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Gerund vs. Participle: Understanding -ing Word Functions

Medium | B1 | Intermediate | Adjective | Gerund | Participle | Subject | Verb | Progressive tense

1. You're telling someone about your daily routine. Select the correct option for each blank to identify the function of the -ing words.

"I enjoy **reading** before bed, but right now I am **studying** for my exam."

In the first part, "reading" is a _____.

In the second part, "studying" is a _____.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** gerund (noun/object)
- **B)** participle (adjective)
- **C)** participle (part of verb phrase)

Blank 2

- **A)** gerund (noun/subject)
- **B)** gerund (noun/object)
- **C)** participle (part of verb phrase)

2. Choose the correct grammatical label to identify each -ing word's function.

You're chatting with a friend about weekend activities. Look at these sentences and label each -ing word correctly!

"**Cooking** is my favorite hobby." ' _____

"The **boiling** water splashed everywhere!" ' _____

"I was **watching** a cooking show." ' _____

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** Gerund (noun/subject)
- **B)** Participle (adjective)
- **C)** Participle (verb part)

Blank 2

- **A)** Gerund (noun/subject)
- **B)** Participle (adjective)
- **C)** Participle (verb part)

Blank 3

- **A)** Gerund (noun/subject)
- **B)** Participle (adjective)
- **C)** Participle (verb part)

3. You're writing a quick movie review for your friends. Select ALL the sentences where the -ing word is a **present participle** (functioning as an adjective describing a noun).

Select all that apply.

- **A)** Watching movies is my favorite pastime.
- **B)** That was the most boring film I've ever seen.
- **C)** The surprising ending made everyone gasp.
- **D)** I finished reading the book before the movie came out.

4. You're chatting with a friend about how you spend your free time. Select the correct option for each blank to identify the function of the -ing word.

"**Swimming** keeps me healthy."

In this sentence, "swimming" is a _____.

Quick test: Can you replace "swimming" with a noun like "exercise"? Yes! ' "Exercise keeps me healthy."

Choose the correct option for each gap.

- **A)** gerund (noun/subject)
- **B)** participle (adjective)
- **C)** participle (part of verb phrase)

5. Choose the correct function category for each -ing word.

You're reviewing a movie with a friend. Sort these -ing words by how they're used!

"I enjoy **watching** thrillers." ' _____

"That was an **exciting** plot twist!" ' _____

"**Sitting** through a three-hour film is exhausting." ' _____

"The **sleeping** audience missed the ending." ' _____

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** Gerund
- **B)** Participle (adjective)

Blank 2

- **A)** Gerund
- **B)** Participle (adjective)

Blank 3

- **A)** Gerund
- **B)** Participle (adjective)

Blank 4

- **A)** Gerund
- **B)** Participle (adjective)

6. Your study buddy wrote some sentences for homework. Help them out! Select ALL the sentences that contain a **subject-verb agreement error** with a gerund phrase.

Select all that apply.

- **A)** Learning new languages are challenging but rewarding.
- **B)** Playing video games is his favorite hobby.
- **C)** Eating vegetables every day are good for your health.
- **D)** Running marathons requires a lot of training.

7. You're describing your day to a language exchange partner. Select ALL the sentences where the -ing word is a **gerund** (noun), NOT part of a continuous tense (verb phrase).

Select all that apply.

- **A)** I am cooking dinner right now.
- **B)** Cooking relaxes me after work.
- **C)** She enjoys painting on weekends.
- **D)** They were studying when I called.

8. You're reviewing a film you watched last night. Select the correct option for each blank to identify the function of the -ing word.

"The documentary was **fascinating**."

In this sentence, "fascinating" is a _____.

Quick test: Does "fascinating" describe a noun? Yes! ’ It describes "the documentary."

Choose the correct option for each gap.

- **A)** gerund (noun/subject)
- **B)** gerund (noun/object)
- **C)** participle (adjective)

9. Your classmate wrote this sentence in an essay. Help them fix the grammar mistake! Select the correct option for each blank.

"Learning new languages _____ incredibly useful for your career."

Remember: A gerund phrase as a subject is always treated as ONE unit, so it takes a singular verb!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

- **A)** are
- **B)** is

10. You're chatting with a friend about weekend activities. Select ALL the sentences where the -ing word is a **gerund** (functioning as a noun).

Select all that apply.

- **A)** Swimming keeps me healthy.
- **B)** The swimming pool is crowded today.
- **C)** I love hiking in the mountains.
- **D)** She is dancing at the party right now.

11. Your classmate is describing their study routine. Look at the two sentences below and identify the different functions of the -ing words.

Sentence A: "I enjoy studying in the library."
Sentence B: "I am studying in the library right now."

Which statement correctly identifies both -ing words?

Select one.

- **A)** Both are gerunds functioning as nouns.
- **B)** Both are present participles forming continuous tenses.
- **C)** In A, "studying" is a gerund (object); in B, "studying" is a present participle (part of a verb phrase).
- **D)** In A, "studying" is a present participle; in B, "studying" is a gerund.