

## 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 12<sup>th</sup>.

**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!