

Using Gerund Phrases

Without gerunds, we wouldn't have jogging, swimming, and collecting. Colleges wouldn't teach accounting. Speeding wouldn't be a problem on our highways, and nothing at all would be boring. Well, perhaps those things would exist, but we would have to call them something else because the names of each of these things are gerunds.

A **gerund** is a verb form ending in *-ing* that is used as a noun. A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund and any modifiers and complements it may have. The entire gerund phrase acts as a noun. In other words, a gerund or a gerund phrase can do anything that a noun can do.

Subject:	<i>Flying a plane</i> requires many hours of practice.
Indirect Object:	Why don't you give <i>flying model planes</i> a trial period?
Direct Object:	She loves <i>flying kites</i> .
Object of a Preposition:	Tell us about <i>flying the glider in Colorado</i> , Dad.

Because gerunds are a verb form, they can add action to your sentences. Try using a gerund phrase to combine two choppy sentences. It will make a more direct statement.

Original:	<i>I baby-sit neighborhood children.</i> I earn money that way.
Combined:	I earn money by <i>baby-sitting neighborhood children</i> .
Combined:	<i>Baby-sitting neighborhood children</i> is the way I make money.
Original:	<i>They exercise every day.</i> This practice is their top priority.
Combined:	<i>Exercising every day</i> is their top priority.
Combined:	Their top priority is <i>exercising every day</i> .
Original:	<i>We learned twenty Japanese words.</i> It was interesting.
Combined:	<i>Learning twenty Japanese words</i> was interesting.

Notice that when you use a gerund phrase to combine sentences, you need to delete some words and change others. Be sure to read over your revision carefully to be sure that it makes sense and is correctly punctuated.

DIRECTIONS *Combine each of the following sets of sentences into one sentence, using gerund phrases.*

EXAMPLE	He learned how to back up a trailer. The lesson took a half hour.
	Learning how to back up a trailer took a half hour.

1. We practiced for the concert. It required patience and dedication.

2. The members of the committee argued over the issue for hours. This is how they finally reached an agreement.

3. My father votes in every election. He enjoys it.

4. I like to take my dog to Byrd park. We take walks there.

5. My friend Sarah listens to music. This is how she relaxes.

6. Scott sometimes mows yards after school. He earns money that way.

7. The group plays football every weekend. This is their favorite activity.

8. Our music teacher teaches guitar in the evenings. She earns extra money that way.

9. We read a Spanish folktale. It was interesting.

10. April passed her driver's test. It was easier than she had thought.

11. Many people fly kites in the summer. They enjoy it.

12. The pilot became interested in planes at an early age. He watched movies about flying.

13. My parents run in marathons. They consider it to be a healthy pastime.

14. Dogs often ride in cars. It can be a thrill for them.

15. I look through my telescope on clear nights. It is my favorite activity.

Answer Keys: (Answers will vary. Sample answers are given.)

1. Practicing for the concert required patience and dedication.
2. The members of the committee finally reached an agreement by arguing over the issue for hours.
3. My father enjoys voting in every election.
4. I like to take my dog walking in Byrd park.
5. My friend Sarah relaxes by listening to music.
6. Scott sometimes earns money by mowing yards after school.
7. Their favorite activity is playing football every weekend.
8. Our music teacher earns extra money by teaching guitar in the evenings.
9. Reading a Spanish folktale was interesting.
10. Passing her driver's test was easier than April had thought.
11. Many people enjoy flying kites in the summer.
12. The pilot became interested in planes at an early age by watching movies about flying.
13. My parents consider running in marathons to be a healthy pastime.
14. Riding in a car can often be a thrill for some dogs.
15. Looking through my telescope on clear nights is my favorite activity.