

Clarifying Differences in Gerund/Infinitive Usage via Context

prefer: + **gerund:** I'd prefer V+ing to V+ing
+ **infinitive:** I'd prefer to+V (rather) than to+V.

(Actually, usually the full phrases aren't usually used.)

Julia: What kind of music do you listen to?

Marc: I generally prefer listening to hip-hop.

Julia: Really? You prefer to listen to hip-hop rather than rock?

Marc: Yeah, I really do. What about you?

Julia: Actually, I don't really listen to much popular music.

Marc: Oh yeah? What is that?

Julia: I'm a concert pianist, so I prefer listening to classical music.

Marc: That's interesting. I prefer listening to live classical music to hearing recordings. When's your next performance?

remember: +**infinitive:** = remember to perform a duty or task.
+**gerund:** = recall that something happened in the past

forget: +**infinitive:** = forget to perform a duty or task.
+**gerund:** = forgot that something happened in the past
(*forget* is usually used in the negative)

Lawyer: So what happened on the night of January 12th.

Witness: Well, I remember walking home at about 10:00.

Lawyer: And do you remember hearing any strange sounds.

Witness: Yes. I remember hearing running footsteps coming from up the block. And I got scared, so I hurried to my door.

Lawyer: And what happened then?

Witness: Well, I tried to go in, but I couldn't find my keys in my purse. At that moment, I realized that I'd forgotten to put them in my purse after work. I tried to think back to when I'd last seen my keys, and I remembered leaving them in my desk drawer.

Lawyer: So, you forgot to bring keys home from work. OK, What do remember happening next?

Witness: I remember hearing the voice.

Lawyer: And what voice was this?

Witness: I'll never forget hearing that voice. It was the scariest voice I'd ever heard. I remember being very scared.

Lawyer: What did the man say?

Witness: He told me to open the door and let him inside. I told him that I'd forgotten to bring my keys home, but he didn't believe me. So I opened my purse to show him. And when I did, I realized that I had remembered to put my spray can of mace in my purse, so I grabbed it and sprayed him in the face. I'll never forget seeing him grab his eyes and stumble away in the dark.

regret: +**infinitive:** = to say, to tell, to inform someone of bad news.
 +**gerund:** = regret something that happened in the past

Lieutenant: Ma'am, I regret to inform you that your husband has been killed in the war.

Wife: (crying)

Lieutenant: And I regret to say that his body was lost in the explosion.

Wife: (still crying) I regret letting him enlist for the army...

Lieutenant: We all regret having to lose Deputy Jones, ma'am. He was a good man. And, at this point, I think most of us regret even starting this war.

try: +**infinitive:** = make an effort
 +**gerund:** = experiment with a new method to see if it works

Alice: Hey, what are you doing?

Tony: I'm trying to start my car. (turns key again...) But it won't start.

Alice: Have you tried putting the car in "Park." It won't start unless it's in Park.

Tony: Yes, of course. I did that first.

Alice: Have you tried pumping the gas pedal? I've heard that helps.

Tony: I would have tried doing that, but that only works on a manual car. Mine's an automatic.

Alice: I'll tell you what *I* would do. I'd try calling a mechanic!