

Extension exercises

Chapter 12: Infinitive and *-ing* forms of verbs | Comments

Course materials

Some materials pay little or no explicit attention to the use of infinitive and *-ing* forms. Sometimes the attention is haphazard and occurs in the context of other topics (for example, the use of infinitives and *-ing* forms as the subjects of sentences and clauses may be taught within exercises on writing skills). At the opposite extreme, some materials may attempt to teach a full list of the reasons for using infinitives or *-ing* forms in one block.

What is appropriate will depend on the learners and the extent to which this area of grammar causes them difficulty. While the topic should probably never be completely ignored, it may well be the case that for many learners the most useful strategy is to integrate the teaching of these forms into other parts of the syllabus so that as they learn certain verbs, for example, they also learn which verbs are followed by infinitives and which are followed by *-ing* forms.

Some learners may internalise the rule through exposure to examples that, for example, prepositions need to be followed by *-ing* forms rather than infinitives. Perhaps it is not necessary or helpful for these learners to pay attention explicitly to this. Equally, more analytically-minded learners may find the distinction between gerunds and present participles useful, but others may find it confusing.

Exploring how learners use English

The result of this experiment will depend on the learners. Learners who are more aware of the need to choose between infinitives and *-ing* forms may find it easier to learn the rules, but other learners may find they instinctively know what is right without consciously applying rules they have learned.

There may be a lot of individual variation in how the students respond to the teaching.