

The Gerund

Recognize a *gerund* when you see one.

Every gerund, without exception, ends in *ing*. Gerunds are not, however, all that easy to identify. The problem is that all present participles also end in *ing*. What is the difference?

Gerunds function as nouns. Thus, gerunds will be subjects, subject complements, direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions.

Present participles, on the other hand, complete progressive verbs or act as modifiers.

Read these examples of gerunds:

Since Francisco was five years old, *swimming* has been his passion.

Swimming = subject of the verb *has been*.

Francisco's first love is *swimming*.

Swimming = subject complement of the verb *is*.

Francisco enjoys *swimming* more than spending time with his girlfriend Diana.

Swimming = direct object of the verb *enjoys*.

Francisco gives *swimming* all of his energy and time.

Swimming = indirect object of the verb *gives*.

When Francisco wore dive fins to class, everyone knew that he was devoted to *swimming*.

Swimming = object of the preposition *to*.

These *ing* words are examples of *present participles*:

One day last summer, Francisco and his coach were *swimming* at Daytona Beach.

Swimming = present participle completing the past progressive verb *were swimming*.

A Great White shark ate Francisco's *swimming* coach.

Swimming = present participle modifying *coach*.

Now Francisco practices his sport in safe *swimming* pools.

Swimming = present participle modifying *pools*.

