

English Verb Form Guide

Here is an overview of when to use the **base form** (simple form), the **infinitive form** (to + verb), the **present participle** (-ing), or the **past participle** (-ed or irregular).

BASE FORM (aka: Simple Form)

<u>Use the Base Form as the 2nd verb in the sentence:</u>	<u>Examples:</u>
After the auxiliary verb “Do” in questions or negative sentences in: Simple Present or Simple Past	Do you want to come? He didn't see us. She doesn't remember us.
After Causative Verbs: (Let, Help, Make, Have)	I let her use my computer. Will you help me talk to them? She made the kids do their chores. We had some friends come over.
After Verbs of Perception: (see, watch, feel, hear, smell, etc.)	I <i>saw</i> him enter the room. I <i>heard</i> the door shut . I <i>felt</i> the ground shake .
After Modal Auxiliaries (Can, Could, Should, Would, Will, etc.)	<i>I should work.</i> <i>Could you check?</i> <i>We might go.</i>
In the Subjunctive Mood: Used to express wishes, suggestions, demands, desires, or other hypothetical situations.	I suggested she study more. I hope you stay healthy. It is important <i>that</i> he arrive early. I demand <i>that</i> she leave at once. <i>often used in “that” clauses</i>

INFINITIVE (to + base form)

<p><u>Use the Infinitive Form as the 2nd verb in the sentence:</u></p>	<p><u>Examples:</u></p>
<p>After most verbs - especially to elaborate on the 1st verb, or give an explanation or reason for the 1st verb.</p> <p>(eg. want, agree, arrange, choose, decide, hope, learn, offer, etc.)</p>	<p>I want to teach you.</p> <p>She agreed to sing for the event.</p> <p>I rearranged the furniture to clean.</p> <p>She chose to live here.</p> <p>Did you decide where to move?</p> <p>I hope to visit South America soon.</p> <p>We learned to speak quickly.</p> <p>I offered to help.</p>
<p>After most adjectives</p>	<p>Were they able to come?</p> <p>It's unusual to see that!</p> <p>It was so frustrating to read at first.</p> <p>It's great to live close to the ocean.</p>
<p>After the Causative "Get"</p> <p>When someone/something gets someone/something to do something, it means to persuade or convince them to do something.</p>	<p>The child got his mom to give him \$10</p> <p>I got my friend to carry my luggage.</p> <p>Can we get them to work here?</p> <p>I finally got you to believe me.</p>

PRESENT PARTICIPLE (-ing)

<u>Use the Present Participle:</u>	<u>Examples:</u>
<p>in Continuous Tenses (after the auxiliary verb “be”)</p> <p>be + verb + -ing</p>	<p><i>Present Continuous:</i> I am talking right now.</p> <p><i>Past Continuous:</i> I was sleeping when you called.</p> <p><i>Future Continuous:</i> I will be working all day tomorrow.</p> <p><i>Present Perfect Continuous:</i> I have been studying this for years.</p>
<p>when you need to use a Gerund:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When the verb is the subject of the sentence 2. After verbs which must be followed by nouns. 3. After prepositions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Driving carefully in winter is very important. 2. Have you <i>finished</i> eating yet? 3. We need to talk <i>about</i> organizing the event.
<p>for Participial Adjectives using the active form</p>	<p>This is interesting!</p> <p>Learning English can be confusing!</p> <p>The movie got boring after 2 hours.</p>
<p>after Verbs of Perception when the perceived action is continuous (see, watch, feel, hear, smell, etc.)</p>	<p>I <i>smell</i> something burning!</p> <p>I <i>saw</i> him entering the building.</p> <p><i>Listen</i> to the dog snoring!</p>

PAST PARTICIPLE (-ed / irregular)

<u>Use the Past Participle:</u>	<u>Examples:</u>
in Perfect Tenses (after the auxiliary verb "have")	Has she ever been to this place? I have never gone to Europe. By the time you see this, I will have already left .
for Participial Adjectives in the passive voice	Are you interested in AI technology? She is bored at her job. The fish is still frozen . Are you lost ? The toast was burnt .

Causative Verbs

Causative Verbs are used when the first verb causes the second verb to happen, with slightly different meanings. The causative verbs are **Let, Help, Make, Have, and Get.**

Let & Help

Use the simple form for the verb after <i>let</i> and <i>help</i>	
(a) My father <i>lets</i> me <i>drive</i> his car. (b) I let my friend <i>borrow</i> my bicycle. (c) <i>Let's go</i> to a movie. (d) They let the dogs run off leash outside	<i>Let</i> is followed by the simple form of a verb, not an infinitive. Incorrect: My father lets me <i>to drive</i> his car
(e) My brother helped me wash my car. (f) My brother helped me to wash my car.	<i>Help</i> is usually followed by the simple form of a verb, as in (e). The infinitive is also possible, as in (f). Both (e) and (f) are correct.

1. Don't **let** me _____ my car keys like I forgot them last week!
2. The teacher usually **lets** us _____ the homework late.
3. Will you **help** me _____ the dishes?
4. Keep working, don't **let** me _____ you.
5. The police officer **helped** the lost child _____ his way home.

Make, Have, Get

<p>Use the simple form for the verb after <i>make</i> and <i>have</i></p> <p>Use the infinitive form for the verb after <i>get</i></p>	
<p>(a) I made my brother carry my suitcase.</p> <p>(b) I had my brother carry my suitcase.</p> <p>(c) I got my brother <u>to carry</u> my suitcase.</p>	<p><i>Make, have, and get</i> can be used to express that “X” causes “Y” to do something.</p> <p>When they are used as causative verbs, their meanings are similar but not identical.</p>
<p>Forms</p> <p>MAKE</p> <p>a. X makes Y do something. (Simple form)</p> <p>HAVE</p> <p>b. X has Y do something. (simple form)</p> <p>GET</p> <p>c. X gets Y to do something. (infinitive)</p>	<p>In (a): my brother had no choice. I insisted that he carry my suitcase.</p> <p>In (b): My brother carried my suitcase because I asked him to.</p> <p>In (c) : I managed to persuade my brother to carry my suitcase.</p>
<p><u>Causative Make</u></p> <p>(d) Mrs. Lee made her son clean his room.</p> <p>(e) Sad movies make me cry.</p>	<p>Causative make is followed by the simple form of a verb, not an infinitive. (<i>Incorrect: She made him to clean his room.</i>)</p> <p>Make gives the idea that “X” forces “Y” to do something. In (d): Mrs. Lee’s son had no choice.</p>

<p><u>Causative Have</u></p> <p>(f) I had the plumber repair the leak.</p> <p>(g) Jane had the waiter bring her some tea.</p>	<p>Causative have is followed by the simple form of a verb, not an infinitive. (<i>Incorrect: I had to repair the leak.</i>)</p> <p>Have gives the idea that “X” requests “Y” to do something. In (f): The plumber repaired the leak because I asked him to.</p>
<p><u>Causative Get</u></p> <p>(h) The students got the teacher to dismiss class early.</p> <p>(i) Jack got his friends to play soccer with him after school.</p>	<p>Causative get is followed by an infinitive. Get gives the idea that “X” persuades “Y” to do something. In (h): The students managed to persuade the teacher to let them leave early.</p>
<p><u>Passive Causatives</u></p> <p>(j) I had my watch repaired / fixed (by someone).</p> <p>(k) I got my watch repaired (by someone).</p> <p>(l) I had the check cashed.</p> <p>(m) I got my shirts cleaned at the laundromat.</p>	<p>The past participle is used after have and get to give a passive meaning. In this case, there is usually little or no difference in meaning between have and get. In (j) and (k): I caused my watch to be repaired by someone.</p>

Complete the sentences with the words in parentheses.

Example: The doctor made the patient (stay) stay in bed.

1. Mrs. Crane had her house (paint) _____ blue.
2. The teacher had the class (write) _____ a 2000 word research paper.
3. I made my son (wash) _____ the windows before he could go outside to play.

4. She got some kids in the neighborhood (clean) _____ out her garage.
5. I went to the bank to have a check (cash) _____ .
6. I had the bank (cash) _____ my check.
7. Tom had a bad headache yesterday, so he got his identical twin brother (go)_____ to class for him. The teacher could not tell the difference.
8. When Scott went shopping, he found a jacket that he really liked. After he had the sleeves (shorten) _____ , it fit him perfectly.
9. My boss made me (redo) _____ my report because it wasn't long enough.
10. Alice stopped at the service station to have her gas tank (fill) **filled**_____.
11. I got Rosa (lend) _____ me some money so I could go to the concert last night.
12. The man went to a doctor to have a wart on his nose (remove) _____ .
13. I spilled some tomato sauce on my suit, so now I need to go to the laundromat to get it (clean)_____ .
14. Peeling onions always makes me (cry)_____ .
15. Tom Sawyer was supposed to paint the fence, but he didn't want to do it. He was a very clever boy, so he got his friends (do) _____ it for him.
16. We had a professional photographer (take) _____ pictures
17. Sometimes parents make their children _____ chores.
18. You should take your car to the service station to get your oil _____.
19. My cousin's jokes always make me_____ .

Verbs of Perception

Verbs of Perception are one of the unique cases in English where the verb is not followed by either an infinitive (to + base form), but is instead followed by the base form, like **modals** and **causative verbs** (let, make, have, help). Sometimes verbs of perception are also followed by the **present participle form** (-ing).

Using Verbs of Perception											
<p>(a) I saw my friend run down the street.</p> <p>(b) I saw my friend running down the street.</p> <p>(c) I heard the rain fall on the roof.</p> <p>(d) I heard the rain falling on the roof.</p>	<p>Certain verbs of perception are followed by either the base form OR the -ing form as a gerund, but with a continuous or progressive connotation.</p> <p>There is only a very small difference</p>										
<p>(e) When I walked into the apartment, I heard my roommate singing in the shower.</p> <p>(f) I heard my neighbors arguing all night last night.</p> <p>(g) I heard something fall last night.</p>	<p>Sometimes there is a clear difference between using the simple form or the -ing form. The use of the -ing form gives the idea that an activity is already in progress when it is perceived, like in (e) - or continuous like in (f).</p> <p>In (g) the base form is used to show that it was just one moment, not continuous and not already in progress.</p>										
<p>Verbs of perception followed by the simple form OR the -ing form</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">See</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Look at</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Hear</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Feel</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Smell</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Notice</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Observe</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Listen to</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Watch</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		See	Look at	Hear	Feel	Smell	Notice	Observe	Listen to	Watch	
See	Look at	Hear	Feel	Smell							
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→ Incorrect: I **saw** my friend **to run** down the street

→ Correct: _____

Verbs of Perception - Practice #1

Complete the sentences with any appropriate verbs. Both the simple form and the -ing form are possible with little, if any difference in meaning.

1. Polly was working in her garden, so she didn't hear the phone _____.
2. I like to listen to the birds _____ when I get up early in the morning.
3. The guard observed a suspicious-looking person _____ into the bank.
4. There was an earthquake in my hometown last year. It was just a small one, but I could feel the ground _____.
5. I was sleeping last night when I suddenly heard someone _____ on the door.
6. While I was waiting for my plane to arrive, I watched other planes _____ and _____.

Verbs of Perception - Practice #2

Both the simple form and the -ing form are grammatically correct, so you can't make a grammar mistake. But a speaker might prefer to choose one over the other.

Read the situation, then decide which form seems better to you in the sentence that contains a verb of perception. Remember that the -ing form gives the idea that an activity is in progress when it is perceived.

Example:

Situation: *I was downtown yesterday. I saw the police. They were chasing a thief.*

When I was downtown yesterday, I saw the police chasing a thief.

1. Situation: *The front door slammed. I got up to see if someone had come in.*
When I heard the front door _____, I got up to see if someone had come in.
2. Situation: *Uncle Jake is in the bedroom. He is snoring.*
I know Uncle Jake is in the bedroom because I can hear him _____.

3. Situation: When I walked past the park, some children were playing softball.
When I walked past the park, I saw some children _____ softball.

4. Situation: *It was graduation day in the auditorium. When the school principal called my name, I walked to the front of the room.*
When I heard the school principal _____ my name, I walked to the front of the auditorium to receive my diploma.

5. Situation: *I glanced out the window. A baby was walking toward the house. I was surprised.*
I was surprised when I glanced out the window and saw a baby _____ toward the house.

6. Situation: *Someone is calling for help in the distance. I suddenly hear that.*
Listen! Do you hear someone _____ for help? I do.

7. Situation: *My daughter's team plays soccer every weekend. I always watch the team when they play a game.*
I enjoy watching my daughter _____ soccer every weekend.

8. Situation: *A fly landed on the table. I swatted it with a rolled up newspaper.*
As soon as I saw the fly _____ on the table, I swatted it with a rolled up newspaper.

9. Situation: *I smell smoke. Something must be burning.*
Do you smell something _____? I do.