

Non-Finite Verbs Study Notes

Complete Chapter Reference: Infinitives, Gerunds & Participles (Rules & Applications)

1. INTRODUCTION & CLASSIFICATION

Finite Verbs: Bound by tense, number, and person of the subject. They change according to subject shifts.

Non-Finite Verbs: Not limited by number, person, or tense of the subject. They do not act as the primary predicate verb.

Sentence	Verb Form	Type	Explanation
I <i>have given</i> him money.	have given	Finite	Limited by subject 'I' and present perfect tense.
I like <i>to give</i> him money.	like	Finite	Main verb, changes with tense/person.
I like <i>to give</i> him money.	to give	Non-Finite	Infinitive; independent of subject number or tense.

Forms of Non-Finite Verbs: 1. Infinitives | 2. Gerunds | 3. Participles

2. INFINITIVES & GOVERNING RULES

RULE I Standard Patterns & "How + Infinitive"

(A) (Verb / Adjective / Noun) + Infinitive:

- She comes here **to study**. (Active)
- Nobody likes **to be cheated**. (Passive)
- Everyone desires **to be rich**.
- **To err** is human (or: *It is human to err*).

(B) Verbs & Adjectives followed directly by Infinitives:

agree, happy, desire, need, dare, hope, expect, decide, want, wish, refuse, fail, glad, heard, easy

(C) How + Infinitives (Manner / Method):

When expressing method or skill, verbs like *know, learn, explain, teach, discover, wonder, show, ask, remember, forget* require **how + to-infinitive**.

- He knows **how to write** English. (*Not: He knows to write English*)
- We taught him **how to cook** food.

RULE II Difference Between 'To' and 'For'

- **To + Infinitive:** Used for **purpose implying future action**.

✓ **I went to see him.** (Purpose: will see him)

~~✗ I went for seeing him.~~

- **For + Gerund:** Used for actions indicating **cause (action in the past)**.

- He will punish you **for breaking** the pen.
- He punished you **for coming** late.

- **For + Gerund:** Used to indicate the **purpose/utility of an object**.

- This book is **for reading**.
- This machine is **for measuring** height.

RULE III Direct / Bare Infinitives (Without 'To')

1. 'Need' and 'Dare' as Auxiliaries:

Used as bare infinitives in *negative* and *interrogative* sentences without 'to' and without terminal 's'.

- Ordinary Verb: You need **to work** hard. | Do you need **to work** there now?
- Auxiliary Verb: He **need not work** hard. | **Need he work** there now?
- Ordinary Verb: He dares **to go** outside. | Does he dare **to go** in dark?
- Auxiliary Verb: He **dare not go** in dark. | **Dare he go** in dark?

NOTE: 's' is never appended to *dare* or *need* when used as auxiliary verbs (e.g., *He dare not*, not *dares not*).

2. After Specific Active Verbs:

Verbs: let, bid, make, know, help, hear, watch, see take direct infinitives in active voice.

- Active: I made the student **write** an essay.
- Passive: The student was made **to write** an essay. (*Takes 'to' in passive*)
- **Exception ('let'):** Takes bare infinitive in both active and passive:
Active: The teacher let him **go** out. | Passive: He was let **go** out by the teacher.

3. After Idiomatic Phrases:

Direct infinitives follow: had better, had rather, would rather, would better, as soon, sooner than .

- I would/had better **leave** your house at once.
- She would/had rather **stay** than leave now.
- They had sooner **stay** than leave.
- I would as soon **stay** at home as go.

4. After Prepositions & Conjunctions:

Direct infinitives follow but, than, and, except, as, or .

- He did nothing **but cry**.
- She did no more **than sleep** the whole day.

5. Structures with 'Have':

- **Have + object + bare infinitive** (sense of 'wish'): *I will have him believe it.*
- **Won't + have + object + gerund** (sense of 'won't allow'): *I won't have you talking like that.*

RULE IV Perfect Infinitives (to have + V3)

Used when the action expressed by the infinitive **precedes** the action of the finite verb.

- ~~✗ Yesterday I intended to have gone to Delhi.~~
- ✓ Yesterday I intended to go to Delhi. (*Intention preceded going*)
- ✓ He admitted to have uttered these words against me. (*Uttering preceded admitting*)

Verbs allowing perfect infinitives: *deny, confess, admit, recollect, remember, recall, claim, regret, appear, report, believe, understand, say, allege, suspect, learn, suppose.*

- She denied **to have seen** him yesterday. (Or: *She denied seeing him yesterday*)
- He appears **to have been** rich earlier. | He appears **to be** poor these days.

RULE V - VII Modifiers, Split Infinitives & Continuous Infinitives

Rule V: 'Enough' vs. 'Too':

- *Adjective + enough + infinitive:* Expresses affirmative meaning (*She is good enough to help me*).
- *Too + adjective + infinitive:* Expresses negative meaning (*She is too ill to go out* = cannot go out).

Rule VI: Split Infinitives:

An infinitive should not be split by inserting an adverb between 'to' and the verb.

- ~~✗ You are requested to kindly stay.~~ → ✓ You are requested kindly to stay.
- ~~✗ I advised him to carefully carry the bag.~~ → ✓ I advised him to carry the bag carefully.

Rule VII: Continuous Infinitives (to be + V-ing):

Used with verbs like *appear, seem, believe, consider, think, report, happen, arrange, hope, pretend*, or modals (*may, might, should, could, must*) to express ongoing action coinciding with the main verb.

- Malini appears **to be running** temperature.
- I happened **to be sitting** with my daughters.
- She is reported **to be working** at Chandigarh.
- He thought she might **be waiting** for her.

3. GERUNDS (VERBAL NOUNS)

Nature & Definition

A gerund is a **verb + ing** form functioning as a **noun**. It can serve as a subject, direct object, or prepositional object.

- **Smoking** is not good for health. (Subject)
- I do not like **riding**. (Object of finite verb)
- She is used to **swimming**. (Object of preposition)

Gerund (Acts as Noun)	Present Participle (Acts as Verb/Adjective)
Smoking is injurious to health.	I saw him smoking in the cinema hall.
I am tired of working in this place.	We found him working even after sunset.

NOTE: The verbs *need*, *require*, *want* are followed by a gerund in place of passive voice infinitives (e.g., *My car needs washing* = *needs to be washed*).

RULE I Preposition + Gerund

Prepositions (except when 'to' is part of an infinitive) must be followed by gerunds, not infinitives.

desirous of, disqualify from, refrain from, prevent from, debar from, desist from, restrain from, prohibit from, dissuade from, abstain from, point in, deter from, intent on, bent on, keen on, aim at, confident of, confidence in, insist on, persist in, succeed in, successful in, sense in, interested in, justified in, hesitate in, a hope of, fortunate in, harm in, assist in, a chance of, fond of, take/feel pleasure in

RULE II Direct Gerunds with Specific Verbs & Idioms

Gerunds are directly used after:

give up, put off, set about, stop, avoid, enjoy, mind, cannot help, it is no use, it is no good .

- We stopped **writing**. (*Not: stopped to write*)
- He has given up **playing** hockey.
- She enjoyed **riding** on the hills.
- You should avoid **spending** extra money.
- She cannot help **telling** a lie. (*Note: can also be written as "cannot help but tell a lie"*)
- Suhani does not mind **helping** me.
- It is no use/good **waiting** for her.

RULE III Phrases with 'To + Gerund'

In the following expressions, '**to**' is a **preposition**, requiring a gerund rather than a base verb:

used to, accustomed to, averse to, with a view to, addicted to, devoted to, look forward to, object to, owing to, given to, taken to, prone to

- He is addicted to **smoking** heavily. (*Not: addicted to smoke*)
- We go there with a view to **studying** Science.
- He is used to **getting** up early in the morning.

RULE IV Possessive Case Before Gerunds

A noun or pronoun placed immediately before a gerund must be in the **possessive case**.

- ~~✗ I don't like him wasting time.~~ → ✓ I don't like his wasting time.
- ~~✗ Geeta insisted on Rohan going with her.~~ → ✓ Geeta insisted on Rohan's going with her.
- Compare with Participle: I saw **him** wasting time. ('him' is the object seen, wasting is a participle)

4. PARTICIPLES & PARTICIPLE CLAUSES

Participle Forms

Participle Type	Construction	Example	Meaning / Paraphrase
Present Participle	Verb + ing	A <i>burning</i> candle	That is burning (Active, continuous)
Past Participle	Verb + ed / en / t (V3)	A <i>burnt</i> paper	That is burnt (Passive, completed)
Perfect Participle (Active)	Having + V3	<i>Having burnt</i> paper	After burning paper (Completed action)
Perfect Participle (Passive)	Having been + V3	<i>Having been burnt</i>	Passive voice completion

RULE I & II Participle Clauses & Clause Conversions

Participle Clause / Nominative Absolute: A participle phrase replacing a subordinate finite clause.

- **Walking** in the garden I came across an old friend. (*Present Participle, Active*)
- **Surprised** at the news I rushed to the airport. (*Past Participle, Passive*)
- **Having taken** food I left for office. (*Perfect Participle, Active*)
- **Having been arrested** the thief was taken to prison. (*Perfect Participle, Passive*)
- The Sun **having risen**, we left the town. (*Nominative Absolute: independent subject*)

Participles can replace multiple types of subordinate clauses:

- **Adverb Clause of Time:** *As I was wandering in the street, I met my friend* → **(While) wandering** in the street, I met my friend.
- **Adverb Clause of Reason:** *Since she was late, she was punished* → **Being late**, she was punished.
- **Adverb Clause of Contrast:** *Although she came late, she was not punished* → **In spite of coming late**, she was not punished.
- **Adjective Clause:** *I saw a girl who was singing* → I saw a girl **singing** a song.
- **Co-ordinate Clause:** *He returned and he was smiling* → He returned **smiling**.

RULE III Temporal Agreement (Simultaneous Action)

Present participles should be used **only** to express an action that coincides with (is simultaneous to) the main finite verb.

- ✗ ~~Left for Mumbai on Monday, reaching there on Tuesday.~~ (Not simultaneous)
- ✓ **Left for Mumbai on Monday and reached there on Tuesday.**

RULE IV Misrelated / Unrelated (Dangling) Participles

A participle must have a clear, grammatically stated subject of reference. If omitted, it automatically attaches to the main clause subject, causing errors.

Three Methods to Correct Misrelated Participles:

1. Expand the participle into an adverbial clause.
2. Bring the proper logical subject immediately after the participle as the main subject.
3. Place the proper subject before the participle (forming a Nominative Absolute).

Incorrect (Misrelated)	Corrected Options
Walking along the road a scooter knocked him down.	(i) <i>While he was walking along the road, a scooter knocked him down.</i> (ii) <i>Walking along the road, he was knocked down by a scooter.</i>
Having taken food my father sent me to market.	(i) <i>When I had taken food, my father sent me to market.</i> (ii) <i>I having taken food, my father sent me to market. (Absolute)</i> (iii) <i>Having taken food, I was sent to market by my father.</i>
Being cloudy we enjoyed picnic.	(i) <i>As it was cloudy, we enjoyed picnic.</i> (ii) <i>It being cloudy, we enjoyed picnic. (Absolute)</i>
Being honest the teacher rewarded him.	(i) <i>As he was honest, the teacher rewarded him.</i> (ii) <i>He being honest, the teacher rewarded him.</i> (iii) <i>Being honest, he was rewarded by the teacher.</i>
Possessing huge wealth people do not like him.	(i) <i>Although he possesses huge wealth, people do not like him.</i> (ii) <i>Possessing huge wealth, he is not liked by people.</i>

RULE V Impersonal / Independent Participles

Certain participles do not refer to any specific grammatical subject in the sentence because their unexpressed subject is generalized or indefinite. They are correct without agreement:

regarding, concerning, considering, speaking, judging, taking into account

- **Considering** his problems he was advised to leave Jalgaon.
- Roughly **speaking** two hundred persons died in the earthquake.