

Gerunds and Gerundives

Gerund

- verbal noun
- active
- occurs only in neut. sing. acc.-gen.
- 2nd declension noun endings

Gerundive

- verbal adjective
- passive
- all cases, numbers, genders
- 1st-2nd declension adj. endings

The gerund is a verbal noun (___ing), that is to be distinguished from a participle (noun-head ___ing). The gerund can do anything a noun can do, except serve as subject or direct object (subjective and complementary infinitives are used instead).

Gerundives are used in place of a gerund + DO, which was avoided in Latin.¹ The gerundive is technically a future passive participle and thus an adjective. But Latin prefers to use it (despite having to switch the entire construction into the passive) just to avoid the gerund + DO:

Gerund: *Legendō legere discimus*, "We learn to read *by reading*".

Gerundive: If the gerund would take an object, "We learn to read *by reading books*", Latin uses the gerundive, *Librīs legendīs legere discimus*, "we learn to read *by books about to be read*". But translate "*by reading books*"

Constructions with gerunds:

- 1) Ablative of means "by ___ing" (the most common)
- 2) *ad* + accusative (purpose), "for the purpose of ___ing" **or** *causā*+ genitive, "for the sake of ___ing"
- 3) Genitive: "of ___ing"
- 4) *Less Common*: other uses such as dative and object of preps. are possible

Constructions with gerundives:

- 1) As a replacement for the gerund + DO; thus all of jobs 1-3 above.
- 2) With *sum*, *esse*, the nominative gerundive is a main verb: the "future passive periphrastic" construction expressing necessity: e.g., *Carthāgō dēlenda est*, "Carthage *must be* destroyed." If the agent is expressed, it will be in the dative case.²

(Less Common):

- 3) Intransitive verbs form an impersonal passive construction. It still expresses necessity, but translate as *active*: *hostibus parcendum est*, "One *must spare* the enemy".
- 4) *-able*. The gerundive can convey necessity outside of the periphrastic construction, sometimes best rendered as an adjective in *-able*: *quamquam ferenda nōn fuērunt*...., "although they were *unbearable*..."

¹ The exceptions to this rule are that gerunds take neuter pronouns and adjectives as DO when gender might otherwise be confused, and instead of the genitive plural to avoid the sing-song effect of *-ārum*, *-ōrum*. Example: instead of *armōrum capiendōrum facultās*, "The chance of taking arms," one will find *arma capiendī facultās*.

² exception: special intransitive verbs + dative have to revert to *ā* / *ab* + ablative