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Grammar Reference

a. Grammar Reference: Gerunds and infinitives

Gerunds and infinitives are verbs that are used as nouns in a sentence. A gerund is formed using a base verb +ing.

Example: **Cooking** is one of my favorite weekend activities.
The hardest part of studying is **starting**.

An infinitive is formed using to + a base verb.

Example: I am *hoping* **to start** Chinese classes soon.
He *has been* happy **to help**.

Gerunds are often formed when one **verb** follows another *verb*. Gerunds are most often the subject or object of a sentence.

Example: I *adore* **living** here.
I *can't stand* **listening** to that music all night.

However, if the second verb takes an object, it follows the infinitive form. Therefore, infinitives are most often the subject of a sentence.

Example: I *convinced* her **to visit** me.
He *warned* me not **to go** there.

Some verbs can ONLY be followed by a gerund often showing distaste such as but not only including: *adore, appreciate, can't stand, detest, don't mind, enjoy, give up, keep, put off, suggest*.

Example: I **suggest starting** to go on individual dates after you have first gained some experience in group dating.
He always appreciates **sharing** what we are thankful for.

Some verbs can ONLY be followed by an infinitive often showing the influence of one thing on the actions of another such as, but not only including: *advise, allow, ask, decide, encourage, expect, force, forbid, intend, need, order, persuade, refuse, seem, tell, tend, urge, warn*.

Example: We **decided to go** our separate ways.
I **tend to choose** stylish clothes over functional ones.

However, there are also some verbs that can be followed by *either* a gerund *or* an infinitive such as, but not including: *begin, bother, consider, continue, hate, prefer, start*.

Example: I *love* **choosing** my outfits out the night before.
I *love* **to choose** my outfits the night before.

But be careful, these five specific verbs can be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive, but the meaning changes significantly: *try, stop, forget, remember, regret*.

Example: I **tried to read**, but couldn't focus today. (tried, but lacked the ability, will do again in future)
I **tried reading** in Spanish, but quit when I got to Don Quixote. (tried, but stopped forever)
He **stopped eating** sugar. (He quit eating sugar forever)
He **stopped to eat** lok lak. (He took a break from what he was doing to eat lok lak)

Verbs that are followed by prepositions follow the gerund form.

Example: I *look forward to* **meeting** her.
High prices often *prevent* me **from buying** stylish clothes.
We *insist on* **paying**.

b. Grammar Reference: Comparisons using adjectives

Adjectives take comparative forms and structures to compare one noun to another. A comparative adjective is formed by changing the form of an adjective.

If the adjective is one syllable, add *-er* to the end of the **adjective** followed by the word *than*.

Example: My older brother is **shorter** *than* me.
A cheetah is **faster** *than* a lion.

If an adjective ends in *y*, it follows the same form as one-syllable **adjectives**, except *-ier* is added to the adjective instead of just *-er*.

Example: My brother is always **hungrier** *than* me.
She will never be **prettier** *than* you.

If the adjective is two syllables or more, add *more* or *less* in front of the **adjective** followed by the word *than*.

Example: Each version of the iPhone is *more* **expensive** *than* the previous one.
Watching a movie together is *more* **fun** *than* sitting at a coffee shop.
Our boss is really disappointed that the company was *less* **profitable** this quarter.

There are also a few adjectives that are irregular.

good -> better
bad -> worse
far -> farther

To show a small difference between two things, use words like *slightly*, *a little bit*, and *a tiny bit* before the comparative.

Example: He's just *a little bit* **taller** than his dad.
The cuisine here is *slightly* **more varied** than our old neighborhoods.

To show a big difference between two things, use words like *much*, *far*, and *considerably* before the comparative.

Example: My drive to work is *much* **shorter** than before.
The tuition of this university is *considerably* **more expensive** than community college.

Use *as + adjective + as* to show that two things are equal or not as + adjective + as to emphasize that they are not equal. Adding *quite* can show a small difference, while phrases like *nowhere near* or *nearly* show a bigger difference.

Example: This exam is just *as difficult as* the last one.
The new teacher is *not as funny as* the last teacher.
This school isn't *quite as good as* my last one.
This pie is *nowhere near as good as* your homemade pie.