

Gerunds and infinitives: choosing the correct form

Introduction

Understanding when to use gerunds and infinitives is crucial for the TOEIC test, particularly in the Listening and Reading sections. These forms often appear in business contexts, and knowing the difference can help you understand the nuances of English grammar and improve your score.

Explanation

A gerund is the -ing form of a verb that functions as a noun. For example, in the sentence *"I enjoy reading,"* "reading" is a gerund. An infinitive is the base form of a verb, usually preceded by "to." For example, "to read" in *"I want to read"* is an infinitive.

Certain verbs are followed by gerunds, while others are followed by infinitives. Here are some examples:

- **Gerunds:** enjoy, avoid, consider
 - *"She enjoys working on challenging projects."*
 - *"They avoid discussing sensitive topics."*
- **Infinitives:** decide, plan, hope
 - *"He decided to accept the offer."*
 - *"We plan to expand our operations."*

Common mistakes

- **Mixing up gerunds and infinitives:** Learners often use an infinitive when a gerund is needed, or vice versa. For example, *"I enjoy to read"* should be *"I enjoy reading."*
- **Forgetting the "to" in infinitives:** Sometimes learners omit "to," as in *"I want visit"* instead of *"I want to visit."*

Tips for the TOEIC test

- Pay attention to the verbs in the sentence. Some verbs are always followed by a gerund or an infinitive.
- Listen for context clues in the Listening section. The surrounding words can help you determine the correct form.
- Practice with common business verbs that frequently appear in TOEIC, such as "consider" (gerund) and "decide" (infinitive).

Mini practice

Fill in the blanks with the correct form (gerund or infinitive) of the verb in parentheses:

- The manager suggested _____ (hold) a meeting on Friday.
- We hope _____ (launch) the new product next month.
- She avoided _____ (mention) the budget issues during the presentation.

Answers

- holding
- to launch
- mentioning