go, leave, lie, run, sit, and stand, etc.* For example:

*He arrived puffing and panting.* (F.R. Palmer, 1978)

Cf. He arrived *hot and miserable*.

*The birds came hopping round my window.* (Hornby, 1977)

*Please fill in this form, giving your name, address, etc.*

(The participial phrase here denotes how or in what manner the form is to be filled in.)

*They left for the fields, shouldering spades and hoes.*

(The participial phrase here denotes in what manner or in what circumstances they left for the fields.)

*She lay smiling at me.*

*The sunshine came streaming through the window.*

*People ran screaming for help when the earthquake broke out.*

*Dr. Kang sat there, reading a newspaper.*

*They sat there, talking and laughing.*

*Sandy sat telling me what happened last night.* (accompaniment)

*The sun was setting, spilling golden light on the low western hills.*

*The two ladies shook hands, smiling at each other.*

*They were standing there, waiting for the bus.*

*Sandy stood talking about the good old times.* (= Sandy stood and talked ....)

*The children stood by the roadside, watching the parade.*

*The whole family stood waving in the road.* (accompaniment)

We must pay attention to the use of a present participle above. The logical subject of the present participle must be the subject of the sentence. We do not say \**Working in the field, my ankle was broken*. The logical subject of *working* is not the subject, *my ankle*, of the sentence. Instead, we can say *Working in the field, I broke my ankle* or *When/While working in the field, I broke my ankle*. See 14 **The nominative absolute construction**.

### Past participles used to express manner/accompaniment (or attending circumstances)

Just like the present participles, the past participles can be used to express accompaniment to the main verbs, as in

*She came back, utterly **exhausted**.*

= She came back **and** was utterly exhausted.

*He continued to walk up and down, **lost in thought**.*

*He drove the damaged car home **undismayed**. (R. Quirk et al., 1972)*

*The girl lay **trapped** in the car wreckage for three days after the accident.*

*Sandy returned home **overjoyed**.*

*Beibei sat in the chair **exhausted**.*

*Dr. Kang sat in a chair, **lost in thought**.*

*Heishman sat at the corner of the library, **absorbed in painting her picture**.*

***Surrounded by** a group of students, Mr. Roser sat in a chair, answering each student's question.*

### 12.10 Used as an adverbial of degree to make an overstatement

Some present participles can be used like adverbs to modify adjectives or participles to emphasize their meaning, and in such a case the present participle is tantamount to the meaning of the adverb - *exceedingly* or *extremely* or *very*, as in

*The summer weather in Las Vegas is often **blazing/burning/scorching** hot.*

*The soup is **boiling** hot.*

*She wore **shocking** pink clothes at her son's wedding party.*

*His clothes were **dripping/soaking** wet when he came in.*

*The weather in December here is **biting/freezing/piercing** cold.*

*Don't eat **steaming** hot food. It will hurt your tongue.*

*The fierce lady was **raging/raving** mad when she left.*

*At noon, the snow on the mountain looks **dazzling** white.*

*Despite the **piercing** cold weather, Marlowe still went swimming.*

*There came a **groping dark** wilderness.*

*Don't be fooled by her **flattering sweet** words. You'll be taken in by her words.*

The present participle used in these sentences above act like the function of an adverb.

### 12.11 Apposition

Occasionally a participle can be used as appositive (see 14.4), as in

*He is encumbered – **burdened** with debts. (Zhang et al., 1981, p.631)*

### 13 Used as independent elements

Both the infinitive and the participles (present and past) can be used as a disjunctive element independent of the sentence. Their logical subjects are usually not the subjects in the main clauses. The phrase is more or less stereotyped, though with a very few of them, the infinitive and the participles are interchangeable. They are enumerated in sentences as follows:

*It will take an hour to go to the station, **allowing** for traffic delay.*  
***Assuming** that there is the chance, what is the use if he cannot come back in time and avail himself of it?*  
***Considering/Given** his age, his knowledge is marvelous.*  
*There are fifty people killed in the fire, not **counting** the children.*  
***Failing** the last train, you will have to stay overnight.*  
***Granting** his honesty, he is slow to work.*  
*Things don't look too nice, but **having said that**, there are still grounds for optimism.*  
***Judging from** the circumstances, the thief must have entered the house by climbing over the wall.*  
***Judging from** his appearance, he must be a very healthy man.*  
***Frankly speaking**, you have hurt her feelings.*  
***Generally speaking**, everyone has done a good job.*  
***Putting it frankly**, you have made a grave mistake in this matter.*  
***Roughly speaking**, the two are identical.*  
***Scientifically speaking**, coronavirus can be controlled.*  
***Strictly speaking**, you are not supposed to have said so.*  
***Speaking/Talking** of French, my father is an expert.*  
***Taking** everything **into consideration**, this is not bad.*  
***Seeing** that she once refused to help us, why should we help her now?*  
***Seeing** that there is a lot of time, there is no need to hurry like that.*

Perhaps it is advisable to reiterate that all the phrases enumerated and elucidated above are more or less fixed by usage and stereotyped, especially so far as the participle is concerned. In fact, originally, they were *dangling participles*, which have at last been sanctioned by usage. They have become legitimate, as it were. But illegitimate ones should be resisted, much less invented. We usually have the following: (*honestly, generally, normally, politically, properly, roughly, strictly, scientifically, etc.*) *speaking, speaking frankly, speaking of, speaking off the record, talking about, looking at, judging from/by, putting it (mildly, etc.), setting ... aside,, taking ...into consideration, put frankly, taken..., taken as a whole, considered ...,etc.* Most of them have become prepositions or conjunctions (see 16), e.g. *assuming* (followed by a clause), *barring, concerning, considering, considering that* (followed by a clause), *excepting, failing, following, given, given that* (followed by a clause), *granted/granting, granted that* or *granting*

*that* (followed by a clause), *including, owing to, pending, providing(that)/provided (that)* (followed by a clause), *regarding, supposing (that)* (followed by a clause), *etc.*, as in

*Assuming we have enough money, we'll buy 50 ventilators for our hospital.*

*Considering that he was too young, we disregarded what he had said.*

*Given that the voters approve the fund, we'll have a new school in our area.*

*Given (= considering) their inexperience, they've done a good job.*

*Granted his obsequious manner, I still think he's ambitious enough to do the job.*

(R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.301)

*Provided you sign the paper, I won't arrest you.*

*We will play providing that the weather is fine.*

*I'll go with you providing you are nicer to me.*

*Supposing that you have a flat tire, can you replace the tire by yourself?*

*Supposing you had been more careful, your iPhone would not have been stolen.*

(subjunctive mood)

*Suppose/Say (= if) he takes the job, what sort of salary will he get?*

*Jean can't come today, owing to her car accident.*

## 14 Used in the nominative absolute construction

The nominative absolute construction is much less common in spoken than in written English. The nominative absolute phrases or absolute construction of the participles used express: *time, cause, condition, circumstance, apposition, etc.*, and are equal to adverbial clauses or compound sentences.

### 14.1 Time

#### Present participles used to express time

*The meeting (being) over, everyone left happily.*

= After/When the meeting was over, everyone left happily.

*Spring coming on, the trees turn green.*

=When/After spring comes on, the trees turn green.

*The lights having gone out, we couldn't see anything.*

=After/When the lights had gone out or After/When the lights went out, we couldn't see anything.

*A hole having been dug, the men just disappeared.*

= After/When a hole was dug/had been dug, the men just disappeared.

*The sun having set (= When/After the sun set/had set), all of us went home.*

*Her aunt having left the room, I decided my passionate love for Celia.*  
(R. Quirk et al., 1972)

### Past participles used to express time

*Her coffee finished, she left without saying a good-bye to us.*

= After/When her coffee was/had been finished, she left without saying a good-bye to us.

*The test completed, he gave it to the teacher.*

= After/When the test was/had been completed, he gave it to the teacher.

*The work done, Dr. Kang went home.*

= After/When the work was/had been done, Dr. Kang went home.

*Him/He taken care of* (= When/As he was taken care of), *we could leave without any worry.* (time or reason)

(*Him* used in *him take care of* is informal or substandard.)

*He having been taken care of, we could leave without any worry.*

(Rarely used with perfect, especially when a logical subject is a pronoun.)

*The report having been read* (= After/When the report had been read), *a lively discussion began.*

*Our house painted white, we'd like it better.*

= Our house being/having been painted white, we'd like it better.

= After/When our house is/has been painted white, we'd like it better.

*All things considered, we decided to move on.*

= All things having been considered, we decided to move on.

= After/When all things were/had been considered, we decided to move on.

*Kayla having watched Emily play, she left the school.*

= After she watched Emily play, Kayla left the school.

= After having watched/watching Emily play, Kayla left the school.

*We left the room and went home, the job finished.* (R. Quirk et al., 1972)

When a past participle is used in such a case, *being* or *having been* can be omitted when they are in passive as seen from some examples above: *Her coffee (having been) finished, she left without saying a good-bye to us.* *All things (having been) considered, we decided to move on.* *Our house (being) painted white, we'd like it better.*

### 14.2 Cause/reason

#### Present participles used to express cause/reason

*So many students being absent* (=As/Because/Since so many students were absent), *the field strip had to be put off.*



***There being nobody in the classroom, Marlowe turned off all the lights.***

***Our pace was slow, the horses being tired.***

= Our pace was slow because the horses were tired.

***The room was quiet, the students neither talking nor laughing.***

= The room was quiet because/as the students neither talked nor laughed.

***No further discussion arising, the meeting was brought to a close.***

***It being known that he was a fluent speaker of English, many people came to learn spoken English from him.***

***It being cold, Beibei put on her coat.***

= As/Because it was cold, Beibei put on her coat.

***He being absent, we'll have to put off the meeting.***

= As/Because he is absent, we'll have to put off the meeting.

***It being now pretty late, we took our candles and went upstairs.***

***He, being in a hurry, began to run.*** (Construction of this kind is not often used.)

***I having few friends, my business began to fail.*** (Bergen Evans et al., 1957)

***Nobody having any more to say*** (=As/Because nobody had any more to say), ***the meeting was closed.*** (perfect form)

***The library having closed*** (= As/Because the library was/had been closed), ***I had to go home.*** (perfect form)

***The weather having improved*** (=As/Because the weather had been improved), ***the game was enjoyed by players and spectators alike.*** (perfect form)

***All the guests having arrived*** (=As/Because all the guests had arrived), ***the meeting was declared open.*** (perfect form)

***The lights having gone out, we couldn't see anything.*** (perfect form)

### **Past participles used to express cause/reason**

***His comrades all dragged away, he was left alone in the prison cell.***

= Because/As his comrades were all dragged away, he was left alone in the prison cell.

***Her leg badly wounded, she has to stay in bed.***

= Because/As her leg was badly wounded, she has to stay in bed.

***His shirt caught on the nail, he was unable to move.***

***All our savings gone, we started looking for a job.***

***The question (having been) settled, the meeting adjourned.***

***She having finished the work*** (= As/After/When she had finished the work), ***there was nothing for us to do.***

***The weather having improved, we enjoyed the remainder of the game.***

In such a construction, *having been* can be omitted in passive voice without changing the meaning. For example, “*The building (having been) painted white, it looks magnificent.*”

We can also use the construction *with or without + noun + past participle* or a *gerund* or an *infinitive or adjective* to express reason, as in

*With him taken care of, the parents felt happy when they were working at weekend.*

*You must give me a true account, with nothing added and nothing removed.*

*With the tree now tall, we get more shade.* (Tall is an adjective.)

*I wouldn't dare go home without the job finished.*

*Without any food left in the house, she had to buy more.*

*Without anyone noticing, I slipped through the window.* (Noticing is a gerund.)

*With so many people helping me, I finished the work early.* (Helping is a gerund.)

*The war was over without a shot being fired.* (Being is a gerund.)

*With so much to do, I will have to go back to my office.* (To do is an infinitive.)

*Without a thing to worry about, Dr. Kang began to have her vacation next week.*

(To worry is an infinitive.)

It is noted that *without* has a negative meaning and it usually requires a non-assertive form like *anyone* or *any* as seen from some of the sentences above containing *without*. When *with* is omitted, the gerundial phrase becomes the absolute construction of the participles (see 43.2).

### 14.3 Condition

#### Present participles used to express condition

*Weather permitting, we will go for a walk in the park.*

= If weather permits, we will go for a walk in the park.

*All being well* (=If all is well), *we will complete the work by tomorrow.*

#### Past Participles used to express condition

*Everything taken into consideration, his work is well done.*

= If everything is taken into consideration, his work is well done.

### 14.4 Apposition

#### Present participles used to express apposition

Such apposition is regarded as the reduced relative clauses (either restrictive or non-restrictive), as in

*The two girls living in the same apartment, **one (being) a Chinese and the other (being) an American**, died of coronavirus last night.*

= The two girls living in the same apartment, *one of whom was a Chinese and the other of whom was an American*, died of coronavirus last night.

*Several soldiers, **one looking like a chap I know**, stepped up to the bar.*

= Several soldiers, *one of whom* looked like a chap I know, stepped up to the bar.

*I saw a lot of protesters in the street, **some shouting, some yelling, and some throwing bottles at the police.***

*His one claim to fame, **being secretary of the local tennis club**, is the recurrent theme of his conversation. (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.741)*

### **Past participles used to express apposition**

*The soldiers, **some drunk**, started fighting each other.*

*In the riot it is estimated that 43 protesters were injured, **nine of them disabled for life.***

## **14.5 Attendant circumstances/accompaniment (manner)**

### **Present participles used to express attendant circumstances/accompaniment (manner)**

*We went sight-seeing yesterday afternoon, **Mr. Marlowe acting as guide.***

*Our office was on the third floor, **its windows overlooking the cast-iron bridge.***

*A little girl walked past, **her doll dragging behind her on the pavement.***

*Off we started, **the late arrivals remaining behind.***

*We walked in a file, **he leading the way.***

*We all went home, **she remaining behind** (= and she remained behind).*

*I saw a lot of people in the room, **some talking, and some listening.***

*In the room I saw three men, **two of them smoking a pipe.***

*Mr. Roser lapsed into silence, **his mind working.***

*That fierce lady looked at the ground, **her face burning with shame.***

*They were watching the acrobatic show, **their eyes (being) wide open.***

*She glanced with disgust at the cat, **mewing.** (R. Quirk et al., 1972)*

(The logical subject of **mewing** is not the subject of the sentence, but *the cat.*)

### **Past participles to express attendant circumstances/accompaniment (manner)**

*Many students were moving to and fro, **most of them muffled in their coats.***

*The little boy lay there, perfectly content, **his head cradled in his mother's arm.***

*It is estimated that more than 20,000 are infected, **500 of them disabled for life.***

*Sandy sat forward in the chair, (with) her eyes fixed on her face.*

We can also use the construction **with or without + noun + past participle** to express *cause or reason, time, circumstance, or accompaniment, etc.*, according to the context, as in

*The hero walked to the execution ground, with his head held high.*

*He whipped out a gun with a silencer attached.*

*Beibei lay on her back, with her legs drawn up.*

*With the tree grown tall, we get much shade.* (cause)

*With one of his legs gone, he was still able to go about visiting his friends.* (concession)

*They sat in the room with the curtain drawn.* (accompaniment)

*I wouldn't dare go home without the job finished.* (reason)

*Without him taken care of, the child was left alone at home.*

It is to be noted that in the absolute construction, besides the present participle, we can also use perfect tense or passive voice. If the logical subject is a personal pronoun, we usually use a subject case rather than object case although an object case is used in colloquial English or regarded as non-standard, etc., as in

*We were walking side by side, I still humming my little tune.*

*We all set out, he remaining behind.*

*Members of the family occupied the spare bedrooms, the remaining guests having been booked in at neighboring hotels.* (R. Quirk et al., 1972)

*She having finished the work* (= As/After/When she had finished the work), *there was nothing for us to do.* (reason or time)

*They smoked the joint in silence, her sitting, him standing.* (*her* or *him* used colloquially)

*We should do well together, me being a good cook.* (*me* used colloquially)

## 15 The omission of *being* in the nominative absolute construction

As mentioned earlier, the participle **being** in the nominative absolute construction can be omitted without changing the meaning. Some grammarians called it *a verbless clause* after *being* is omitted, as in

*The meeting (being) over, everyone went home happily.*

(*The meeting over* is a verbless clause.)

*Everything (being) ready, we started for the construction site.*

(*Everything ready* is a verbless clause.)

*The children watched the gigantic bus passing through the village, **their eyes (being) bright and eager.** (Their eyes bright and eager is a verbless clause.)*

As shown above, when the logical subject of the nominative absolute construction is a noun or noun phrase, the **being** can be omitted except for the logical subject of a pronoun or **there + be** construction, as in

***The meeting over**, everyone went home happily.*

*(The meeting over is a verbless clause.)*

*32 people have been killed in the riot, many of them **(being)** children.*

*There **being** nobody in the classroom, he turned off all the lights.* (no omission)

*It **being** known that he was a fluent speaker of English, many people came to learn spoken English from him.* (no omission)

## 16 Dangling participles

Generally speaking, a participle (present or past) should have a notional/logical subject or agent. The notional subject should be the subject of the principal statement (main clause). We can say, “*While **dancing**, he hurt his leg.*” In this sentence the logical subject of “*dancing*” is *he* in the main clause. But in “*\*While **dancing**, his leg got hurt*”, the logical subject of *dancing* seems to be *his leg*. Actually, *his leg* is not the subject/agent of *dancing*. Therefore, that sentence is incorrect, so are these sentences: *\*Looking back, the building was on fire.* *\*Having fought two days, a strong wind swept down.* *\*Painted white, we like the house better, etc.* An adverbial participle phrase with an unexpressed agent (or notional subject, as it is also called) other than the sentence subject itself is said to be **dangling**. In the above sentence, the present participle **dancing** (in *while dancing, his leg got hurt*) is called a **dangling/unrelated participle**, because it modifies the wrong subject in the main clause. This mismatch occurs because the logical subject of that participle is missing. Some grammarians also called it “*unattached participles.*” Dangling constructions are faulty grammatically and should be avoided except those which have already been sanctioned by usage although we see the use of dangling particles in newspapers, scientific English literature, etc. The following sentences are also unacceptable:

*\*If found guilty, the lawsuit could cost the company US \$12 billion.*

*\*Walking down the cliff, his smile went brighter.*

*\*Reading the evening newspaper, a dog started barking.*

*\*Having eaten in nearby restaurants, this is a great place to let your food settle with a bottle of reasonably priced drink.*

--- <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2011/09/participles-how-not-to-dangle/>

*\*Crossing the street, a bus knocked him down.*

*(Agent of crossing is not the subject of bus.)*

*\*Raining heavily, we could hardly get out.*

(Agent of *raining* is not the subject of *we*.)

*\*Wanting to see you, will you please come tomorrow?*

(Agent of *wanting* is not the subject *you*.) (Huang, 1979)

Let's consider the following again:

*\*Standing on the top of the mountain, the whole city could be seen.*

From the above sentence, the question is “**Who was standing on the top of the mountain?**” It seems as if *the whole city were standing* on the top of the mountain. The logical subject is not *the whole city*, but it can be *we, you, they, he, she, or anyone*. However, in scientific English literature, dangling participles are sometimes seen to be used. But try to avoid using them in formal English, spoken or written, in order for people not to misunderstand the information. The remedy would be either (1) to use a subject which can govern both the main verb and the participle, or (2) to use an adverbial clause instead of a participle phrase. We can choose three faulty examples from the given sentences above to correct them in this light as follows:

1) By using a subject common to the main verb and the participle:

*Standing on the top of the mountain, we could see the whole city.*

*Crossing the street, he was knocked down by a bus.*

*Wanting to see you, I should ask you to come tomorrow.*

*It raining heavily, we could hardly get out.*

2) By converting the participial phrase back into the adverbial clause:

*Because/As/While/When we were standing on the top of the mountain, we could see the whole city.*

*As/While/When he was crossing the street, a bus knocked him down.*

*As/Because I want to see you, will you please come tomorrow?*

*As/Because it was raining heavily, we could hardly get out.*

By way of comment, it should be pointed out that the adverbial clause is the most exact and natural and that the adverbial participial phrase is the most formal, but may be ambiguous in reference, for, as we have seen, it may refer to *time, cause, condition, or accompaniment, etc.* Some of the dangling participles (present or past) are used so much that they look as if they are prepositions or conjunctions (see **13**). Therefore, they are not regarded as present participles anymore, as in

*Considering the bad weather, our sports meet was a huge success.*

(*Considering* is a preposition, and it means *in view of*.)

*Police are anxious to hear any information **concerning** his whereabouts.*  
 (*Concerning* is a preposition and means *about*.)  
*There are thirteen left, **not counting** the spoilt ones.*  
***Following** the lecture, we were able to ask questions.* (*Following* means *after*.)  
***Given** the circumstances, you've coped well.* (*Given* means *considering*.)  
***Granting/Granted** that he didn't know, he should have written to inquire about it.*  
***Granting** his honesty, he may be mistaken in his enthusiasm.*  
*I will go, **provided/providing** you send a car.*  
*No action has been taken **regarding** your complaint.* (*Regarding* means *about*.)  
***Seeing** it is your birthday, you may stay up an hour later tonight.*  
***Talking** about the football match, who won?*

There is no danger of misunderstanding without the subject of the particles as seen from these sentences above. "The participial phrase really modifies the general intent of the whole sentence, and not the subject of the main clause only" (L.X.H., 1982, p.249). The subjects of such participles do not need to be the same when we use them. They are used to modify the main statement as a whole. F.T. Wood (1981, p.135) considered them as "... idiomatic. They modify or depend upon no other word in the sentence." Also see **13 Used as independent element** and **42 Dangling gerunds**. We often use the following participles in such cases:

***admitting (that), assuming (that), barring, considering (that), concerning, excepting, failing, granting (that), owing to, pending, presuming (that), providing (that), regarding, respecting, saving, seeing (that), supposing (that), touching, given (that), granted (that), provided (that), etc.***

Some grammarians think that if an impersonal pronoun, *it*, is used, referring to weather in the main clause, a dangling participle can be accepted, as in

*It was raining hard **coming back**.*  
*It was cold **getting up** this morning.*

When there is no misunderstanding from the context, dangling participles are often seen to be used, as mentioned earlier, especially, in scientific English - the literature of science and technology, and in newspapers. Frequently, a dangling participle, is meant to apply indefinitely to anyone or everyone, as in "*Facing north, there is a large mountain on the right*" and "*Looking at the subject dispassionately, what evidence is there?*" (Bergen Evans et al., 1957). Except for some idiomatic expressions, e.g. *following* (= after), *considering* (= in view of), *regarding* (= about), *etc.*, try not to use dangling participles or gerunds when the content of a sentence is misunderstood, especially for those whose native language is not English avoid using dangling participles when they are writing or speaking English. A dangling participle, however, is not

limited to the participle; it can occur with the gerund and the infinitive, too, e.g. “I succeeded him as captain upon **dying**.” *Dying* would mean *my dying*. Say *his dying* instead of *dying*. “Production has increased by leaps and bounds since **overthrowing** the government.” Say “Production has increased by leaps and bounds since the **overthrow** of the government.” “To climb the rock face, certain precautions are set out below.” Say “To climb the rock face, we have set out certain precautions below”, etc.

## 17 Transitive present participles vs. transitive past participles

As mentioned earlier, the present participle expresses active voice, while the past participle expresses passive voice, so to speak. Both have nothing to do with tense at all. Thus:

*His sudden resignation is quite **surprising**.*

*I am quite **surprised**.*

*The explanation is very **confusing**.*

*The audience are very much **confused**.*

*He is very much **loved** by her.*

*The proof is quite **convincing**.*

*Now he is **convinced**.*

*Your friend is **interesting**.*

*Dr. Kang is **interested** in science.*

A participle used predicatively is virtually an adjective so that it may be modified by the adverb *very*, or *very much*, especially when a past participle is used as adjective, as seen above. The expression, however, does simulate the progressive tense in the case of the present participle, and the passive voice in the case of the past participle. But the present participle construction differs from the progressive tense in that it does not, as the latter would, require an expressed object. For example:

*The news of her death was **shocking**.* (predicative)

*The news of her death was **shocking** the whole community.*

(predicative, progressive; *the whole community* is the object of “shocking”.)

*The news of her death **shocked** all of us.*

(simple past tense; *all of us* is the object of “shocked”.)

When the main verbs are state verbs, they are used in progressive tense. The predicative participle can occur in *appear*, *seem*, etc., besides *be*, as in

*The question **appears** puzzling.*

*His argument **seems** interesting.*



We don't say "*His argument is seeming interesting*" because *seem* here is a state verb.)

The difference between the predicative past participle and the finite passive voice is that the former expresses a state of the subject, and the latter an action. This difference leads to difference in time reference, that is, different tenses are used for the same event, e.g.

*The window glass is broken.*

(Predicative, emphasizing present state of the glass; hence present tense)

*The window glass was broken by a boy.* (passive)

(Finite verb, showing the time of *breaking*; hence a tense with past reference.)

## 18 *Go or come* + present participles

This combination may show three meanings:

1) Some temporary activity usually connected with sports, past times or something, as in

*go begging, go boating, go climbing, go dancing, go drinking, go fishing, go hiking, go hunting, go riding, go skiing, go shooting, go shopping, go cycling, go sailing, go swimming, go walking, etc.*

More examples:

*Come swimming with us tomorrow.*

*Come dancing with us.* (R.A. Close, 1975)

*She came running.* (G. Leech et al., 1974)

*Let's go swimming.*

We also have such phrases as the following:

*go sight-seeing, go collecting bird's eggs, etc.*

2) A more or less permanent occupation, as in

*go farming, go teaching, go nursing, go soldering, go bricklaying, etc.*

It is to be noted that not all occupations are capable of such a construction. For instance, we don't yet say that a person *goes printing, goes publishing, goes building, etc.* The advice seems to be not to use any that has not been accepted in usage.

3) Disapproval or deprecation of an activity, as in

*You shouldn't go **boasting** about your abilities.*

*If you **go eating** this spoilt food, you will surely be in for food poisoning.*

## 19 Participles used in echo exclamation or other occasion in expression of surprise, resent, hate, etc.

Just like an infinitive, participles can be used in echo exclamation, as in

A: *I'm going to Las Vegas.*

B: ***Going to Las Vegas!** What for?*

A: *Have you completed your project due next Monday?*

B: ***Completed my project!** I just started!*

A: *I'm going to invite Jean to the party.*

B: ***To invite Jean!** No way! (infinitive)*

## 20 Compound words

### 20.1 Present Participles

We can make compound words by using a present participle, a noun, an adjective or an adverb.

#### 1) Noun + present participle

We can use a noun followed by a present participle to form a compound word. In such a case, the relationship between the noun and the participle is that of verb and object. The participle deriving from the verb is usually a transitive verb. We say: ***She has reached the child-bearing age*** and ***she has borne several children*** (SVO). ***We have saved a lot of labor for this project*** (SVOA). ***They are labor-saving machines.*** i.e. *save (V) labor (O) → labor-saving; coin-collecting → collect (V) coins (O), etc.* If the object is a countable noun (e.g. *coins, stamps*) in a plural form, a singular noun should be used when a compound word is made, so we don't say *\*coins-collecting* or *stamps-collecting*. Compare: ***Coin-collecting is an interesting hobby.*** ***Collecting coins is my hobby.***

More examples:

***book-keeping, book-reviewing, brainwashing, breathtaking, coin-collecting, dressmaking, an English-speaking lady, epoch-making progress, fact-finding, faultfinding, fur-bearing animals, fish-producing lakes, a gas-exporting country, heart-***

*breaking news, housekeeping, letter-writing, life-giving, a man-eating animal, oath-taking, peace-loving people, a road-widening plan, record-breaking, self-justifying, sightseeing* (= see sights), *a steel making factory, story-telling, etc.*

But this is not always the same, sometimes we can have the present participle deriving from an intransitive verb and the noun is used adverbially (VA), as in

*churchgoing* (= go to church), *daydreaming* (= dreams during the day), *fist-fighting*, *handwriting* (= write by hand), *horse riding* (= ride on a horse), *law-abiding* citizens (= citizens who abide by law), *lip-sucking*, *mouth-watering food*, *ocean-going ships* (= ships go across oceans), *rope-dancing* (= dance on a rope), *shadow-boxing* (= box against a shadow), *sleepwalking* (= walk in one's sleep), *sun-bathing* (bathe in the sun), *town-dwelling* people (= people who dwell in a town), *etc.*

## 2) Adverb + present participle

We can use an adverb and a participle to form a compound adjective. The relationship between the participle and the adverb is that of adverbial.

For example:

*ever-increasing, ever-lasting, ever-widening, far-reaching, hardworking, a never-ending war, long-pending, long-playing, ongoing, outgoing presents, outstanding, well-meaning, etc.*

## 3) Adjective + present participle

*an easy-going lady, good-tasting food, a good-looking girl, high-sounding, etc.*

## 20.2 Past Participles

### 1) noun + past participles

We can make compound words by using a past participle and a noun. In such cases, the compound words (formed by a noun and past participle) are adjectives. They are often hyphenated between the noun and the past participle or they have no hyphen or written as one word. They often have adverbial relationship, e.g. *heartfelt*, means *feeling it in the heart*.

*blood-splattered, battle-tested, custom-built, frost-bitten, handmade, handwritten, heartfelt, home brewed, homemade, poverty-stricken, rain-soaked* (=soaked by/with rain), *self-contained, self-taught, state-owned* (= owned by the state), *sun-burnt, suntanned, thunder-struck, town-bred, weather-beaten, war ravaged, etc.*

## 2) Adverb + past participles

In such a case, the relationship between the adverb and the participle are adverbial. They are used as adjectives. They are hyphenated between them or have no hyphen or sometimes written as one word, as in

*a dearly paid mistake, full-fledged, a full-grown boy, far-fetched, hard-boiled, a hard-boiled egg, ill-gotten, ill-mannered, out-spoken, outstretched, ready-made, rough-hewn, upraised, well-arranged, well-informed, well-known, well-behaved, well-meant, well-spoken, wide-opened, widespread, etc.*

It is to be noted that *rough, wide* and *ready* in the compounds above are adverbs rather than adjectives. When *ready* is used this way, it is usually followed by past participles, i.e. *ready cooked, ready mixed, etc.* Besides, some compound words are made up of an adverb and a past participle, in which the adverb is usually with reference to time or manner, etc., as in

*a badly-built house, a well-built house, a well-behaved boy, far-fetched reasons, half-baked ideas, half-finished houses, her newly-born daughter, the far-and-wide discussed new product, newly-invented devices, highly-developed countries, the many-times repeated warning, a tightly fastened down mouse, some hitherto unpublished letters, well-nourished and well brought-up children, well-educated teachers, etc.*

## 3) Adjective + past participles

*American-born* (= born in America), *western-educated* (= educated in the West), *new-born, new-laid, true-born, etc.*

Some of the adjectives derive from their nouns, i.e. *American* comes from *America*.

## 4) Adjective + past participle deriving from a noun

Besides, we can use adjective plus a noun with *-ed* for its suffix, which looks like a participle, as in

*a curly-haired girl* (= a girl with curly hair), *a fat-fingered baby* (= a baby with fat fingers), *good-tempered, long-legged, the long-nosed man, noble-minded, white-haired, a white-jacketed workman* (= a workman with a white jacket), *etc.*

In such a case the noun *hair* becomes *haired*, and *leg, legged, etc.* *Haired* and *legged*, for example, look like past participles. Not all such phrases can be replaced by a compound.

## 5) Past participles + adverb/preposition

We can use a verbal phrase in which the particle is an adverb or preposition. When they are past participles, they can be used as adjective usually with a hyphen in it, as in

*made-up stories* (= stories that have been made up), *stepped-up provocation*, *a rolled up map*, *a built-in program*, *a long-drawn-out struggle*, *a much talked-about affair*, *undreamed-of success*, *unheard-of wonders*, *unpaid-for goods*, etc.

## 21 The Gerunds

The parts of the verb ending in *-ing* form are the present participle and the gerund. The gerund (verbal noun) is a form of a verb functioning as a noun, which describes an action or experience. For example, “building” is a gerund (a verbal noun) in “*The building of the bridge was slow work*” and “smoking” in “*Smoking does no good to health*,” etc. Since a gerund is a noun, it can be used as subjects, direct objects or objects of prepositions, predicative (nominative), apposition, etc.

### 21.1 Forms of the gerunds

	Active	Passive
Indefinite	<i>writing</i>	<i>being written</i>
Perfect	<i>having written</i>	<i>having been written</i>
Perfect Progressive	<i>having been writing</i>	<i>having been being written</i> (possible) Not <i>*being being written</i>

Like the finite verb, the gerund can be put into the passive voice, if the meaning so required.

### 21.2 Active gerunds

When the logical subject of the gerund is also the subject of the sentence, an active voice is used, as in

*Dr. Kang doesn't like going swimming in cold weather.*

(The logical subject of *going* is also the subject of the sentence, *Dr. Kang*.)

*Mr. Roser enjoyed taking care of his students.*

(The logical subject of *taking care of* is also the subject of the sentence, *Mr. Roser*.)

*No one likes getting up early at weekend.*

*He denied having stolen his girlfriend's iPhone.*

*She regrets not having completed the work on time.*

= She regrets that she hasn't completed the work on time.

*I hate your **hanging** around here. (But the logical subject of *hanging* is **you** not **I**.)*  
*I recall his **having** dinner with me the day when I met him.*  
(But the logical subject of *having* is **he** not **I**.)

### 21.3 Passive gerunds

When the subject of the sentence is also the logical object of the gerund, a passive voice is used, as in

*He is quite annoyed at **being ordered** about like that.*  
(The logical object of **order** is also the logical subject of the sentence, **He**.)  
*Beibei dislikes **being regarded** as a nobody.*  
(The logical object of **regarded** is also the logical subject of the sentence, **Beibei**.)  
= Beibei dislikes people **regarding her** as a nobody.  
*The fierce lady dislikes **being interrupted** in her conversation.*  
*No one enjoyed **being disturbed** in the middle of the night.*  
*We couldn't help **being impressed** by their wonderful achievements.*  
*He doesn't like **being ordered** about in that way.*  
*He likes **joking** and **being joked**, and he also doesn't mind **being made fun of**.*  
*She recalls **having been beaten** many times by her stepfather.*  
= She recalls that she had been beaten/was beaten many times by her stepfather.  
*I don't remember **having ever been scolded** by my former boss.*  
= I don't remember that I had ever been scolded/was scolded by my former boss.  
*She'd run the risk of **being arrested** if she continued doing something dirty.*  
*The new teaching method has the advantage of **having been tried** a few times by experienced teachers.*  
*Sandy left the meeting without **being noticed/seen***  
*All Sandy wanted was her daughter **being given** the job.*  
(The logical object of "give" is her daughter.)  
*What upset me most was Kayla's **being told** not to join them.*  
(The logical object of "tell" is Kayla.)  
*What upset the child was his not **being allowed** to visit his mother in the hospital.*  
(The logical object of "allow" is the child.)  
*I congratulated Sandy on **being elected** chairwoman of the technology club.*  
*I couldn't understand John's **being expelled** because of his bad behavior.*  
(The logical object of "expel" is John.)  
*Afraid of **being caught**, she sneaked out of the room.*  
(Passive is used because the logical object of the verb, *catch*, is also the subject of the main clause, *she*.)  
*I object to **being kept** waiting for so long.*

(Passive is used because the logical object of the verb, *keep*, is also the subject of the sentence, *I*.)

*I look forward to **being invited** again.*

Cf. I look forward to people inviting me again

*They were proud of their **products being praised** highly by the buying public.*

(The logical object of “praise” is their products.)

*Some customers complain of **having been treated** very rudely.* (Perfect gerund form)

From the sentences described above, the understood object of the non-finite verb (the passive gerund) is also the subject of the sentence or the logical objects of the verbs that are in passive forms.

## 22 Tense in a gerund or gerundial phrase

We usually use a simple tense in a gerund or gerundial phrase. However, we use a perfect tense to emphasize something happening prior to that in the main verb of the subject or the action that happens earlier than that in the main verb of the sentence, as in

*The thought that he couldn't get rid of was his **having made** the mistake himself.*

***Having done** the hard work is an experience I will never forget.*

(inversion: The experience I will never forget is **having done** the hard work.)

***Having been wounded** before proved to be too much.*

*Imagine **having travelled** round the world.*

*I regret **having told** her so much.*

*I regret not **having completed** the work on time.*

= I regret that I didn't complete the work on time.

*She must admit to **having gone** a long way to realize what she did in the past.*

*He admitted to **having been sexually abused** by his stepfather.*

*She recalls **having been beaten** many times by her stepmother.*

= She recalls that she had been beaten many times by her stepmother.

*I don't remember **having ever been scolded** by my former boss.*

= I don't remember that I had ever been scolded by my former boss.

*The students must be proud of **having found** a way to solve the problem.*

*Thank you ever so much for **having done** too much to me!*

= Thank you ever so much for doing too much to me!

## 23 Use of the gerund and the gerundial phrase

Contemporary grammarians would prefer to use *-ing* forms for both present participle and gerund in the English language. However, the writer prefers using the gerund form rather than

the **-ing** form although they are the same in form. This might be good for those whose native language is not English to understand the difference, and it might be easier for them to write or speak English when they know the rules or usage. Let us consider the following:

- 1) *I saw him/John **entering** the house.* (SVOC)
- 2) *\*I saw his/John's **entering** the house.*

In Sentences 1) and 2), **entering** is present participle rather than a gerund, so Sentence 2) is incorrect because **his** or **John's** (a possessive form) cannot be used as the logical subject of the participle **entering**, but **him/John** can be the logical subject of **entering** because **entering** is a participle. Let us look at the following:

- 3) *Would you mind **me/him/John** opening the door?*
- 4) *Would you mind **my/his/John's** opening the door?*
- 5) *Do you mind **me/my** smoking here?*

In Sentences 3) and 4), **opening** is a gerund rather than a participle. In Sentence 3), **me, him,** or **John** (pronouns in the objective case and **John** with no apostrophe) is used as the agent (the logical subject) of **opening**; in Sentence 4), **my** or **his** (a possessive pronoun) or **John's** (a noun with an apostrophe), is also used as the agent (the logical subject) of **opening**. This is the marked difference between the use of the **-ing** form and the gerundial form because the **-ing** form (= a present participle) does not take a possessive as shown in 2) above while the gerund can take either objective case as shown in Sentences 3) or a possessive as shown in 4) above. If a possessive, such as **my, his** or **John's**, is used instead of the objective case (**me, him** or **John**), the gerund, **opening**, is, of course, a **full gerund**, as shown in 4) above. The gerund with an agent, the logical subject, (either a noun or pronoun in the objective case), **opening**, as shown in 3) above, is called a **half gerund**. See **43 The half gerund vs. full gerund**.

As mentioned earlier, because the logical subject of the gerund and the gerund is a complete gerundial phrase, we cannot use the subject of the gerund to convert it into a passive, i.e. *\*I am not minded smoking here* as compared with “*Do you mind me smoking here?*” but there is no problem we can say, “*I saw him leaving the house and He was seen leaving the house*, because *leaving* here is a present participle rather than a gerund in the sentence.

### **23.1 Used as subject**

Like a noun or noun phrase, the gerund or gerundial phrase can be used as subject, as in

- Breathing** under water is difficult.*
- Having a telephone** can be nuisance.*
- Smoking** does no good to health.*



*Swimming is beneficial to health.*

*Studying English is hard.*

*Standing here all day makes me very tired.*

*Writing the book has taken up nearly all her spare time.*

*Not having one has its disadvantage.*

*Not/Never having an iPhone can save a kid a great deal of trouble.* (with negation)

*Not smoking a pack of cigarettes a day helps you to avoid lung cancer.*

(*Not smoking a pack of cigarettes a day* is used as subject.)

*Having done such hard work is an experience I will never forget.*

(*Having done such hard work ...* is a perfect tense, which is the same as *That I have done such hard work is an experience I will never forget.*)

*Having been wounded before* (= That you had been wounded before) *proved to be too much.*

(*Having been wounded before* is a perfect tense with passive voice.)

*Having been trying* (= That you have been trying) *is no excuse.*

(perfect progressive tense)

*Jean's staying up so late* (=That Jean stays up so late) *worries her mother.*

(*Jean's* is the logical subject of the gerund phrase *staying up*. See 43)

*His saying he was sorry* (=That he said he was sorry) *was appreciated.*

*His having danced the tango skillfully surprised me.*

*Does our saying that mean anything to her?*

*Me knowing her name surprised her.*

*Being ridiculed in this way is beyond endurance.*

(*being ridiculed* with passive voice, used as subject)

*Being invited to come here is a great honor.* (with passive voice, used as subject)

*Being elected chairman of the club is a blessing.* (with passive voice)

*Being cast in a movie is the best fun in the world, she thought.*

## 23.2 The difference between the use of a gerund and an infinite used as subject

Generally speaking, there is slight or no difference between the use of a gerund and an infinitive when they are used as subjects, as in

*Seeing is believing.*

*To see is to believe.*

*Swimming in the cold weather does no good for some people.*

*To swim in the cold weather like today does no good for you.* (specific reference)

*Lying is wrong.* (generic reference to anyone who lies)

Some grammarians think that the use of gerunds as subject indicates generic or abstract or habitual meaning while the infinitive indicates a specific situation, or a new act, and not habitual.

Besides, the gerundial use indicates descriptive force while the use of an infinitive indicates a general statement. In spoken English gerundial forms used as subject are more than the infinitive use, especially in interrogative questions or at the beginning of a sentence. Sometimes, in such a case, there is no practical difference. Also see **26 The difference between the gerund and the infinitive used as object/predicative.**

### 23.3 Anticipatory *it*

For the gerund, the introductory or anticipatory *it* (empty subject) is used with an adjective or a noun or a noun phrase. The *it* represents the following gerund or gerundial phrase, as in

*It's* great fun ***playing/to play with that game.***

*It's* no good ***arguing with her.***

*It* is no good ***your speaking so fast.***

*It* doesn't seem much/good/use ***going on.*** (Hornby, 1977)

*It* wouldn't be any good ***my talking to her.***

*It's* so nice ***sitting here with you***

*It's* no use ***crying over spilt milk.*** (idiom)

*It's* no use ***asking him about the matter.***

*It's* no use ***him wiring back.*** (Bergen Evans et al., 1957)

*It's* not the slightest use ***your losing temper with me***

*It's* no use ***your pretending that you didn't know the rules.***

*It* wouldn't be much use ***trying to reinstall the program.***

*It's* worthwhile/worth (while) ***learning Spanish.***

*It's* not worth while ***losing your temper.***

*It* might be worth ***taking/to take the guided tour.***

(Cf. The guided tour is worth taking.)

*It* was hard ***getting on the crowded bus in the rush hour.***

*It* was odd ***his coming to beg from me again.***

*It's* wonderful ***lying on the beach all day.*** (Hornby, 1977)

*It* was a difficult business ***getting everything ready in time.*** (Hornby, 1977)

*It* was quite an experience ***going swimming/to go swimming in a big deep lake.***

*It* is an awful job ***repairing the damaged computer.***

*It* is a nuisance ***being/to be without AC in the hot summer.***

*It* felt good ***walking in the forest in the morning at weekend.***

*It* seems such a pity, ***all the furniture being spoiled by the damp.***

*It* is vilely unjust, ***the minority people in that country being treated like that.***

A comma is sometimes inserted between the subject complement and the gerundial phrase when the logical subject of the gerundial phrase is long or longer than the subject complement as we

see the last two sentences above. After *experience, fun, nuisance, use,* and *worth*, an infinitive can also be used, especially when *for* + a noun or a noun phrase construction is used, as in

*It's great fun (for us) to work with you today.*

*It wouldn't be any good for me to talk to her.*

*It wasn't much use for me to pretend (that) I didn't know the rules.* (Hornby, 1977)

### 23.4 *There + be + no + gerund*

In the construction, *there + be + no + gerund*, it is tantamount to the meaning of *it is impossible to do* or *doing*. In such a case, *there* is used as an introductory subject or empty subject, in which the following gerund does not take logical subject and the gerund cannot be replaced with an infinitive, as in

*There is no denying the fact.*

= It is impossible denying/to deny the fact.

*There is no getting along with that fierce lady.*

*There is no joking with her.*

\**There is no your joking with her.* (no logical subject before the gerund in such a construction)

\**There is no to joke with her.* (no infinitive used after *no*)

*There is no making progress in negotiating with China in the trade war.*

Occasionally, *not any, never any* replaced with *no* in this construction, as in

*There isn't any getting away from it.*

*There's never any predicting what they will do next.*

*There won't be any problem/difficulty parking.*

Sometimes, *there + be* is omitted in such a construction, especially in advertisement or public notices. In such a context, an object is not used, as in,

***No smoking!***

Cf. *Smoking not allowed.*

***No trespassing!***

***No parking!***

Cf. *Don't park your car here! Parking prohibited between 7 am and 5 pm.*

They look like imperative sentences. However, the gerund form - *there + being* – can be used as a subject or a prepositional object, as in

*There being an index to that book is a great advantage.* (used as subject)

*There being no index to that book is a disadvantage.* (used as subject)

= *There not being an index to that book is a disadvantage.*

*I am surprised at **there being** no index/not an index to that book.*

(used as prepositional object)

*Were you disappointed at **there not having been** more applause?*

(used as prepositional object with perfect gerund)

## 24 Used as direct object

### 24.1 A gerund or a gerundial phrase used as object in SVO construction

Since a gerund has a function of a noun, it can be used as an object just like other nouns, as in

*The girl admitted **being careless**.*

*He admitted **having seen** Beibei.*

*Sandy loves **sneaking up on her husband to frighten him**.*

*We must practice **speaking** English every day.*

*I enjoy **swimming** in summer.* (not followed by a perfect gerund, \**having swum*)

*She recalls **having been beaten** many times by her stepfather.*

=She recalls that she had been beaten many times by her stepfather.

*I don't recall ever **saying** (=having said) *such a thing*.*

*I regret not **seeing** (= not having seen) *her*.*

*I don't remember **having ever been scolded** by my former boss.*

= I don't remember that I had ever been scolded by my former boss.

*I remember **mailing** (=having mailed) *the letter*.*

*She resented **being looked at**.* (passive)

(The logical object of "look at" is also the subject of the sentence, *she*.)

In "**remember** or **recall** something, etc.", the gerund shows the action happening before that in the main clause. We can use either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form without changing the meaning. But when we use a perfect gerund form, we just emphasize that action prior to that of **remember** or **recall** something. The following verbs and verbal phrases are usually followed by a gerund used as direct objects:

**Acknowledge** (allowed to be followed by a perfect gerund form), **admit/admit to** (allowed to be followed by a perfect gerund form), **advise** (the *to*-infinitive is also used in SVOC), **advocate**, **don't allow** (the *to*-infinitive is also used in SVOC), **anticipate**, **appreciate**, **attend**, **authorize**, **avoid**, **do not bear**, **begin**, **begrudge**, **bear** (usually used in the question or negative with *can*), **bother** (either the *to*-infinitive or a gerund used when it is in negative sentence or question),

*can't endure, can't/couldn't help* (followed by either a simple gerund form or perfect gerund form), (*can't*) *stand, confess/confess to* (allowed to be followed by a perfect form), *consider, contemplate* (either a possessive or objective case for the logical subject of the gerund can be used), *continue, defend, defer, delay, deny* (usually followed by a perfect gerund form), *deplore, deprecate, describe, deserve* (followed by a gerund with passive meaning), *detest* (rarely using the *to*-infinitive), *discontinue, dislike* (either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form and either a possessive or objective case for the logical subject of the gerund), *doubt, dread* (the *to*-infinitive used mainly with *think* or *imagine*), *encourage, endure, enjoy* (no perfect gerund form), *entail, envisage, escape, excuse, evade, face* (used in the question or negative with *can*), *facilitate, fancy* (= want), *favor, finish* (no perfect gerund form), *forbid, forget* (followed by either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form), *forgive, grudge, hate* (better to use an objective case or a noun without apostrophe if a gerund needs a logical subject), *have* (= experience), *imagine* (can be followed by either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form), *include, intend, involve, justify, keep from, keep (on), like* (better to use an objective case or a noun without apostrophe if a gerund needs a logical subject), *love, mean, mention, mind* (used in negation or question), *miss, necessitate, need, omit, pardon, permit* (the *to*-infinitive also used in SVOC), *postpone, prefer, practice* (AmE), *practise* (BrE), *prevent, propose, put off, quit, recall, recollect* (can be followed by either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form), *recommend* (the *to*-infinitive also used in SVOC), *regret* (followed by either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form), *remember* (can be followed by either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form), *renounce, require, report, resent* (followed by either a simple gerund form or a perfect gerund form), *resist, resume, risk, save, can't see* (= can't imagine) *somebody doing something, shun, cannot stand* (= *stand* meaning *bear* or *endure*), *start* (an objective case for the logical subject of the gerund), *stop, try, suggest, tolerate, understand, want, warrant*, and other phrasal verbs such as *feel like, give up* (smoking), *go on* (working), *leave off* (raining), *put off*, and *set about* (doing something), *etc.*

For example:

*Sandy doesn't advocate you/your going there tomorrow.*

*I don't advocate starting the project tomorrow.*

*They don't allow sunbathing here.*

Cf. They don't allow people to sunbathe here.

*My aunt doesn't allow smoking here.*

Cf. My aunt doesn't allow people to smoke here.

*Dr. Kang appreciated being invited to dinner last night.*

(with passive voice; the logical object of *invited* is the subject of the sentence, *Dr.*

*Kang.*)

*Try to avoid making such a silly mistake next time.*

*I can't bear seeing/to see her husband treated badly.*

*Don't bother washing up/to wash up.*

*Have you **considered finding** a job abroad?*  
*I can't **contemplate** John/John's **coming** tomorrow. (F. R. Palmer, 1978)*  
*She **denied having been** there.*  
*I **deplore** them/their **doing** that.*  
*I always **dreaded being** kissed by my aunts.*  
*He **deserves criticizing** for being late.*  
 = He deserves to be criticized for being late.  
 But: He *deserves to win*. She *deserves to lose money*. (Both are active in meaning.)  
*Sandy can't **endure being** disturbed in her work.*  
*Excuse my **interrupting** you.*  
*I cannot **understand his behaving** in such an irresponsible manner.*  
*Imagine never **having been** abroad.*  
*I can't **imagine him knowing** all that. (F.R. Palmer, 1978, p.203)*  
*He **kept talking**.*  
*Sandy **mentioned having been** to Las Vegas.*  
*Do you **mind standing** here for a while?*  
*She **doesn't mind** you/your **saying** that.*  
*He **misses going** to the theater.*  
*I **miss them coming** to see me every week. (F. R. Palmer, 1978)*  
*Your hair **needs/wants cutting**. (active in use, but passive in meaning)*  
*He **quit smoking** and **drinking** five years ago.*  
*I **remember** (my) **saying** that.*  
*I can't see him ever **owning** a house! (F.R. Palmer, 1978, p.193)*  
 (= I can't imagine him ever **owning** a house!)  
 Not \*I can't see him ever *own* a house.  
*I can't **stand sitting** around doing nothing.*  
*Marlowe **can't stand working** in an office.*  
*How can you **stand** Beibei **coming** home late all the time?*

When *advise, recommend, don't allow, or permit, etc.*, have a logical subject of the non-finite verb in SVOC, a *to*-infinitive is used, e.g.

*I **advised visiting** Las Vegas.*  
 Cf. I advised them to visit Las Vegas.  
*I **don't allow going** there so early.*  
 Cf. I don't allow all of you *to go* there so early.

## 24.2 The logical subject of the gerund

Generally speaking, the logical subject of a gerund is usually the subject of the sentence when the gerund is used as an object in SVO, but this is not always the case. It depending on the

context, the logical subject of a gerund can be *anyone* (see 27) when what the subject of the sentence has uttered denotes a general statement or opinion or suggestion or an idea, etc. Compare:

*I enjoy **living** here.*

(The logical subject of the gerund, **living**, is the subject of the sentence, **I**.)

*Sandy doesn't advise **doing** that.*

(The logical subject of the gerund, **doing**, is not *Sandy* but *we*, *you*, *they*, or even *anyone*. Sandy suggests not doing that.)

*I don't recommend **starting** the project immediately.*

(The logical subject of the gerund, **starting**, is not **I** but **we** or **you** or **anyone**.)

*I hate **lying**.* (general statement; the logical subject of *lying* can be *anyone*.)

*I didn't like **complaining**.*

(I complained or someone complained, but I didn't enjoy it or I didn't like the idea.)

*I don't like **to put off** today's work till tomorrow.* (usually myself)

*I don't like **putting off** today's work till tomorrow.* (either myself or somebody else)

## 25 The gerund used as part of complex object

*Can you **call this serving the people**?*

(*Serving the people* is a gerundial noun phrase. It is SVOC.)

*I can't **contemplate Sandy/Sandy's coming** tomorrow.*

***Fancy him knowing** that.*

*We **kept them talking**.* (SVOC)

Cf. We kept *talking*. (SVO)

*They were **kept talking**.*

*He **left them standing** in the street.*

*They were **left standing** in the street.*

*Would you **mind her using** the computer in your room?*

*I **miss them coming** to see me every week.*

Cf. I miss *visiting* Las Vegas,

*He **prevented them (from) leaving**.*

*They were **prevented from leaving***

*He **started them talking**.*

Cf. He started *talking*.

*They were **started talking**.*

Verbs of this type (F.R. Palmer, 1978, p. 207) are: **chance**, **consider**, **contemplate**, **countenance**, **detest**, **discuss**, **enjoy**, (**don't**) **fancy** (only in the imperative), **justify**, **don't mind**, **miss**, **regret**,

*(don't) relish, resent, risk, welcome, etc.* The possessive is possible with these verbs, but objective case is preferable as seen from the examples above. However, the following verbs are commonly found with the possessive as well as objective case. Verbs of this type are: *advocate, anticipate, deplore, deprecate, etc.*, as in

*I don't advocate **you** going there tomorrow.*  
*I don't advocate **your** going there tomorrow.*  
*I deplore **them** doing that.*  
*I deplore **their** doing that. (Their is better than them here.)*

In spoken English we usually use a noun or pronoun with object case (*me, him, etc.*) or possessive pronouns (*my, his, etc.*) as a logical subject, but some of the verbs, e.g. *deny, deplore, deprecate, postpone, defer, etc.*, usually have possessive cases as logical subject of the gerund (i.e. possessive is better than objective case in use), as in

*They deferred **Roser's** going home on furlong until next week.*  
*Reid doesn't deny **his** breaking the agreement.*  
*I had to postpone **my** paying the rent due to coronavirus outbreaks.*

## 25.1 Anticipatory *it* representing a gerundial structure in complex objects

We use *it* to present the real object in such a construction, as in

*We found **it** very useless **trying to persuade him to go with us.***  
*Don't you think **it** wise **our climbing the mountain without a guide?***  
(The real object is a gerundial structure, *our climbing the mountain without a guide*; its complement is *wise*. The *it* is used as an anticipating object to represent *our climbing the mountain without a guide*. *Our* is a possessive pronoun used as a formal logical subject of the gerund, *climbing*.)  
*She finds **it** rather dull **living here.***  
*We thought **it** no good **telling him about that.***  
(*It* is an anticipatory object, representing the real object - *telling him about that*.  
*No good* is used as the complement.)  
*I don't think **it** worthwhile **taking such trouble.***

## 26 The difference between the gerund and the infinitive used as object/predicative

It is hard to tell the difference between the use of a gerund and an infinitive when they are used either predicative (subject complement) or an object. As mentioned early, some grammarians point out that the gerund is used to refer to the action in general or general statement, abstract or



generic reference, whereas the infinitive is used to refer to the particular occasion, a specific reference, or a new act, or a single action that may or may not happen. When we describe something for general statement, we usually use a gerund, especially after verbs indicate likes and preferences and their opposites, but the infinitive **to** is used especially when the verb is used with **would** or **should** / **'d** in statements or questions or negation about specific occasions (Hornby, 1977, p.42), as in

*Would you like **to go** with me now?* (particular occasion)  
*I like the children **going** to the beach.* (general statement)  
Cf. I like the children *to go* to the beach today. (specific)  
*I like **swimming**, but I wouldn't like **to swim** in cold weather.*  
*I like **getting up** early, so I should like **to get up** early tomorrow.*  
*\*I'd like getting up early.*  
*I don't like her **being** rude to me.*  
*I liked his **seeing** a doctor.* (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p. 837)  
= I liked him to see a doctor.  
Cf. I like *him to see* a doctor. I like *to see* a doctor.  
*I don't like **smoking**, but I'd like **to smoke** at your tomorrow's birthday party.*  
*Women like **being admired**.* (*To be admired* is also acceptable.)  
*Men don't like **being criticized**.* (*To be criticized* is also acceptable.)  
*I prefer **swimming** in warm water; I should prefer not **to go** swimming in cold water.*  
*My job is **teaching math**.* (generic reference)  
*Don't lie to me! I hate **lying**.* (*Lying* here is generic reference.)  
*My job is **to teach** them math tomorrow.* (specific reference; one single action)  
*Casey's job this morning/today is **to help** you.* (specific reference)  
*Her hobby is **collecting** stamps.* (general statement)  
(Cf. \*Her hobby is *to collect* stamps.)  
*Sandy's favorite winter sport is **skating**.* (preference – general statement)  
(Cf. \*Sandy's favorite winter sport is *to skate*.)  
*It's nice **to be** young.* (idea)  
*It's nice **being** young.* (fact), (Leech, 1978, p.107)

In the sentence, *I liked his **seeing** a doctor*, the possessive pronoun, **his**, is used, but F. R. Palmer, 1978 (p.206) stated that "... the possessive form is most unlikely." He put an asterisk on the following sentence, *\*I like his going to the theatre*, which means is unacceptable, but R. Quirk et al. (1972, p. 837) gave the example of the sentence *I liked his seeing a doctor* is acceptable, where **his** is used (see 43). It seems that the verb **like** does not take a possessive when it is used in affirmative sentences, but it is found that it takes possessive in negative sentence, as in

*I don't like **Sandy/Sandy's coming**.*

*We don't like **them/their coming** late.*

*I don't like **you/your being** out so late. (Alexander et al., 1977, p.178)*

*I don't like **people/them interfering** in my affairs.*

*I like **the children going** to the park.*

Cf. I like the children/them *to go* to the park.

There is no problem for the verb **dislike**, as in

*I dislike his/him **doing** that. (F.R. Palmer, 1978, p.179)*

*I dislike Brown's **painting** his daughter. (a full gerund) - R. Quirk et al., 1972)*

*I dislike Brown **painting** his daughter. (a half gerund)*

As mentioned earlier, when **wouldn't** or **shouldn't** or **would** or **should** is used, the use of the *to*-infinitive is preferred to that of the gerund for statements or questions about particular occasions (also see above). Here **would like** means *wish* or *want*, as in

*I like **swimming**.*

*I don't like **swimming**.*

*I'd like **to go** swimming this afternoon. (a particular occasion)*

*I **shouldn't** like **to swim** in that cold lake. (Hornby, 1977)*

***Would** you like **to go** for a walk with me this evening?*

*I **wouldn't** like **staying/to stay indoors** for four weeks.*

(I **wouldn't** like that experience.)

*I prefer **swimming** in warm water; I **should** prefer not **to go** swimming in cold water.*

## 27 Some verbs be followed by either an infinitive or a gerund

Some verbs may be followed by either the *to*-infinitive or a gerund, sometimes it depending on the meaning to be expressed. These verbs are **attempt**, (**can't**) **bear**, **begin**, **bother** (either the *to*-infinitive or a gerund form used when it is in a negative sentence or question), **cease**, **continue**, **delay** (usually followed by a gerund), **dread** (the infinitive used mainly with *think* or *imagine*), **forget**, **hate**, **intend**, **learn**, **like**, **love**, **mean**, **need**, **neglect**, **omit**, **plan**, **prefer**, **propose**, **regret**, **remember**, **start**, **stop**, **try**, **undertake**, **want**, *etc.* Sometimes there is no practical difference in the use of either gerund or infinitive as the object. That being said, the gerund is of a more general characteristic than the use of the infinitive. Again, examine the following:

*I don't like **reading novels**. (statement in general)*

*I don't like **to read this novel**. (on a certain occasion)*

*She likes **swimming**. (general, habitual action, denoting her likeness)*

*She **doesn't** like **to swim** this afternoon; it is too cold for her. (specific occasion)*

*I didn't like **to complain**.* (= I didn't complain, because it wasn't a good idea.)

*I didn't like **complaining**.*

(I complained or someone complained, but I didn't enjoy it or I didn't like the idea.)

*I like **to be invited**.*

*I like **being invited**.*

*I'd like **to swim** today.*

*I'd like **to be invited**.*

*\*I'd like **being invited**.* (Because 'd is used.)

*\*I'd like **seeing** you.* (Because 'd is used.)

But: I would like swimming in cold weather.

*I hate **doing** the tedious work.*

*I'd hate **to go** there now.*

*I plan **visiting** Las Vegas next week.*

*I plan **to visit** Las Vegas next week.*

Either a **to**-infinitive or a gerund form is used when **bother** is used in a negative sentence or question, as in

*Don't bother **to wash up**.*

*Don't bother **washing up**.*

Verbs used like above are **begin, bother, can't bear, ease, commence, continue, hate, intend, like, love, plan, prefer, propose, start, etc.** Interestingly enough, K. Schibsye (1979) mentioned that when the verbs **begin** or **start** is followed by a gerund, it expresses intentional action and the infinitive non-intentional action. When a perfect tense is used in the main verb, the infinitive is preferred, i.e. *It has already started to rain* rather than *?It has already started raining*. When **start** is not followed by a noun or a pronoun or noun phrase, either a **to**-infinitive or a gerund is used, but only a gerund is used when followed by a noun or a pronoun or noun phrase, as in

*Jean started **talking*** (and carried on for an hour).

*Jean started **to talk*** (but was interrupted).

*Will you start **to read/reading**?*

*Beibei started them **talking**.*

Cf. They were started talking. (passive allowed)

However, verbs in reference to **hate** or **like** are usually used with a gerund to express a habitual or personal interest in general, but as mentioned earlier, the **to**-infinitive is used when **would** or **should** is used with them. When we compare something, we'd better use a gerund rather than an infinitive, as in

*I like **riding** better than **walking**.*

The action of the infinitive often refers to the subject of the sentence, whereas that of the gerund is not necessarily associated with the agent expressed by the subject of the sentence, but may also refer to some other agent, e.g.

*I don't like to put off today's work till tomorrow. (usually myself)*

*I don't like putting off today's work till tomorrow. (either myself or somebody else)*

Note that **can't bear, begin, cease, prefer, etc.**, can have either the infinitive or the gerund as object without the change of meaning, as in

When the president came, the people *began **cheering/to cheer***.

We *intend **attending/to attend*** the conference next week.

They *began/preferred **watching/to watch*** television.

They *ceased **watching*** television.

They *couldn't bear/ceased **watching /to watch*** television.

She *can't bear **seeing/to see*** animals treated cruelly. (Hornby, 1977)

I *dread **to think/imagine*** what might happen to you all alone in the city infested with coronavirus.

I *always dreaded **going*** there alone.

I *hate **leaving/to leave*** early.

But only the gerund is used with the verb, **cease**, to indicate the end of something: **Cease firing**.  
*The factory **ceased making** bicycles.*

When **have** is used, the gerund may be used (R. A. Close, 1975) after **prefer**, as in

*I prefer **having** my own computer.*

*I prefer **to have** my own computer.*

However, only the infinitive is normal in the following cases after **would** is used in reference to a new act in the future or completed act (R.A. Close, 1975). Verbs of this type are **hate, like, love, prefer**, etc., as in

A: *Would you like/prefer **to dance**?*

B: *I would love/hate to (**dance**).*

Sometimes when **wouldn't** is used, either a gerund or infinitive can be used, as in

*I wouldn't like **swimming** in cold water. (I wouldn't like that experience.)*

When a verb can be followed by either an infinitive or a gerund, the infinitive **to** is usually used rather than a gerund if the infinitive is a state verb, as in

*We began **to see** what she meant. (\*We began **seeing** what she meant.)*

*We began **to believe** her story. (\*We began **believing** her story.)*

*She begins **to see/understand** what I have just told to her.*

*(\*She begins **seeing/understanding** what I have just told to her.)*

*I began **to know** what she meant.*

*\*I began **knowing** what she meant.*

In the above sentences, *believing*, *knowing*, *seeing* (= understand), and *understanding* cannot be used because they are state verbs. Sometimes in order to avoid repetition, the infinitive (which is not a state verb) is used when the main verb can be followed by either the infinitive or the gerund, as in

*We are beginning **to leave** at ten.*

*\*We are beginning **leaving** at ten.*

*We are starting **to leave** at ten.*

*\*We are starting **leaving** at ten.*

*He's beginning **to learn** English.*

*\*He's beginning **learning** English.*

*She started them **talking**.*

Cf. They were started talking. (Passivization allowed in this case)

*\*They were begun talking. (F.R. Palmer, 1978, p.204)*

(No passivization in this case)

We say, “*We are beginning/starting to leave*” and *He's beginning/starting to learn English*, because the main verb is in progressive tense. More examples:

*It's beginning **to rain**. (\*It's beginning raining.)*

*I'm starting **to work**.*

*They are proposing **to start** at nine.*

Cf. They propose *starting* at nine.

Verbs of this type are **begin**, **continue**, and **start**.

When the verb has to be followed only by a gerund, the gerund has to be used, as in

*We are considering **visiting** Las Vegas.*

*\*We are considering **to visit** Las Vegas.*

(*Consider* is followed by a gerund as object.)

*Sandy is considering **changing** her job.*

**Like** and **continue** both are followed by either a gerund or an infinitive, but when the prefix **dis** is added to them, **dislike** and **discontinue** are followed only by a gerund (Hornby, 1977), as in

*That horse dislikes **wearing** blinkers.*

*\*That horse dislikes **to wear** blinkers.*

*I dislike his/him **doing** that. (F.R. Palmer, 1978)*

*I dislike Brown's **painting** his daughter. (a full gerund) (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.133)*

*I dislike Brown **painting** his daughter. (a half gerund)*

*Sandy dislikes his/him **having done** that.*

*I don't mind **being criticized** by you, but I dislike/hate **being criticized** by strangers.*

However, when **should** is used with the verb followed by NP, the infinitive can be used, e.g. "*I should **dislike** the children **to gamble**.*" *The children* is NP. The verbs of this type include **dislike**, **loathe**, (**couldn't**) **stand**. When these verbs are followed by an infinitive, they also have a conditional meaning (F.R. Palmer, 1978, p.207). For example, *I couldn't stand **to wait** for three hours.*

There is no practical difference when the gerund or the infinitive is used as object for the following verbs: **attempt**, **intend**, **plan**, **propose**, *etc.*, but the infinitive may be more common, as in

*Don't attempt **making/to make** a test without being supervised!*

*I can't bear **getting/to get** my hands dirty.*

*She can't bear **to be laughed at/being laughed at**.*

*I will continue **to help/helping** you.*

*Sandy didn't intend **selling/to sell** her car.*

*He intended **to double** the advertising budget.*

*They love **to play/playing** football.*

*Marlowe planned **to visit/visiting** Las Vegas.*

*It won't **stand being** handled roughly.*

*I can't **stand travelling** in the rush-hour. (Hornby, 1977)*

*(Stand here means bear or endure.)*

*Will you start **to read/reading**?*

Generally speaking, we can use the gerund form to refer to an action in progress in general or to a progress and the infinitive to a new or completed act. Again, consider the following used after an adjective:

*I am interested in/keen on **collecting** stamps. (general)*

*I am/would be interested **to hear** your news. (a new act)*

## 28 Used as predicative/subject complement

A gerund used as predicative is also called subject complement. A gerund or gerundial phrase is used to indicate the purpose or content of the subject of the sentence, in which the main verb is usually *be*, as in

*My favorite sport is **swimming**.*

*Seeing is **believing**.*

*The scientific approach to a subject is **grasping** the essence of it.*

*Marlowe's hobby is **growing** vegetables in his green house.*

*My goal is **passing** the AP test.*

*The only thing to worry about is **being** afraid of them.*

*Sandy's plan was not **starting** the project early.*

*One of the troubles is his **using** too much money for the project.*

*What upset me most was Marlowe's **having** a surgery the next day.*

*What she looked forward to most was **visiting** her husband in Iraq.*

*What she suffers from is not **being** able to sleep.*

*What I'm doing is **teaching** him a lesson. (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.954)*

*What he likes best is **playing** a slot machine in Red Rock Casino.*

*The sport Marlowe likes most is **climbing mountains or canoeing** down a mountain stream at weekend.*

*What I don't like is her **coming** to bother me.*

*What upset me most was Kayla's **being told** not to join them.*

*What upset the child most was his not **being allowed** to visit his mother in the hospital.*

It is to be noted that either subjective case or objective case is used as logical subject of the gerund. In spoken English the objective case is used more than the subjective case, as in

*What I really don't understand is **you changing** your mind about breaking off your engagement.*

*All I know is your **boyfriend having** an affair with another pretty girl.*

## 29 Verbs taking a *to*-infinitive or gerund with different meaning

Verbs of this type are *dread, forget, go on, cannot help, leave off, mean, regret, remember, stop, try, etc.* We must pay attention to individual verbs in their usage. A good dictionary can help you to distinguish their difference, as in

### 1) *dread*

With *dread*, an infinitive is used when followed by such verbs as *think* or *imagine*. When a gerund is used, the reference is to something that causes fear, e.g.

*I dread **to think** what might happen to you when you are alone.*

*I dread **seeing** that fierce lady.*

### 2) *forget*

With *forget*, the infinitive is used when it has the meaning *fail to remember* or *neglect to do something*, e.g.

*I am afraid he will forget **to preview** his new lesson.*

*You forgot **to sign** the paper. (You forgot you had to and didn't do it.)*

*I forgot **to buy** you the flowers for your birthday. (I didn't buy you the flowers.)*

With the gerund it means *lose the memory of the past*, e.g.

*I will never forget **visiting** Las Vegas for the first time.*

*(Visiting Las Vegas happens first, and I will not forget the visit.)*

But we usually do not say *\*I forgot **doing** it*; instead, we use a *that*-clause or a preposition, as in

*I forgot **that I had done** it. (Meaning: I was unable to remember I did it.)*

*I forgot **about doing** it.*

But when a present tense (*forget*) is used, it is acceptable, as in

*I forget **mailing** (= having mailed) the letter.*

= I forget (that) I mailed the letter.

The sentence means *I mailed the letter but I have forgotten about the letter I mailed*. It is to be noted that when the negation is used with *forget* (*never forget* = *remember*), we can use a gerund or perfect infinitive preceded by an object; otherwise, we cannot use that way, as in

*I shall never forget my girlfriend **coming** to see me.*

*I'll never forget John/John's/him/his **imitating** the teacher.*

*I shall never forget my father **to have been** kind. (F.R. Palmer, 1978, p.202)*

*\*I forget my father **to have been** kind.*

*(Not acceptable because no negation is used of *forget*.)*

*I forget **coming** to see you.*

*I forget my father **coming** to see me.*



There is no problem when we use **remember** in the following sentences, as in

*I remember **coming** to see her.*

*I remember my girlfriend **coming** to visit me.*

*I remember my girlfriend **to have been** kind*

### 3) go on

*He went on **talking**.*

*He went on **to talk**.*

“**Go on talking**” means “continuing to talk” while “**to talk**” in “**Go on to talk**” expresses purpose, which may mean “*He stopped doing something else in order to talk*, especially after stopping or changing to a different topic.”

### 4) can't help

*I couldn't **help** laughing when I heard the funny joke. (I had to laugh ....)*

*I couldn't **help** to finish it. (I was unable to finish it.)*

### 5) leave off

*They left off **playing** basketball.*

*(They stopped playing basketball, **playing basketball** being the object of **left off**.)*

*They left off **to play** basketball. (They left and went to play basketball. The infinitive is used to express purpose rather than its object.)*

### 6) mean

When the verb **mean** is followed by the infinitive, it expresses purpose or intention; when a gerund is used, it expresses result or a sign of, e.g.

*I'm sorry. I didn't mean **to hurt** you. (purpose)*

*I'll have to drive my girlfriend to the airport at three tomorrow morning. That means **getting up** early. (result)*

*Missing the airplane means **waiting** for an hour (= You will have to wait.)*

*I meant (= intended) **to tell** you about it.*

*Your getting coronavirus will mean (your) **staying** indoors for 14 days.*

*(It requires that self-quarantine.)*

*The bus strike will mean **walking** to work.*

*(Because of the strike, everyone has to walk.)*

### 7) regret

With **regret**, when an infinitive is used, the reference is to something that happens at the same time or to the present time, especially when bad news is given, e.g.

*I regret **to tell** you that you have failed the test.*

= I regret that you have failed the test.

*I regret **to say** that I cannot go with you.*

(*Regret* and *say* happen at the same time.)

When a gerund is used, the reference is to something that precedes *regret* or to express regret about the past, e.g.

*I regret **telling/having told** you that bad news.*

(*Telling/having told* you that bad news precedes the action of *regret*. That is, the action of *telling* happens before that of *regret*. Now I regret (that) I told you the bad news. I shouldn't have told you that bad news, but I did.)

*I regret **to have told** you that bad news. (perfect infinitive form used)*

= I regret telling/having told you the bad news.

*I regret **wasting/having wasted** so much money in Red Rock Casino last week.*

## 8) remember

With *remember*, the infinitive is used for future action and means *not to forget* (also see *forget* above), e.g.

*Please remember **to bring** you with an umbrella. It is going to rain this afternoon.*

The gerund is used for a past event and means *call to mind*. That is to say, the action shown in a gerund happens prior to that in *remember*, e.g.

*I remember **meeting** (=having met) her somewhere before.*

= I remember that I met her somewhere before.

*I remember my father **coming** to visit me. (= never forget)*

*I remember (= shall never forget) my father **to have been** kind. (F. R. Palmer, 1978.)*

*I remember **posting/having posted** the letter.*

= I remember (that) I posted the letter. (R.A. Close, 1975)

That is to say, we use a gerund to talk about memories of the past. *Meeting her* happens first and *remember* the matter second in the first sentence above. "*I remember to have met her somewhere before*" is the same as "*I remember meeting her somewhere before*." Examples used with passive voice:

*I remember **being beaten** (= I remember I was beaten/was being beaten).*

*I remember **having been beaten**. (= I remember I had been beaten).*

### 9) stop

Stop *talking*.

Stop *to talk*.

From the above example, **stop** is followed by a gerund and means “ending the action of talking.” In other words, it is rude to say “Shut up.” When **stop** is followed by an infinitive, it expresses purpose, in which case, **stop** is used as an intransitive verb, that is, “Stop (something) in order to do something else.” Another example: *On the way home I met a friend of mine; I stopped to talk to her.*

### 10) try

With *try*, the infinitive has the meaning of *make an attempt*, e.g.

*You must try to be more diligent in your school.*

In spoken English we can use *try and do something* rather than *try to do something*, i.e. *try and work hard*, which is the same as *try to work hard*. When **try** is used in the past tense, we do not use the *and*-construction; therefore, we do not say “\*I tried and worked hard.” Instead, we say “I tried to work hard.” With the gerund it means *experiment with in order to learn or see what will happen*, e.g.

*He tried putting on new shoes before he wanted to buy it.*

“I can’t unlock the door.” “Try turning the key the other way.”

(R.A. Close 1975, p.84)

When you are not sure how to use a verb correctly, the best way is to look up the word in a dictionary

## 30 Some verbs mean passive when followed by gerunds

When some of the verbs are followed by a gerund, it does not mean active in meaning, but passive in meaning. Verbs of this type are: *won’t bear* or *wouldn’t bear*, *deserve*, *need*, *require*, *stand (=bear)*, *want*,) or a preposition like *worth*, etc. They are followed by the gerund, active in use but passive in meaning only when the subject of a sentence is also the logical object of the gerund, e.g.

*The machine needs/requires repairing.*

= The machine needs/requires to be repaired.

(The logical object of the gerund, *repairing*, is the subject of the sentence, *the machine*.)

*The car **needs painting**.*

*The boy **needs washing**.* (passive in meaning, the logical object of “wash” is the boy.)

Cf. The boy ***needs to wash***.

(Active in meaning, the logical subject of *wash* is the boy; *wash* is an intransitive verb here.)

*It won't **bear thinking of*** (= to be thought about). (Hornby, 1977)

*What she said **wouldn't bear repeating**.* (= ... was too bad to be repeated.)

*His language won't **bear repeating*** (= was too bad to be repeated).

His words ***do not bear repeating***.

= His words do not bear *to be repeated*.

*They **deserve shooting*** (= deserve to be shot) *for that*.

That naughty little boy ***deserves spanking/to be spanked***.

*These products **cannot stand using**.*

*The computer is **worth reimagining**.*

*The book is **worth reading**.* (passive)

Cf. It is worth reading that book. (active)

*These things are not **worth buying**.* (Alexander et al., 1977, p.96)

*They're not **worth looking at**.*

This iphone ***needs/wants/requires repairing***.

= This iphone needs, *or less preferably*, wants, *but rarely*, requires *to be repaired*.

*The shoes **want mending**.* (= The shoes need to be mended.)

*My hair **needs/wants cutting**.* (= It needs to be cut. I need/want to have a haircut.)

*The man **wants watching**.* (passive in meaning)

(The object of *watch* is the subject, *the man*.)

Cf. The man wants ***to watch***.

(active in meaning; the logical subject of *to watch* is also the subject of the sentence, *the man*.)

*Your hair **needs/wants washing**.* = Your hair needs to be washed.

*The issue **needs looking into**.* (A phrasal verb, v + preposition, is used. The logical object of “looking into” is the subject of the sentence, *the issue*.)

*These children **need looking after**.* (A phrasal verb, v + preposition, is used.)

When the subject of a sentence is also the logical subject of the gerund or infinitive in *won't bear* or *can't bear*, their meaning is active, as in

*She can't bear **seeing/to see** animals treated cruelly.*

There is no practical difference when the gerund or passive infinitive is used after ***need, require, want, etc.***, as shown above, but a gerund is better than a passive infinitive for the sake of brevity. We also do not use a passive gerund form in the sentences above, e.g. \**Your hair needs being cut*.

## 31 A gerund used after some adjectives or nouns

We can have a gerund used after some of the adjectives or nouns, as in

*It is **better driving** slowly now.*

*You **would be better coming** with us.* (R.A. Close, 1978, p.82)

*Roser was **busy correcting** (= in correcting) his students' calculus papers.*

*The children were **busy building** sandcastles.*

*It's **difficult** not **smoking** for a whole day.*

*It's very **dull going** for a walk alone.* (a general statement.)

*It was **easy getting** the equipment loaded.*

(Cf. Getting the equipment loaded was easy.)

*It won't be **easy choosing** the right one.*

*It is **expensive running** this car.*

*She is **foolish contacting** him again.* (It is foolish of her contacting him again.)

*He was **foolish doing/to do** that.* (Alexander et al., 1977)

*He is **foolish meeting** her again.*

=It is foolish of him meeting her again. (R.A Close, 1975, p.83)

*He is **happy meeting** her again.*

(The gerund usually implies that the action has been performed by the speaker or the subject of the sentence, **he**, or others.)

***Nice/Happy seeing** you again.* (The experience of *seeing you* made me feel nice/happy.)

*It was quite **an experience going** swimming in the river in the remote area.*

*It's great **fun riding** a bike down from the hill.*

*It wouldn't be **any good trying** to catch the train.*

*It is an idea that's **worth considering**.*

*It's **a nuisance being** without water in the building.*

*It's **a pleasure being** here.* (Alexander et al., 1977)

*It's **no use crying** over the spilt milk.*

*It is **worth reading** that book.* (=The book is worth reading.)

In “*I don't want to go for a walk alone. I would be much nicer **to go** for a walk with you*”, the infinitive used here generally implies that action is a new or future one.

## 32 Used as object of prepositions

A gerund is normally used as an object after a preposition, e.g., **at, in, of, on, upon, etc.**, or in the construction of **verb + preposition, an adjective + preposition, and a noun + preposition**. Here are some examples:

*I'm surprised **at** his/Casey's/him/Casey **making** that mistake.*  
*Please let me know **before leaving** the office.*  
***Despite** your **reminding** me, I forgot about the matter.*  
*I'm **interested in** watching movies at weekend.*  
*My wife is **good at cooking**.*  
***Instead of going** to Las Vegas, the couple visited New York.*  
*It's just a **matter of filling** in a form.*  
***On/Upon entering** (=At the moment when you enter) *the town, you will be greeted by the Mayor.**  
***On returning** home (=As soon as I returned home), I found her waiting for me in the house.*  
*Sandy **has no objection to starting** the project early. (Here **to** is a preposition.)*  
*We have got/become/grown quite **used to** cooking. (Here **to** is a preposition.)*  
*She passed by **without seeing** me.*  
***Without my interfering with their sleep**, I was allowed to sit watching TV in the living room.*  
*Dr. Kang left the meeting **without being noticed/seen**. (passive voice)*  
*Passengers boarding any train **without having previously paid** the fair are liable to be prosecuted. (perfect gerund)*

It is to be noted that **on** or **upon** in the above sentence is optional. When **on** is not used, **entering** is a present participle to express time, so we can have “**Entering** the town, you will be greeted by the Mayor.” When **on** is followed by a passive, **on** is less likely to be optional, e.g. **On being taken** to the scene of the crime, he broke down and confessed everything (Alexander et al., 1977, p.174).

### 32.1 Verb + preposition + gerund

*She **admitted to stealing** (= having stolen) his boyfriend's money.*  
*I **admit to being** a fool.*  
*She must **admit to having gone** a long way to realize what she did in the past.*  
*He **admitted to having been** sexually abused by his stepfather.*  
*I **am afraid of visiting** that terrific place.*  
*She is **against cancelling** the visit to Las Vegas.*  
*Mrs. Roser is **good at teaching** science in West Career&Technical Academy.*  
*I **am not interested in telling** what happened last night.*  
*A vacation is **nicer than sitting** in office all day long. (**Than** is a preposition.)*  
*I'm **tired of being treated** like an idiot!*  
*He **boasted of never having had** a serious illness. (Hornby, 1977, p.32)*  
*Jean **complained of being underpaid**.*

*Everything **depends on** their **having** the courage of their convictions.*  
*I **feel like being treated** like an idiot in the workplace.*  
*She **doesn't feel like going** there again.*  
***Forget me for interrupting/having interrupted** you. (perfect gerund used)*  
*I **object to being criticized** so stupidly. (**To** is a preposition.)*  
*John **objects to his being punished**.*  
*He **succeeded in repairing** his iPhone X*  
***Thank you for helping** me. (**Helping** is used as the object of the preposition, *for*.)*  
*Sandy **is thinking of visiting** Las Vegas.*  
***Thank you ever so much for having done** too much to me!*  
*The people **voted for joining** the organization.*

The following are normally used with a gerund after a verb + preposition:

***admit to, (dis)agree with, aim at, apologize for, (dis)approve of, believe in, benefit from, care for, complain about, confess to, count on, depend on, feel like, get on with, insist on, object to, pay for, put up with, rely on, resort to, succeed in, talk about, thank ... for, think about, think of, vote for, worry about, etc.***

As is known to all, the infinitive sign **to** is used between two or more verbs to indicate a non-finite form, but the **to** is also a preposition. For example, *I do not object to getting up early tomorrow*, where **to** is used as a preposition rather than the infinitive sign, **to**. Therefore, a gerund is used when it is followed by a verb. We usually have the following verbs and adjectives, where **to** is the preposition:

***admit to** (followed by either a simple gerund or perfect gerund), **confess to, face up to, look forward to, object to, prefer ... to..., resort to, take to, etc.**; the adjectives are: **accustomed to, close to, opposed to, resigned to, be/become/get/grow used to, etc.** and the prepositional phrases such as **in addition to, etc., due to, owing to, etc.***

More examples:

*He **admitted to stealing/having stolen** her girlfriend's iPhone.*  
*I **object to being kept waiting**. (passive gerund)*  
*She **objects to having to wait** in the bus.*  
*I **am looking forward to hearing from** you soon.*  
*She **has got/become/grown quite used to cooking** since her husband's death.*

It is to be noted that the verb **prefer ... to ...** is followed by a gerund or a noun. When the first object is a gerund, the second one must be a gerund, too, even if it can be followed by an infinitive. Let us consider the following:

*Sandy preferred riding to walking.* (Both are gerunds.)  
*?Sandy preferred to ride to to walk.*

This sentence with a questions mark is very awkward, and we never say it like that. Instead, we can use **rather than**, as in

*Sandy preferred to ride rather than to walk.*)  
Cf. I prefer tea **to** coffee.

The best way to know how to use them correctly is check the use of a verb from a dictionary to make sure whether the **to** is a preposition or the infinitive sign, **to**. Compare: **We agreed to go there** (we were of the same opinion) and **we agreed to going there** (we accepted the suggestion).

### 32.2 Adjective/past participle + preposition + gerund

As mentioned earlier, adjective/past participle + preposition can be followed by a gerund if the meaning requires, as in

*She's ashamed of losing* (= having lost) *her temper.*  
*I am surprised at his/John's/him/John making that mistake.*  
*I am always nervous of speaking in public.*  
*The students must be proud of having found a way to solve the problem.*

### 32.3 The past participles + prepositions

In the English language, there are many participles followed by different prepositions. After the preposition, a gerund or NP can be used as object. We list some of them as follows:

#### 1) Followed by **about**

*aggrieved, annoyed, concerned, distressed, excited, pleased, puzzled, shocked, worried, etc.*

*Jean was puzzled about solving the problem.*

Cf. Jean was puzzled *about* the problem.

*I was shocked about her being arrested.*

Cf. I was shocked *about* her arrest.

#### 2) Followed by **at**

*Abashed, affected, afflicted, aggrieved, amazed, amused, annoyed, appalled, astonished, concerned, delighted, disappointed, disgusted, dismayed, displeased, dissatisfied, exasperated, excited, infuriated, irritated, offended, overjoyed, pleased, shocked, surprised, vexed, etc.,* as in



*He was alarmed **at being** told that Tom died of coronavirus.*

Cf. He was alarmed *at* his former girlfriend's death.

*She felt abashed **at hearing** what she did wrong.*

Cf. She felt abashed *at* what she did wrong.

As mentioned before, different verbs have different meaning in usage when followed by different prepositions, adverbs, a gerund or an infinitive. The best way to know how to use them correctly is look up the word in a good English dictionary. Again, "*She shouted **to me***", in which *to* is used, and the shouter is communicating with me, *ie* that I am the recipient of the message, while "*She shouted **at me***", in which *at* is used, "suggests that I am being treated merely as a target (*eg* of abuse) ... *At* here usually suggests hostility" (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.322). Another example: *He **threw the brick at me***. Roughly, that means he tried to or intended to hit me or to kill me with brick. Verbs of this kind regarding utterance are *bellow, growl, mutter, roar, and shout, etc.*

3) Followed by *against*

*arrayed, irritated, prejudiced, prepared, prepossessed, etc.*

*Be prepared **against waging** war on China.*

Cf. We are prepared *against* war.

4) Followed by *for*

*celebrated, concerned, destined, disqualified, disinterested, noted, prepared, pressed, qualified, etc.*

*Sandy is well qualified **for taking** the job.*

Cf. Sandy is qualified *for* the job.

5) Followed by *in*

*absorbed, attired, celebrated, clothed, concerned, confirmed, disappointed, delighted, dressed, embarrassed, engaged, entangled, experienced, immersed, interested, justified, lost, mistaken, steeped, veiled, versed, etc.*

*I am interested **in reading** when I have free time.*

Cf. I am interested *in* science.

*The boy was/felt embarrassed **in showing** his middle finger at the party.*

Cf. The boy was/felt embarrassed *in* his bad behavior at the party.

6) Followed by *of*

*accused, ashamed, convinced, convicted, defeated, deprived, disappointed, formed, frightened, made, possessed, seized, terrified, tired, etc.*

*She was accused **of stealing** a school computer.*  
Cf. She was accused *of* murder.

7) Followed by *on/upon*  
*based, bent, set, founded, etc.*

*Dr. Kang is bent **on studying** Spanish.*  
Cf. Dr. Kang is/seems bent *on* success at all costs.

8) Followed by *to*  
*abandoned, accustomed, acquainted, addicted, adapted, allied, apprenticed, (be/become/get/grow) used, committed, dedicated, destined, devoted, doomed, engaged, entitled, exposed, inclined, indebted, known, lost, opposed, related, suited, unknown, wedded, etc.*

*Sandy is very much opposed **to** your **going** there alone.*  
Cf. Sandy is very much opposed *to* your plan.  
*I am used **to living** in Las Vegas despite the scorching hot weather in summer.*  
Cf. I am used *to* the hot weather here.

Also see “shout at” in 2) above.

9) Followed by *with*  
*agitated, annoyed, bored, concerned, covered, delighted, disappointed, discontinued, disgusted, displeased, dissatisfied, elated, endowed, equipped, exasperated, excited, exhausted, horrified, imbued, infatuated, infected, infested, inflamed, intoxicated, irritated, obsessed, occupied, overcome, overwhelmed, pleased, pressed, satisfied, soaked, studded, stunned, surmounted, surrounded, tormented, tortured, etc.*

For example:

*Roser was **annoyed with** you saying that.*  
Cf. Roser was annoyed *with* what you said.

We can use either a preposition + gerund or a *to*-infinitive after some verbs and adjectives described above with a little difference in meaning. They are: *aim at doing/to do, amazed at doing/to do, angry at doing/to do, annoyed at doing/to do, content with doing/to do, grateful for doing/to do, pay for doing/to do, ready for doing/to do, satisfied with doing/to do, thank .. about/for/to,, thankful for doing/to do, surprised at doing/to do, vote for doing/to do, etc.*

There are many adjectives followed by different prepositions. In such a case a gerund or NP is used as object if the meaning requires. We list some of these adjectives as follows:

*afraid of, amazed at, angry about/at, annoyed about/at, anxious about, ashamed of, aware of, bad at, bored with, capable of, content with, dependent on, different from/to, excited about/at, famous for, fed up with, fond of, good at, grateful for, guilty of, happy about/with, interested in, keen on, nervous of, pleased about/with, ready for, responsible for, sorry about/for, successful in, wrong with, etc.*

For example:

*My wife is good at cooking.*  
Cf. *My wife is good at math.*  
*She was sorry for having said that.*  
Cf. *She was sorry for what she had said.*

### 32.4 Nouns + prepositions

There are a lot of nouns followed by a preposition, where a gerund is used if the meaning requires, as in

*I have no objection to starting the project early.*  
*It's just a matter of filling in a form.*

Gerunds or NP are normally used after a noun + preposition:

*advantage on/in, aim of/in, amazement at, anger about/at, annoyance about/at, anxiety about, apology for, awareness of, belief in, boredom with, danger of/in, difficulty (in), effect of, excitement about/at, to the expense of, gratitude for, idea of, insistence of, interest in, job of, matter of, objection to, pleasure of/in, point of/in, possibility of, problem of/in, prospect of, purpose of/in, question about/of, reason for, satisfaction with, success in, surprise at, task of, work of, worry about, etc.*

### 32.5 Logical subject of the gerund

A gerund used after a preposition can also have its logical subject, either possessive or objective case. In spoken English, especially when you emphasize the logical subject of the gerund, objective case is often used (see 43 **The half gerund vs. full gerund**), as in

*Sandy insisted on me helping her.*  
*We were just talking about Casey losing his job.*

*I don't like the idea of us/our not helping them at all.*

### 32. 6 As used as a preposition

Besides what is described above, we have some verbs (*accept, describe, quote, regard, think of, etc.*) followed by an object complement introduced by the preposition, *as*, followed by a gerund, as in

*They quoted him as saying these words.*

*I thought of that boy as struggling with math in my class.*

### 33 Some verbs or adjectives expressing different meaning when different prepositions or the *to*-infinitive used

Sometimes a verb can be followed by either the *to*-infinitive or different prepositions, but they have different meaning when a gerund is followed. A few examples are listed below:

#### Agree with / to

*Agree with* means thinking that something is right, but *agree to do something* means making a decision, as in

*I don't agree with you going there alone.*

*We agreed to have the meeting after the issue.*

#### Afraid of/to

*Afraid of* is used to express fear that might happen, but *afraid to do something* expresses unwillingness to do something, as in

*Beibei is afraid of going to bed in the dark.*

*I didn't tell her because I was afraid of upsetting her.*

*Don't be afraid to ask for help.*

*He tiptoed across the room, being afraid to wake her up.*

#### Anxious about/to

*Anxious about* means worried about, but *anxious to do something* means wanting to, as in

*Heishman was anxious about making a mistake again.*

*Beibei is anxious to get the job she likes most.*

### **Ashamed of/to**

*Ashamed of* expresses shame about something, but *ashamed to do something* expresses unwillingness caused by shame or by being laughed at, as in

*I was **ashamed of having lied** to my mother.*  
*you ought to be **ashamed of yourself** – **treating** your girlfriend like that!*  
*I feel rather **ashamed of having told** you such a lie.*  
*That kind of behavior makes me **ashamed to be** British. (R. Quirk, 2004)*  
*She was **ashamed to ask** such a simple question.*

### **Certain of/to, sure of/to**

*Sandy is **certain/sure of passing** her exam. (Sandy herself is certain.)*  
*Sandy is **certain/sure to pass** her exam. (The speaker is certain.)*  
*They are **certain/sure to come** to the party. (The speaker is certain.)*

### **Happy about/to, pleased about/to**

*Happy about* and *pleased about* expresses pleasure, but *happy to do* and *pleased to do* is often used to express polite statements or a particular positive occasion, as in

*Sandy is **happy/pleased about winning** \$1,000 from a slot machine in Red Rock Casino today.*  
*I am **happy/pleased to meet** you.*

### **Interested in/to, keen on/to**

*Interested in/to* and *keen on/to* usually mean a general interest, but *keen to do /interested to do* means a wish or desire to do a particular thing. Generally speaking, the infinitive used also expresses a new act and the gerund used expresses the idea of doing something or activity in general or a process, as in

*Mr. Marlowe is **keen on climbing** mountains. (his desire or habitual interest)*  
*Mr. Marlowe is **keen to climb** that big mountain tomorrow if weather permits.(specific)*  
*I am/would be very **interested to hear** your news. (a new act)*  
*I am **interested in/keen on collecting** coins.(That is my hobby or desire.)*  
*Sandy is **interested in reading** science books. (general statement)*  
*Sandy is **interested to read** the very book I gave to her yesterday. (a particular thing)*

**Keen on/to** (see **interest in/to** above)

**Pleased about/to** (see **happy about/to**)

**Remind ... of/to** (See **Tell ... about/to**)

### Sorry about/for, sorry to

*Sorry about/for* express an apology for an earlier action, but **sorry to** with a *to*-infinitive expresses an apology for or unhappiness about - a present or immediate action/behavior, as in

*I'm sorry for causing all that trouble yesterday.* (an apology for an earlier action)

=I'm sorry to have caused all that trouble yesterday.

= I'm sorry (that) I caused all that trouble yesterday.

*I am sorry for waking you up early this morning.*

=I am sorry to have waked you up early this morning.

= I am sorry (that) I woke you up early this morning.

**Sorry to bother** you, but can I talk to you now? (an apology for an immediate action)

*I am sorry to hear your bad news.* (an apology for a present action)

### Sure of/to (see certain of/to above)

### Tell...about/to, remind ... of/to

*Tell...about/remind ... of* is used to report statements and thoughts, but the *to*-infinitive use reports an order or reminder, as in

*I told you about visiting Las Vegas.*

*What you said reminds me of getting early tomorrow.*

*I told you not to go there by yourself.*

*Please remind me to get up early.*

### Thank ... for/to do ...

*Thank you for being* (= having been) so kind to me. (gratitude for past action)

*Thank you for helping me just now.* (gratitude for past action)

*Thank you to leave me alone!* (impolite request for action now)

*I'll thank you to leave me alone.* (impolite request for future action)

### Think about/of ... think to do ...

*She's thinking about changing her job.*

*They're thinking of moving to Canada.*

*I did think of resigning, but I decided not to.*

*I never think about/of dating her.* (The idea never occurs to me, expressing "intention.")

*I couldn't think of letting you have the blame.*

*I couldn't think of letting her take the blame.*

*She would never think of marrying so old.*

*I never thought to invite her.* (I didn't think of it, so I didn't invite her.)

Note that *think of* is used with *could*, *would*, *should*, and *not* or *never*, it means “have the idea of something”, as seen above.

### Used to, be/become/get/grow used to

*I used to live in Las Vegas for 10 years.*

(past habitual action in the past. I no longer live there now.)

*Life here is much easier than it used to be.*

*You used to smoke a pipe, didn't you?*

*I usedn't to like her.* (formal)

*I usen't to like her.* (usen't, BrE – old fashioned)

= I didn't use to like her. (informal)

= I used not to like her. (BrE, old fashioned)

*Used you to go there?*

= Did you use to go there? (informal)

*I am used to living in New York.*

(It no longer seems surprising, difficult, strange, uncomfortable, etc., for me to live in New York. Here *used* is an adjective, and *to* is a preposition rather than the infinitive sign, *to*.)

*I am quite used to working hard.*

*She had got used to living in such a poor area.*

## 34 Infinitive used after some prepositions rather a gerund

Generally speaking, a gerund should be used after a preposition when required, but this is not always the case; the following prepositions *about*, *except*, *but*, *than*, *etc.*, are usually followed by the infinitive in particular situations, rather than a gerund form, even if they are prepositions (Gu, 1984). Thus:

*He was about to die* (= near death). (Not \*about dying)

*They desired nothing except to succeed.* (Not \*except succeeding)

*They desired nothing but to succeed.* (Not \*but succeeding)

The bare infinitive (the infinitive without *to*) may occasionally be used after the prepositions *but*, *except*, *than*, *rather than*, *etc.*, rather than a gerund, as in

*The child did nothing except weep.*

Cf. He seldom comes *except to look at* my pictures.

*She will do anything for you except lend* your money.

Cf. It had no effect *except to make* him angry.

*She did nothing except complain* the whole time she was here.

*What could I do then **except watch** them carry you away?*  
*She can do everything **except cook**.*  
*They could do nothing **but wait** for the doctor to arrive.*  
*She can do anything **but sing**.*  
*He did nothing **but laugh**.*  
*She did nothing **but sleep**.*  
*They couldn't do anything **but just sit** there and hope.*  
*He did nothing else **than laugh/weep**.*  
*John did nothing else **than cry**.*

From the above examples, we see a bare infinitive used after the prepositions **except**, **but** and **than**, because in the main clause contains the verb *do* or *did*. Without the use of *do* or *did*, we usually keep the infinitive sign, *to*, as in “*He seldom comes **except to look** at my pictures.*” “*It had no effect **except to make** him angry.*” “*He desired nothing **but to succeed**”, etc.* Moreover, when *else* is used, we do not use **but** or **except**, we use **than** instead (Gu, 1984), as in

*He did nothing else **than laugh**.*  
 = He did nothing *but laugh*.  
*He did nothing else **than weep**.*  
 = He did nothing *except weep*.

Besides what has been described above, the omission of the infinitive sign *to* also happens after the prepositions **save**, **besides**, *etc.*, when the verb *do* or *did* form appears, as in

*I hardly remember what I did **besides read**.*  
*That afternoon I had nothing to do **besides answer** letters.*  
*What has he done **besides read** the paper?*  
*What had she done for her father **save leave** him at the first opportunity?*

### 35 Used as apposition

A gerund is a form of a verb functioning as a noun; it can be also used as apposition, as in

*That's my pride, **teaching** you something!*  
*That's a pity, **having** to leave so early.*  
*That's a mistake, **asking** him to come!*  
*She is absorbed in her hobby, **collecting** stamps and coins.*  
*His habit, **using iPhone in bed for long hours at night**, remains unchanged.*  
*Sandy likes her new work – **teaching biology in the school**.*  
*Dr. Kang was absorbed in her hobby, **collecting classic cars***



*That's a shame, **teaching you something!***

*That's a pity, **having to leave right now.***

***Sailing a boat**, his chief hobby, cost him most of his salary.*

= His chief hobby, *sailing a boat*, cost him most of his salary.

***Playing football**, his only interest in his life, has brought him many friends.*

= His only interest in his life, *playing football*, has brought him many friends.

***It helped them to make friends quickly, his being the only doctor in the village.***

*That's a mistake, **letting him go without paying to us.***

*His one claim to fame, **being secretary of the local tennis club**, is the recurrent theme of his conversation. (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.741)*

***It seems such a pity, all the furniture being spoiled by the damp.***

***It is vilely unjust, the minority people in that country being treated like that.***

With a gerund or gerundial phrase, *of* is used to indicate restrictive apposition with such general noun phrases as *the fact, the idea, the view, etc.*, as in

***The thought of playing against them** arouses all my aggressive instincts.*

*Sandy didn't accept **the idea of working** while she was studying.*

*Another way **of putting** it is ...*

### **36 Gerund used after the omission of some prepositions**

In spoken English, especially in American English, a preposition is sometimes omitted before the gerund. Some examples are:

*Sandy is **busy (in) helping** her students with their final exam work.*

*Do you have any **difficulty (in) fixing** the machine?*

*My girlfriend **kept (on) encouraging** me to study Spanish.*

*She won't be **long (in) making up** her mind.*

*I couldn't **stop them (from) coming** here.*

*Marlowe lost **no time (in) coming** to help us.*

*When she was **through (with) talking**, she got up and left.*

*She found **no trouble (in) talking** to him.*

*He **prevented me (from) going**.*

*There is nothing to **prevent her (from) visiting** her ex-husband.*

*What's the **use/good (of) talking** like that?*

*She always **spent/wasted** a lot time **(in) doing** her homework.*

### **37 No practical difference in meanings between an infinitive and a gerund after a preposition**

There is no practical difference, sometimes, in meanings between an infinitive and a gerund used after a preposition in some nouns: *attempt, chance, honor, opportunity, pleasure, way, etc.*, in some adjectives: *content, determined, fortunate, etc.*, and in some verbs: *agree (on), aim (at), decide (on), etc.* Some examples are:

*There is no **chance of visiting** Las Vegas again.*

*There is no **chance to visit** Las Vegas again.*

*We hope to have an **opportunity of seeing** you again.*

*We hope to have an **opportunity to see** you again.*

*This is **the best way of doing** it.*

*This is **the best way to do** it.*

*They were quite **content with staying** where they were.*

*They were quite **content to stay** where they were.*

*They are **fortunate for having** such a beautiful baby.*

*They are **fortunate to have** such a beautiful baby.*

*They are **determined on maintaining** peace.*

*They are **determined to maintain** peace. (R.A. Close, 1975)*

*They **agreed on sharing** the secret.*

*They **agreed to share** the secret.*

*Sandy **decided on buying** another car.*

*Sandy **decided to buy** another car.*

### **38 Gerund used as an adjective vs. present participle used as an adjective**

A gerund can be used as adjective to modify a noun or noun phrase. The difference between the present participle used as an adjective and the gerund as an adjective shows that a gerund denotes the purpose or use for which the thing denoted by the noun is intended. A present participle used as an adjective is the logical (notional) predicate of the noun it modifies. They can extend it into an attributive clause. Examine the following:

Participle: ***boiling water*** = water that is boiling

Gerund: ***boiling point*** = the point at which water boils

Participle: **a drinking horse** = a horse that is drinking  
Gerund: **drinking water** = water for drinking  
Participle: **growing children** = children who are still growing  
Gerund: **growing pain** = pain felt during the stage of growing  
Participle: **living people** = people who are living  
Gerund: **living room** = room where one lives when not sleeping  
Participle: **running water** = water that runs, or tap water  
Participle: **a running stream** = a stream that runs/is running  
Gerund: **running shoes** = shoes used or intended for running  
Participle: **a sleeping child** = a child that/who is sleeping  
Gerund: **a sleeping car** = a car used for sleeping  
Gerund: **studying time** = time for studying  
Gerund: **a swimming pool** = pool used for swimming  
Participle: **a walking man** = a man who is/was/walks/walked  
Gerund: **a walking stick** = a stick used to help walk  
Gerund: **a working method** = a method of working  
Participle: **working people** = people who work  
*etc.*

More examples for gerunds:

**a bathing costume** = a costume used for or intended for bathing (in)  
**working clothes** = clothes used for or intended for working (in)  
**a swimming pool** = a pool used for swimming  
**writing paper** = paper used for or intended for writing (on), *etc.*

We have: **cooking salt** (salt for cooking), **boarding-house**, **boarding school**, **carving knife**, **dining-hall**, **diving board**, **dressing table**, **drinking cup**, **fishing rod**, **freezing point**, **frying pan**, **laughing stock**, **listening materials**, **living room**, **meeting places**, **operating table**, **reading material**, **smoking room**, **spending money**, **teaching aid**, **touring car**, **typing paper**, **sleeping pill**, **waiting room**, **walking stick**, **washing machine**, **writing desk**, *etc.*

Some more examples for present participles:

**a burning apartment**, **the coming months**, **a dying man**, **a smiling face**, *etc.*

Further points of distinction between the gerund and the participle are:

- 1) The participle, which is partly an adjective, can be expanded into an attributive clause as shown above, i.e.

*a 'dying 'man*, which means *a man who is/was dying*, *a 'swimming 'boy* = a boy *who is/was swimming*, etc.

- 2) In the gerund construction, only the gerund is stressed in speech while a participial and noun are both stressed, i.e. *the 'sleeping car*, etc.

Besides a gerund used as adjective (attributive) mentioned above, we use a noun followed by a gerund to form a compound word, which can be also used adjectively. In such cases, the compound word (usually with a hyphen or without a hyphen) has a function of verb (V) and object (O), i.e., an *oil-producing* country, where we can say *country (S) produces (V) oil (O)*. *They are oil-producing countries*. *Story-telling* means *someone tells stories*. *Her story-telling skills are poor*. Hence, we have: *drinking-water, drinking water, town-planning, letter-writing, word-building, tiger-hunting, road building, etc.*

As time goes by, some of such compound words have no hyphen or they are even written together, as in

*breathtaking, daydreaming, hair-splitting, handwriting, painstaking, photocopying, self-seeking, self-sacrificing television advertising, thought-provoking, time-consuming, window shopping, etc.*

R. A. Close (1975) pointed out that “When *-ing* is used as an adjective, it usually refers to a characteristic feature of the thing referred to by the noun and not to any specific act.” Besides what is mentioned above, the compound word made of a gerund has also a function of a linking verb and its complement (SVC). They are used adjectively. *She is good-looking*, for example. *She (S) looks (V) good (C)*, in which the verb *look* is a linking verb and the adjective *good* is used as complement or predicative. *That apple smells bad. That is a bad-smelling apple. It sounds odd. That is an odd-sounding matter, etc.* In addition, a compound word is made up of a verbal form and a particle, which is usually an adverb or adjective or a noun (see 20). For example, adverbs: *far-reading, fast-spreading, going-over, hardworking, never-ending, setting up, well-being, searing-in, uprising, etc.*, adjectives: *easy-going, fine-looking, etc.*, and nouns: *breath-taking, epoch-making, good-looking, ocean-going, self-defeating, theatre-going, etc.*

### 39 The gerundial complex

A gerund may be modified by a noun or pronoun in the possessive (genitive) case or objective case. In such a case the relationship between the noun (or pronoun) and the gerund is that of logical subject or logical object if the gerund is used in passive, e.g.

*He insisted on my brother's going with him.*

*We congratulated him on his being enrolled into Yale University.*

*Does our singing in the room above disturb you?*  
= Does it disturb you that we sing in the room above?

Also see **43 The half gerund vs. full gerund**

## **40 Present participles vs. gerund as premodifier**

The present participle stands in relation to the noun it qualifies as a verb does in relation to its subject (see **38**). In other words, its agent is the very noun it qualifies, e.g. *a sleeping baby* (= a baby is/was sleeping), in which *sleeping* is a participle. On the other hand, the agent of a gerund is not the thing it qualifies but some gerund entity, e.g. *boiling point* (= the point at which water boils), in which *boiling* is a gerund.

## **41 Gerund vs. infinitive**

We are now going to study the non-finites by comparing one with another in the same grammatical functions.

### **41.1 When they are use as subject**

As mentioned earlier, the gerund shows generality or permanency; the infinitive shows rather spontaneity or temporariness. The former (gerund) refers to constant or repeated actions; the latter (the infinitive), mostly to a single occasion or a short period. For example:

*Swimming is beneficial to health.* (general statement)  
*To swim in such cold weather did require of him a great deal of courage.*  
(a short period at most, if not a single occasion)

For the infinitive, the introductory *it* (empty subject) is usually preferred in such a case. Thus:

*It did require of him a great deal of courage to swim in such cold weather.*

For the gerund, the introductory *it* is used much less often, but the following seem quite idiomatic.

*It's no use crying over spilt milk.*  
*It's no good arguing with him.*  
*It would be no good trying to catch the bus now.*

## 41.2 When they are used a predicative

What is true of the subject is also true of the predicative. Thus:

*Our greatest happiness is **helping** the people whole-heartedly.* (a permanent thing)  
*What was difficult was **to persuade** such a self-confident person as John.*  
(a specific affair)

## 42 Dangling gerunds

Besides dangling participles, it can occur with the gerund and the infinitive as well. In *\*On opening the cupboard, a skeleton fell out*, it seems that the skeleton opens the cupboard. Roughly speaking, the agent (or the logical subject) of the gerund should be expressed if it is different from the subject of the sentence, but omitted if it is the same. We can say, *“Upon/On opening the cupboard, I found a skeleton falling on me.”* To omit it where it is necessary is inadvertence; to insert it where it is unnecessary will be redundancy. The following examples show indiscriminate omission leading to a dangling construction:

*I succeeded him as captain upon **dying**.*  
(**Dying** would mean *my dying*. Say *his dying* instead of *dying*.)  
*Production has increased by leaps and bounds **since overthrowing the government**.*  
(Obviously, the agent of *overthrowing* is not *production*, say, *the overthrowing of the government*, so as to make the gerund a full noun, which will then have no specific agent reference.)  
*Such a bad practice is bound to take deep root by **conniving at it**.*  
(Say either *by our conniving at it* or *if connived at*.)

Like the dangling participles, some kind of dangling in the case of the gerund has been accepted by usage, too. This will be the case where the subject of the sentence is inanimate and the main verb passive, and no ambiguity, therefore, can be involved by the omission of the personal but indefinite agent of an active gerund (Huang, 1981), e.g. *“The top of the mountain can be reached by scaling a cliff with a long rope ladder. “The cliff must be scaled so as to reach the top of the mountain.”*

## 43 The half gerund vs. full gerund

We have touched upon the half gerund. It is called by that name to distinguish it from the full gerund. *The half gerund* is the gerund preceded by an agent noun or a pronoun with the objective case for pronouns (i.e. *me. him, etc.*) or common case for other noun phrases (i.e. *John, my sister, etc.*). *The full gerund* is the gerund preceded by an agent noun or a pronoun with the

genitive case (i.e. *my, his, John's, friend's, etc.*), and the genitive case is used in formal style, especially when it is a personal pronoun or a name in formal English. When the logical subject of a gerund is different from the subject of the main sentence, we can have “the option of using either the objective form (*me, you, him*) or the possessive (*my, your, his*) is only open if the subject of the two verbs are different (*I don't mind; you say that*). If the two subjects are the same, then only the possessive is used, e.g. *I remember (my) saying that. (You) stop (your) laughing*” R.A. Close (1975, p.200). R.T. Wood (1981, p.136) said, “For personal pronouns, always use the possessive form: I object to *his* being punished (not *him*). There is not much likelihood of *their* coming now (not *them*).” However, we use the objective case a lot regardless of whether the personal pronouns are the same or not the same as the subject of the main clause, especially in spoken and informal English if it is a pronoun. Let's consider the following:

*Does this justify you/your taking legal action?*

*Can you imagine him/his doing that?*

*Would you mind me/my opening the door?*

*I don't mind you/your smoking here.*

*The rain prevented my friend's coming on time.*

*I agree with you about its being a mistake.* (Hornby, 1977, p.32)

*That prevented the fire (\*fire's) spreading to the neighboring structure.*

(Possessive is not used for inanimate things.)

*I'll never forget the door (\*door's) opening just as George began.*

(Possessive is not used for inanimate things.)

*I'll never forget that (\*that's) happening just as George began.* (R.A. Close, 1975, p.80)

(Possessive is not used for *that*, a pronoun.)

*Do you remember him/his telling us about it?*

*I love this place and I want to stop it/its being turned into a tourist trap.*

(Hornby, 1977, p.70)

*I am surprised at his/John's/him/John making that mistake*

*I can't understand him/his leaving so early?*

*Despite your reminding me, I forgot about it. I am "Swiss Cheese."*

*I'm fed up with Sam's laughing at my accent.*

*It wouldn't be any good my talking to her.*

*It's no use your pretending that you didn't know the rules.*

*Sam's laughing at my accent is getting on my nerves.*

*Jean's grumbling annoyed her husband, but her mother's coming to stay with them was the last straw.*

*Your coming in late made her angry.*

*Him recognizing his fault is a good thing.* (*Him* is very informal or less colloquial)

*His recognizing his fault is a good thing.* (formal)

*You/Your failing into the river was the climax of the whole trip.*

(Alexander et al., 1977)

*The very thought of **my meeting** with her yesterday made me uncomfortable.*  
*The thought that he couldn't get rid of was **his having made** the mistake himself.*  
*One of the troubles is **his/him using** too much money for the project.*  
*What upset me most was **Marlowe's/Marlowe having** a surgery the next day.*  
*We were discussing the possibility of **the house (\*house's) being converted** into apartment. (Possessive is not used for inanimate things.)*  
*He did not like the idea of **his daughter/daughter's going** out to work.*  
 (In speech it might be better to say **daughter** rather than **daughter's**, because **daughter's** might be confused with the plural **daughters**.)  
*I disapprove of **students'/students using** iPhones in the classrooms.*  
 (It would be better to omit **the apostrophe** because there is no difference between **students** and **students'**, **boys** and **boys'**, etc., in speech.)  
*I don't like **Sandy/Sandy's coming**.*  
*We don't like **them/their coming** late.*  
*I don't like **you/your being** out so late. (Alexander et al., 1977, p.178)*

It seems that the verb **like** does take a possessive (see 26) when it is used in affirmative sentence (as seen above), but the verb **like** takes either possessive or objective case in negative sentences as shown above. It is also in formal style, as a general rule, that we use a possessive after a preposition followed by a gerund, e.g. *We can't agree to **your/you taking** part in our work.* *Sandy was frightened of **it/its building** a nest in the chimney.* When the gerund is **being** as part of the subject at the beginning of the sentence, the objective case should be avoided, e.g. ***Him being a doctor** helped them to make friends with the neighbors quickly* (substandard English for the use of **him**). Alexander et al. (1977) regarded the above sentence (**Him being** ...) unacceptable. Instead, we say, "**His being a doctor** helped them to make friends with the neighbors quickly." We should try to avoid using an objective case (i.e. **him being**) for the logical subject of the linking verb **be** used in subject position. From the example above "**His being a doctor** helped them to make friends with the neighbors quickly," we use a subjective case instead. We can also say "(The act) that he is a doctor helped them to make friends with the neighbors quickly." It is acceptable when **him being** ... is used in very informal speech" (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.741).

#### 43.1 An animate noun vs. an inanimate noun

An animate noun, e.g. *friend*, is usually used in the possessive while an inanimate noun or abstract noun phrase, e.g. *fire, a door, work, enthusiasm, etc.*, is not used in the possessive because they are impersonal noun (as seen from some examples above). As to a pronoun, it may be used either in the possessive or in the objective case. In the example above, *Would you mind **me/my opening** the door?* when **my** is used in formal style, **opening** is a **full gerund**, being object to the predicate verb **mind**. When **me** is used in informal style, **opening** is in a **half gerund** in *me opening the door*, being the complex object to the predicate verb, **mind**. In such a case, the object is neither *me* nor *opening the door*, but the combination of them is a complex



object, in which the relation of the object to the half gerund is just like that of a subject to a predicate verb. This serves to distinguish the half gerund from the present participial postmodifier. As mentioned earlier, we can say *I saw him/Sandy leaving*, but not *\*I saw his/Sandy's leaving*. **Leaving** here is a present participle used as complement, whereas in *I don't mind you smoking here* and *I don't mind Sandy smoking here*, **smoking** is a half gerund, and in *I don't mind your smoking here* and *I don't mind Sandy's smoking here*, **smoking** is a full gerund. We regard **you smoking** or **your smoking** as a combination for the object of **mind**; while **him leaving** in *I saw him leaving* is not a combination for the object because **leaving** in such a case is used as complement, so it is incorrect to say *\*I saw his leaving*.

As mentioned before, in spoken English we usually use either objective case (**boy, me, him, etc.**) or possessive (**boy's, my, his, etc.**) for a noun or pronoun, but some of the verbs, e.g. **deny, postpone, defer, etc.**, usually have possessive cases as logical subject of the gerund, as in

*Sandy doesn't deny your breaking the agreement.*  
*They deferred Roser's/his going home on furlong until next week.*

In a word, “the possessive is more formal, and it is less usual in everyday speech. ...and we are more likely to use possessive at the beginning of a sentence” (Eastwood, 2002). If there are two agents, both pronouns, or both nouns, or one a pronoun and the other a noun, or a long noun phrase that contains postmodification (especially postmodified by **of**-phrase), or indefinite pronouns and demonstrative pronouns, to the gerund, the possessive is out of place, especially in spoken English. More examples of the **half gerund** are given below:

*She can't bear her husband making fun of her.*  
*He can't bear his wife making fun of him.*  
 (When emphasis is on *his wife*, genitive or possessive is not used.)  
*They depend on the oil being supplied without interruption.* (an inanimate noun)  
*Do you favor boys and girls of sixteen being given the right to vote?*  
 (*Boys and girls of sixteen* is a long phrase, and also postmodified by the **of**-phrase, *of sixteen*)  
*Can you imagine these fat men climbing Mt Kenya?* (Hornby 1977)  
 (*These fat men* is considered a long noun phrase. Not *\*these fat men's*)  
*He laughed at you and me speaking broken English.* (*You and me* are both pronouns)  
*Do you mind my brothers and sisters coming with us?* (Hornby, 1977)  
 (*Brothers and sisters* is a long phrase.)  
*Do you remember Mary and her mother coming to see us last month?*  
 (*Mary and her mother* is considered both agents or a long noun phrase.)  
*Did you ever hear of a man of good sense refusing such an offer?*  
 (*A man of good sense* is considered a longer noun phrase and postmodified by **of good sense**.)

**Her brother and sister both being** sick makes hard work for the rest of the family.  
(*Her brother and sister both* is a long NP.)

Fancy **Marlowe being** able to improve the technique of operation in his greenhouse.

Is there any hope of **John going** back to USA?

(When emphasis is on *John*, genitive or possessive is not used.)

He objected to **member of the same school** (not *\*school's*) winning the prize.

(containing a long noun phrase with postmodification, *of the same school*)

I object to **that being said** about me. (Never use *that's*.)

I object to **anyone('s) smoking** in here. (Alexander et al., 1977, p.179)

I can't understand **anyone treating** children cruelly.

(because of *anyone*, an indefinite pronoun)

There's not the least likelihood of **anything** having happened to them.

(Evans et al., 1957)

The crisis has arisen as a result of recent uncontrolled **inflation having** outweighed the benefits of devaluation.

(Not *\*inflation's...* because *inflation* is an abstract noun and *recent uncontrolled inflation* is a long noun phrase as well).

These radicals contemplate **people of all classes being** reduced to the same social level (Hornby 1977). (because of the postmodified NP, *of all classes*)

In the event of **the weather being** bad, the vessel's departure has to be put off.

One of the troubles is **him using** too money for the project.

What upset me most was **Marlowe having** a surgery the next day.

It's strange **him/his leaving** like that.

I'm surprised at **it being** eight o'clock/**it being** late.

(Here *it* means time; we only use an object case when *it* means time and never use *its*, but it's OK when it means weather, *ie...* any possibility of *its raining*.)

It's not worth (while) **you/your coming** all that way just to see me.

Do you mind **its being** cold?

Beibei was frightened of **it/its building** a nest near the AC in his greenhouse.

(Here *it* means a bird.)

Do you think there is any possibility of **its raining**? (F.T. Wood 1981, p.136)

(but not *it* because of weather).

As mentioned previously, we do not use possessive or apostrophe for demonstrative pronouns, e.g., "There is no likelihood of that happening (not *\*that's*, which is impossible)." When singular nouns are used in spoken English, it would be better not to use possessive to avoid misunderstanding (as mentioned earlier). For example, "She did not like the idea of **her daughter's** going out late at night." "She did not like the idea of **her daughter going** out late at night." The first sentence is preferred in writing, but the second in speech. When we say **daughter's** in the first sentence, it would sound like the plural form of **daughters** since there is

no difference in pronunciation between *daughter's* and *daughters*, and people thought that she had more daughters. When we have plural nouns, we use an apostrophe in formal writing or do not use it, because there is no difference in speech. For example, “*I object to my boys/boys' staying up late at night.*” “*There is no possibility of airplanes (instead of airplanes') colliding in the air in rural areas.*” “Do you object to political action committees (instead of committees') underwriting candidates' campaigns?” (Bernice Randall, 1988).

As mentioned earlier (see 43), when the gerund needs a logical subject and is used as a subject at the beginning of the sentence, a possessive case (especially when it is a pronoun) is usually used rather than objective case (which may be found in substandard English or in spoken English), as in

*Kevin's/His finding fault with people got him into serious trouble.*  
*Mr. Roden's staying up so late (= That Mr. Roden stays up so late) worries his wife.*  
*His wife's being sick (= That her wife was sick) made him upset.*  
*Emily('s) running away from home was the last straw.*  
*The children's/The children wanting that surprised me.*  
*Him finding fault with people got him into serious trouble.*  
(substandard English)  
*Him recognizing his faults is a good thing.* (less colloquially), (Leech, 1978)  
*You going out without permission made your parents upset.*  
*They/Their being my friends makes me happy.*  
*Me knowing her age surprised her.* (substandard English)  
*Him recognizing his fault is a good thing.* (substandard English)  
*It's strange him leaving like that.*

The *half gerund* is suitable for a complex object which must literally be an object. It would be better not to be used as a complex subject, so to speak. We usually do not say or write:

*Mr. Marlowe being able to improve the technique of operation in his greenhouse is quite surprising.*

Instead, we should use a *that-clause* as follows:

*That Mr. Marlowe should have been able to improve the technique of operation in his greenhouse is quite surprising.*

Or, better still, the introductory *it* (empty subject) may be used, as in

*It is quite surprising that Mr. Marlowe should have been able to improve the technique of operation in his greenhouse.*

But the *full gerund* with a possessive will, of course, be all right. Thus:

*Mr. Marlowe's being able to improve the technique of operation in his greenhouse is quite surprising.*

As is known to all, the logical subject (a noun or pronoun) of the gerund (if it appears) is part of the whole gerundial phrase rather than the object of the main verb. For example, we can say “*I can't contemplate John/John's coming tomorrow*”, in which *John* is not the object of the verb, *contemplate*, but is the logical subject of the gerund, *coming*. Therefore, we cannot convert *John* into the subject of the main clause in passive. Because of that reason, we do not say “\**John cannot be contemplated coming tomorrow*.” Neither do we say, “\**You are not minded smoking here*,” as compared with “*I do not mind you/your smoking here*.” “*I found her sleeping when I stepped in*, where *sleeping* is a participle, used as object complement, so there is no problem to convert it into passive voice – *she was found sleeping when I stepped in*.

#### **43.2 With or without + a noun or noun phrase**

It is to be noted that the *half gerund* occurs in the complex object after a preposition as well as after a verb. And the preposition *with* or *without* + a noun or noun phrase can often introduce a complex object. If the non-finite is or contains *being*, the *being* is often omissible in both construction. Since *with* or *without* is a preposition, the *-ing* form used in the pattern is still regarded as a gerund, but some people regard the *-ing* form as a participle. The logical subject of the gerund in this construction is usually an objective case (nominal case), especially when the logical subject of the gerund, not the action, is stressed or when the logical subject of the gerund is a plural noun, e.g. “Weeks or months may pass without Vinnie [instead of Vinnie's] feeling any need to add to her hoard of unpurchased objects”(Bernice Randall,1988).

For example:

*With so many people (being) absent, it seems the meeting should be postponed.*

*With reinforcement (being) cut off, the enemy had to flee.*

*With production increasing every year, the people's life has become better and better.*

*With prices going up so fast, we cannot afford to buy a car.*

*It was a large room, with bookshelves covering most the wall.*

*It was a grey leaden evening, with an east wind blowing on our backs.*

*With him taking charge of the work, we are all sure of its success.*

*With him being sick, the wife had a great deal to do.*

*She hoped that she could slip back without anybody noticing.*

*With the tree growing tall, we get more shade. (R. Quirk et al., 1972)*

*A car roared past with smoke pouring from the exhaust.*

*We could hardly work **with him fussing** us all the time.*

*The war was over **without a shot being fired**.*

*Our house consumes a lot of electricity from AC in summer **without the tall trees growing around it**.*

(Because there are no tall trees growing around the house, we use a lot of electricity ....)

It is to be noted that the above sentences, when the preposition **with** is omitted (14.2), will belong to an absolute construction of the participle, and *being* and *increasing, etc.*, are no longer a gerund, e.g.

***So many people (being) absent**, it seems the meeting should be postponed.*

***Reinforcement (being) cut off**, the enemy had to flee.*

***Production increasing every year**, the people's life has become better and better.*

***Not a shot being fired**, the war was over.*

The construction, **with/without + noun + gerund**, can be used as a postmodifier, as in

*I have a room **with a window overlooking** the mountain.*

(*With a window overlooking the mountain* is used to postmodify *a room*.)

*Can you see the house over there **with its chimney smoking**?*

(*With its chimney smoking* is used to postmodify *the house*.)

We can also use a past participle in the construction **with/without + noun + past participle** to express accompaniment, time, condition, or cause, etc., as in

***With the tree grown tall**, we get much shade. (cause)*

*They sat in the room **with the curtain drawn**. (accompaniment)*

### 43.3 What with

Sometimes we use "**what with**" followed by a gerund or a noun or noun phrase used for introducing the causes of something (usually several things), especially something bad, as in

***What with working too hard and (what with) taking too little care of himself**, he became quite sick.*

= He became quite sick because he worked too hard and took too little care of himself.

***What with all this work and so little sleep at nights**, I don't think I can go on much longer.*

= Because of all this work and so little sleep at nights, I don't think I can go ....

## 44 A gerund used after *the, this, that, some, etc.*

### 44.1 Introduction

A gerund is used after these words: *the, this, that, some, no, a lot of, a little, a bit*, and *much, etc.* When the definite article *the* is followed by a gerund, it is usually referred to as specific rather than general, as in

*Sandy likes her new job, but **the driving** makes her tired.* (specific)

Cf. ***Driving** makes her tired.* (= all driving, driving in general)

***This constant tweeting** makes everyone unhappy.*

*I'd like to find time for **some shopping** before Christmas.*

*To persuade him took **some doing**.* (Take here means *need*.) (Hornby, 1977)

***No smoking** in the casino!* (Smoking is prohibited, or smoking is not allowed.)

*She's got **a bit of shopping** to do.*

*He used to **do some surfing** in Seattle.*

*Ms. Roden **does a lot of cooking** at weekend.*

*Mr. Marlowe **doesn't do much fishing** these days.*

*Dr. Kang has got **a lot of tidying up** to do.*

### 44.2 The gerund/noun + of + noun construction

In formal English, we usually use *the gerund/noun + of + noun* construction, i.e. *the stretching of the rope; The playing of ball games is prohibited*. In such a case, the relation between the gerund and the noun after *of* is that of verb and object (VO), i.e. *play (V) ball games (O)*, where the verb is usually a transitive verb or a phrasal verb, and the preposition *of* cannot be omitted. For examples:

*An important part of our work is **the keeping** (V) **of records** (O).*

= An important part of our work is *keeping records*.

\*An important part of our work is *the keeping records*.

***The studying of English** is no easy job.*

= *Studying (V) English (O)* is not an easy job.

\* *The studying English* is not an easy job

***The ringing of the bell** startled everyone during the exam.*

\* *The ringing the bell* startled everyone during the exam.

***The keeping of records** is very important.*

Cf. *Keeping records* is very important.

***The building of our country** requires our concerted efforts.*

***The rebuilding of our country** requires our concerted efforts.*

*The sowing of the field* was finished.

*The making of cars* is an industry.

\**The making cars* is an industry.

*The reading of the next chapter* had been begun. (Schibsbye 1979)

Moreover, *the wearing of safety belts* is thought to be a sign of fear.

The state prohibits *the parking of the cars* in specified areas posted.

Designing a new factory took us a lot of time, but *the designing of a new factory* was splendid.

How much time shall we allow for the *drawing up of the plan*? (*Draw up* is a phrasal verb)

Cf. Drawing up the plan will take time.

The following sentences copied from the letter sent on December 17, 2019 by Donald J. Trump, the President of the United States of America, to Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives are as follows:

1) *If you truly cared about freedom and liberty for our Nation, then you would be devoting your vast investigative resources to exposing the full truth concerning the FBI's horrifying abuses of power before, during, and after the 2016 election – including the use of spies against my campaign, the submission of false evidence to a FISA court, and the concealment of exculpatory evidence in order to frame the innocent.*

2) *They will not soon forgive your perversion of justice and abuse of power.*

In Sentence 1), he used *the ... abuse of power, the use of spies, the submission of false evidence, and the concealment of exculpatory evidence*. He used all their nouns preceded by the definite article, *the*, in *abuse, use, submission, and concealment* rather than use their gerunds – *abusing, using, submitting, and concealing*. In Sentence 2), he used *your perversion of justice and abuse of power* rather than *perverting* and *abusing*. (Also see below "...other definitive words such as, *a, this, that, etc.* or a possessive/genitive can be used before the gerund.")

In the letter President Trump omitted the definite article, *the*, in many places in his letter, as in

strong protection of the Second Amendment  
cancellation of the unfair and costly Paris Climate Accord  
recognition of Israel's capital  
destruction of American energy  
elimination of the Second Amendment  
obstruction of both common sense and common good

It was also found that the definite article, **the**, is not used before a noun. For example:

*Mr. Trump also complained the federal administrators are trying to block or show down approval of coronavirus vaccine for political reasons.*

--*The Wall Street Journal (10/2/2020): Inside Trump's Last Public Event Before Disclosing He Has Coronavirus*

*The* is not used before the noun, *approval*, in the above sentence.

It is to be noted that in such a construction – **the + gerund/noun + of + noun**, the gerund can be modified by an adjective, but never an adverb. And only the direct object of the verb can be used to the gerund after the preposition **of** when the indirect object requires the preposition **to**, e.g. *The giving of candy to children is popular in this area.* \**The giving of children candy is popular in this area.* We also do not have a direct object in this construction – “\**the designing a new green house.*” Let us consider the following:

*The sudden ringing of the bell startled everyone during the exam.*

\**The suddenly ringing of the bell startled everyone during the exam.*

\**The sudden ringing the bell startled everyone during the exam.*

*Suddenly ringing the bell startled everyone during the exam.*

*The diligent studying of English is no easy job.*

\**The diligently studying of English is no easy job.*

*Diligently studying English is no easy job.*

Cf. *Studying English diligently* is not an easy job.

*The swift handling of coronavirus was amazing in our state.*

\**The swiftly handling of coronavirus was amazing in our state.*

*There is a rule against the noisy cleaning of the streets at mid-night.*

Cf. *There is a rule against noisily cleaning the street at mid-night.*

*I am for the studying of English that begins as early as possible for those kids.*

*The little boy spent a lot of time for the stretching of the rope.*

From the examples shown above, we know that when **the + gerund + of + a noun** is used, the gerund can be modified by an adjective rather than an adverb when **of** is retained, e.g. *The swift handling of coronavirus was amazing in our state.* \**The swiftly handling of coronavirus was amazing in our state.* However, we can use an adverb to modify the gerund phrase without using the definite article **the** and the preposition **of**, e.g. *Diligently studying English is not an easy job.* Or we simply use a gerund phrase as a subject, e.g. *Studying English is not an easy job*, but not \**the studying English is not an easy job*. We can occasionally use the construction, **the + gerund + of + a noun**, as the object of a preposition, but prefer to use a gerund phrase as a prepositional object, e.g. *there is a rule against the noisy cleaning of the streets at mid-night*, and it would be better to say, *there is a rule against (noisily) cleaning the streets at mid-night*.



When a gerund is a transitive verb and has its own noun, we often use the noun in this construction better than the gerund (also see the examples from Donald Trump's letter mentioned in this section). Again, let us consider the following:

***the management of small businesses***

= the managing of small businesses *or* managing small businesses, but *the management of small businesses* is better than *the managing of small businesses*.

***the education of young children***

= the educating of young children *or* educating young children, but the NP *the education of young children* is better than NP *the educating of young children*.

***the construction of the tower***

= the constructing of the tower *or* constructing tower *or* building the tower

***the publication of the book*** = publishing the book

***the discussion of politics*** = discussing politics

***His refusal of your offer to help is hard to understand.***

= His refusing your offer to help is hard to understand.

***Many new techniques have been adopted in the production of steel.***

= Many new techniques have been adopted in producing steel.

***He gave orders for the setting free of the prisoners.*** (Hornby, 1977)

Cf. He gave orders for the prisoners to be set free.

***The captain gave orders for the firing of a salute.***

Cf. The captain ordered his men to fire a salute.

In such a case, the noun is usually an abstract noun. As seen above (*i.e. the publication of the book, etc.*), the noun is normally used rather than its gerund.

In this construction, ***the + gerund/noun + of + a noun***, the definite article ***the*** is often used, but besides ***the***, other definitive words such as, ***a, this, that, etc.*** or ***a possessive/genitive*** can be used before the gerund. R. Quirk et al. (1972, p.134) referred to such forms as VERBAL NOUNS.

More examples:

***Brown's deft painting of his daughter is a delight to watch*** (R. Quirk et al., 1972, p.133).

(possessive is used)

(*ie* It is a delight to watch while John deftly paints his daughter.)

Cf. Brown's deftly painting his daughter is a delight to watch.

(No ***of*** is used when the adverb is used.)

***Brown deftly painting his daughter is a delight to watch.***

(Here *painting* is a present participle; *ie* Brown who is deftly painting his daughter ....)

***a questioning of our basic principles*** (The indefinite article, ***a***, is used)

***His skillful dancing of the tango surprised me.*** (The possessive pronoun, ***his***, is used)

***this useless arguing of the matter*** (The pronoun, ***this***, is used.)

*their polishing of the furniture* (= They polish the furniture. The possessive pronoun, *their*, is used.)

*The Trump administration has faced sharp criticism for its handling of the coronavirus outbreak, which has crippled the U.S.*

--<https://www.yahoo.com/news/barack-obama-takes-veiled-swipe-182400753.html>

In the above sentence, the possessive *its* is used in *its handling of the coronavirus* ....

*UK government officials say there'll be "reckoning" for China over its handling of the coronavirus.*

--<https://www.yahoo.com/news/boris-johnsons-government-reportedly-furious-075257081.html>

In the above sentence, the possessive *its* is used in *its handling of the coronavirus*.

*On Thursday, Huawei launched its P40 smartphone — one of the first flagship devices the company has launched since Washington's introduction of sanctions last May that barred US companies from selling to the Chinese group unless specifically licensed to do so.*

--<https://www.yahoo.com/finance/m/cb6fa639-6dd3-37a4-bea0-22204ac63028/huawei%E2%80%99s-p40-phone-contains.html>

In the above sentence an apostrophe 's is used in *Washington's introduction of sanctions* ...

*A tweet from Hillary Clinton mocking President Trump's handling of the pandemic is drawing severe backlash from conservatives, who accuse the former Secretary of State of playing politics during a national health crisis.*

--<https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/hillary-clinton-tweet-pandemic-actions-023546554.html>

In the above sentence an apostrophe 's is used in *Trump's handling of the pandemic*.

*They will not soon forgive your perversion of justice and abuse of power.*

-- *From the letter sent on December 17, 2019 by Donald J. Trump, the President of the United States of America, to Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives*

In the above sentence, President Trump used the possessive pronoun, *your*, in *your perversion of justice and abuse of power*.

*Your first claim, is “Abuse of Power,” a completely disingenuous, meritless, and baseless invention of imagination.*

In the above sentence, President Trump used an indefinite article, *a*, in *a completely disingenuous, meritless, and baseless invention of imagination*.

#### **44.3 Do the + gerund pattern**

We often use *do the + gerund* for some kinds of work, especially housework, as in

*I usually **do the cleaning** for the house at weekend while my wife **does the cooking**.*

*Don't worry. Someone comes in to **do the cleaning** for you.*

*Have you **done the ironing** yet?*

*Kayla **does the washing** on Saturday.*

Sometimes, *the* is omitted in such a pattern on some occasions, as in

*I **can't do sewing**. I always make a mess of it.*

*The kids next door always **did trampolining** after school.*

We use *go + present participle* (i.e. *go shopping*, where *shopping* is not a gerund). We also use *do the shopping*, where *shopping* is a gerund. *Go shopping* usually means leisure shopping, but *do the shopping* means buying food or something (Eastwood, 2002).

### **45 Some gerunds totally becoming nouns**

When some gerunds totally become nouns, they are no longer present participles, as in

*a gallery of **paintings**, a common **saying**, his famous **teachings**, a good **recording**, etc.*

More examples:

*These **paintings** are very rare.*

*Is your lab in that **building**?*

*Have you heard the new **recording** of Mozart's Requiem?*

*She often listens to some **recordings** of early Italian music.*

## 46 Conclusion

There have been a variety of examples cited or given in this article to describe the use of the present and past participles, and gerunds. Language is a process of usage, which is always developing and changing. Grammar is made for language and not language for grammar. Therefore, the correct use of participles (present and past) and gerunds is a matter of usage and cannot be explained by all rules. Grammar generalizes usage by deducing some rules, which are meant not to prescribe, but to guide. The goal of this article is that it will serve as a guide for English language learners and their teachers. Any comment or critique is welcome of the article.

## References

- Abate, Frank** (1996). *Complete Wordfinder*. The Reader Digest Association, Inc. Pleasantville, N.Y.
- Alexander, L. G. and Allen, W Stannard and Close R A and O'Neill R J** (1977). *English grammatical structure*. London: Longman.
- Courtney, Rosemary** (1983). *Longman Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs*. England: Longman
- Cowie, A P, et al** (1975). *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Eastwood, John** (2002). *Oxford Guide to English Grammar*. Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Bergen and Evans, Cornelia** (1957). *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*. New York: Random House.
- Ge, Chuangui** (1962). *A Dictionary of English Idiomatic Usage*. Beijing: The Times Press.
- Gu, Wenyuan** (1984). *On the Omission of the Infinitive Sign "to"*, printed in the Journal of Shanghai Maritime University, No. 1, Shanghai China.
- Hornby, A S** (1994). *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*, Fourth edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornby, A S** (1977). *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*, Fourth Impression. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huang, Ziwen** (1981). *The English Verb – Its Grammar and Usage*. China: Commercial Press.
- Leech, Geoffrey and Svartvik, Jan** (1974). *A Communicative Grammar of English*. Great Britain: Longman.
- Leech, Geoffrey N** (1978). *Meaning and the English Verb*. London: Longman.
- L. X. H.** (1982). *Kaiming English Grammar*. Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press, Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages, Beijing China.
- Long, T.H. and Summers, Della** (1979). *Longman Dictionary of English Idioms*. London: Longman.

- Palmer, F.R.** (1978). *The English Verb*. London: Longman.
- Procter, Paul, et al** (1978). *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. Great Britain: The Pitman Press, Bath
- Quirk, Randolph, et al** (1972). *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. Longman House, Burnt Mill, Hartow, Essex CM20 2JE, England and Associated Companies throughout the world, Longman Group Ltd.
- Quirk, Randolph** (2004). *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English with Chinese Translation*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- R. A. Close** (1975). *A Reference Grammar for Students of English*. Longman Group Limited, Landon.
- R. A. Close** (1976). *Guide to Constructions and Usage in English*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Randall, Bernice** (1988). *Webster's New World Guide to Current American Usage*. New York: Webster's New World.
- Schibsbye, Knud** (1979). *A Modern English Grammar*, Second Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Swan, Michael** (1980). *Practical English Usage*. Oxford University Press.
- Wang, Jialing, et al** (1981). *The Non-finite Verbs*. China: Commerce Press.
- Warriner, John** (1982). *Warriner's English Grammar and Composition*, Franklin Edition, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (HBJ), Inc., printed in Unites States of America.
- Wood, Frederick T.** (1993). *English Prepositional Idioms with Chinese Translation*. Beijing: Knowledge Press.
- Wood, Fredrick T.** (1981). *Current English Usage*. The Macmillan Press Limited, London
- Wu, H. S.** (1938). *Helps towards Correct English*. The Commercial Press, Limited Changsha, China
- Xu, Liwu** (1979) *A Practical Grammar of Contemporary English*. China: Hunan People's Press.
- Zhang, Daozhen** (1979). *A Practical English Grammar*. China: Commerce Press.
- Zhang, Zhenbang, et al.** (1981). *A New English Grammar*. Shanghai: Translation Press.
- Zhang, Zhenbang, et al.** (1984). *Essentials of a New English Grammar*, Shanghai Translation Press, China