Gerunds: The Basics

Gerunds are words that are formed with [**verbs**](http://www.gingersoftware.com/content/grammar-rules/verbs/) but act as [**nouns**](http://www.gingersoftware.com/content/grammar-rules/nouns/). They’re very easy to spot, since every gerund is a verb with ing tacked to its tail. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Like all things grammar, gerunds do take a tiny bit of detective work to spot. The problem here is that present participles also end with the letters ing. Besides being able to spot gerunds, you should be able to tell the difference between a gerund and a present participle.

Let’s go back to the definition of a gerund for a moment. Remember that gerunds are words that are formed with verbs but act as nouns. Present participles do not act as nouns. Instead, they act as modifiers or complete progressive verbs. To find gerunds in sentences, just look for a verb + ing that is used as a noun. It’s that simple.

Examples of Gerunds

As you read these examples of gerunds, notice the verbs they contain, and notice that every single one of them ends in ing. By the end of this quick lesson, you’ll have no problem recognizing gerunds when you see them.

1. Swimming in the ocean has been Sharon’s passion since she was five years old.
2. Let’s go dancing at the club tonight.
3. I’ve been dreaming of summer all winter long.
4. Holly decided that flying above the clouds was the most incredible experience she’d ever had.
5. Bill avoided doing his math assignment because the World Series was on.