

It as a provisional subject

When the subject is a phrase that consists of a gerund (-ing form), it is used as a provisional subject to begin the sentence. Instead of saying 'Your trying to convince him is no good' we generally say 'It is no good your trying to convince him'.

Verb pattern: It + verb + subject complement + subject with a gerund

It is no use talking to him about that. (More natural than 'Talking to him about that is no use.')

Will it be any use my seeing the manager about it? (More natural than 'Will my seeing the manager about it be any use?')

It was a difficult business starting the car with such a weak battery.

It is no fun having so many children to look after.

It is just silly throwing away your chances like that.

Note that sometimes it is possible to change the gerund into the infinitive.

It won't be any good for you to talk to him about it. (= It won't be any good your talking to him about it.)

It is no use for us to try to convince him of this. (= It is no use our trying to convince him of this.)

These sentences can also be re-written as exclamatory sentences.

How silly of you to throw away your chances like that!

What a difficult business it was to start the car with such a weak battery!