

Gerund and Infinitive

Read the following sentences.

Alice likes painting.

She would like to paint this landscape.

John likes playing cricket.

He would like to play cricket this evening.

Here sentence 1 means that Alice likes painting as an art. It is a general statement. Sentence 2 means that she would like to paint a particular scene.

Similarly sentence 3 is a general statement about John's liking for cricket as a game. Sentence 4 says that he would like to play cricket on a particular occasion.

Thus we have seen that the gerund is used for making general statements whereas the infinitive is used for making statements about particular occasions – especially after verbs expressing likes and dislikes.

I hate getting up early in the morning. (More natural than 'I hate to get up early in the morning.)

She likes going to the movies.

Interchange of gerunds and infinitives

Gerunds and infinitives are often interchangeable, both as subjects and objects of verbs.

Playing games is good for health.

To play games is good for health.

Smoking is forbidden.

To smoke is forbidden.

Reading is a good habit.

To read is a good habit.

I intend to visit my grandparents next week.

I intend visiting my grandparents next week.