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WRITING

Verbals Part 1: The Gerund

Three different kinds of verbals are **gerunds, participles,** and **infinitives.** This handout and exercise focuses on the gerund.

DEFINITION – a gerund is a verb ending in *–ing* that functions as a noun in a sentence and therefore also occupies the same position that a noun occupies in a sentence: subject, direct object, subject complement, and object of preposition.

Examples:

Gerund as subject: *Traveling* to the Twin Cities is an exciting venture.

Gerund as direct object: We did not like their *arguing*.

Gerund as subject complement: My mother's favorite pastime is *reading*.

Gerund as object of preposition: The teacher failed her for *cheating*.

GERUND PHRASES consist of a gerund and

- the modifier/s and/or
- (pro)noun/s or
- noun phrase/s

They function as the

- direct object/s
- indirect object/s or
- complement/s

of the action or the state expressed in the gerund.

Examples:

Gerund phrase as subject: *Building a new house* would be less expensive than remodeling this old one.

Gerund phrase as the direct object of the verb *enjoy:* I hope they enjoy *my singing at their wedding.*

Gerund phrase as subject compliment: The students' favorite activity is *watching documentaries.*

Gerund phrase as object of the preposition: You might earn a pay raise for *working extra hours.*

PUNCTUATION: Gerunds and gerund phrases rarely ever require punctuation.

SUMMARY

- A gerund is a verbal ending in *-ing* that is used as a noun.
- A gerund phrase consists of a gerund plus modifier/s, object/s, and/or complement/s.
- Gerunds and gerund phrases rarely ever require punctuation.

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Gerund Exercise

Underline the gerunds or gerund phrases in the following sentences and label how they function in the sentence (subject, direct object, subject complement, object of preposition).

1. Jogging helps her stay slim.

2. Swimming at Jack's lake is always splendid.

3. Telling your father the truth is a scary thing to do.

4. The college recommends paying your tuition before the semester begins.

5. The team won the game by practicing regularly all year long.

6. Her most important achievement was winning the third place 4-H prize for her tomatoes at the county fair.

7. Getting up in time for school every day takes discipline.

8. Fighting for their rights made them feel empowered.

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Gerund Exercise Answers

Underline the gerunds or gerund phrases in the following sentences and label how they function in the sentence (subject, direct object, subject complement, object of preposition).

1. **Jogging** helps her stay slim. **(subject)**

2. **Swimming** at Jack's lake is always splendid. **(subject)**

3. **Telling** your father the truth is a scary thing to do. **(subject / or**

   Telling your father the truth is a gerund phrase)

4. The college recommends **paying your tuition** before the semester begins. **(direct object)**

5. The team won the game **by practicing regularly** all year long. **(object of the preposition)**

6. Her most important achievement was **winning the** third place 4-H **prize** for her tomatoes at the county fair. **(direct object)**

7. **Getting up** in time for school every day takes discipline. **(subject)**

8. **Fighting for their rights** made them feel empowered. **(subject)**

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