

## Gerund and present participle

The gerund and the present participle have identical forms. They are both formed from verbs and end in -ing. However, they have different uses. A gerund functions like a noun. It can do everything that a noun does. A participle, on the other hand, functions like an adjective. It is mostly used to modify nouns. It is also used to make continuous tense forms.

Compare:

He kept me waiting. (Waiting – present participle)

I don't like waiting. (Here the -ing form waiting is the object of the verb like and hence it acts like a noun. It is therefore a gerund.)

After playing for an hour, he went home. (Playing – present participle)

Playing is good for health. (Here the -ing form playing is the subject of the verb is and hence it acts like a noun. It is therefore a gerund.)

Forms of gerund

Having worked for twelve hours, I felt tired. (Perfect – active)

She is angry about having been criticized. (Perfect – passive)

Everybody is desirous of being praised. (Passive)

Not knowing what to do, she started crying. (Negative)

Exercise

Say whether the -ing forms given in the following sentences are gerunds or present participles.

1. Telling lies won't help anyone.
2. She was punished for coming late.

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3. Children learn reading and writing at school.

4. Coming events cast their shadow.

5. He left the tap running.

### Answers

1. Telling – gerund (subject of the verb won't)

2. Coming – gerund (object of the preposition for)

3. Reading and writing – gerund (object of the verb learn)

4. Coming – present participle (modifies the noun events)

5. Present participle – running (modifies the noun tap)