

Complements of verbs, nouns and adjectives

Sometimes we need to add something to a verb, noun or adjective to complete its meaning. For example, if somebody says *I want*, we expect to hear what he or she wants.

The words and expressions, which are thus used to complete the meaning of a noun, verb or adjective, are called complements.

I want a car.

He is interested in the supernatural.

We need to go.

I hate having to work on Sundays.

She dislikes such people.

Verbs can usually be followed by noun complements or -ing forms with no preposition. Nouns and adjectives normally need a preposition to join them to their complements.

Compare:

I hate soap operas. (No preposition between the verb and its complement.)

My hatred of soap operas (The noun hatred requires a preposition to join it to its complement.)

It is important to know what kind of complements can come after a particular word. For example, interested can be followed by in...ing form or by an infinitive. Suggest can be followed by a that-clause or an -ing form; it cannot be followed by an infinitive. Want can be followed by an -infinitive; it cannot be followed by an -ing form or a that-clause.

She suggested buying a new car. (NOT She suggested to buy a new car.)

I am interested in learning to sing.

He wants to go. (NOT He wants going.)