Gerunds

Worksheet 1: Possessive + Gerund

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Who Does the Action?

When a gerund has its own subject, English has two ways to express it. The formal, standard choice is a **possessive** before the gerund; the informal choice is an **object pronoun** or **noun**.

Formal (standard written)	Informal (common in speech)	Notes
I don't like **his arriving** late.	I don't like **him arriving** late.	possessive *his* vs object *him*
I was surprised by **their winning**.	I was surprised by **them winning**.	
Mary's leaving early upset us.	**Mary leaving** early upset us.	noun possessive vs bare noun
Do you mind **my asking** you something?	Do you mind **me asking** you something?	

When is the possessive required? In formal written English — academic essays, letters, legal texts. In informal speech and most everyday writing, the object form is perfectly acceptable. Many native speakers use it even in formal contexts. The key is register awareness.

Part A – Rewrite in Formal Style

Rewrite each sentence using the possessive + gerund structure.

1. I don't approve of him staying out so late.

   _____

2. She was annoyed by them making so much noise.

   _____

3. We were surprised by the company closing so suddenly.

   _____

4. Do you mind me opening the window?

   _____

5. The chance of them winning seemed remote.

   _____

Part B – Formal or Informal?

> **Label each sentence F (formal — possessive) or I (informal — object/bare noun). Then decide which register is more appropriate for the context given.**

#	Sentence	F / I	Appropriate context
1	"The board objected to *the CEO's proposing* such a radical restructure."		
2	"I can't imagine *him doing* something like that."		
3	"The possibility of *its being* misunderstood cannot be ignored."		
4	"Do you mind *me asking* how old you are?"		

Part C – Error Analysis

> **Each sentence has an error with possessive + gerund. Identify and correct it, and explain whether the issue is grammatical or a register mismatch.**

1. "The committee objected to him's proposing the change."

   _____

2. "I appreciate you to help me with this."

   _____

3. "His arrive late every day is unprofessional."

   _____

4. "The success of them campaign is not guaranteed."

   _____

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Perfect and Passive Gerund

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Gerund Phrases with Aspect and Voice

The gerund can carry its own tense-like information (aspect) and voice. These forms are rarer but important in formal writing.

Form	Structure	Example	When used
Simple gerund	verb + -ing	She denied **stealing** the money.	action simultaneous with or after main verb
Perfect gerund	having + past participle	She denied **having stolen** the money.	action clearly before the main verb
Passive gerund	being + past participle	He hates **being interrupted**.	subject receives the action
Perfect passive gerund	having been + past participle	She was angry about **having been overlooked**.	past passive — subject received action before main verb

Part A – Identify the Form

> **Name the gerund form in bold: simple, perfect, passive, or perfect passive.**

1. He admitted **having taken** the documents without permission. _____
2. She resents **being treated** like a child. _____
3. I don't recall **meeting** him before. _____
4. He was upset about **having been passed over** for the promotion. _____
5. They enjoyed **being taken** on a tour of the building. _____
6. She regrets **having said** those words. _____

Part B – Simple or Perfect Gerund?

> **Choose the simple or perfect gerund. Both may be possible — explain any difference in meaning.**

#	Sentence	Answer + explanation
1	She denied _____ the letter. *(write / having written)*	
2	I regret _____ you the truth sooner. *(not telling / not having told)*	

3	He remembered _____ her at a conference years earlier. *(meeting / having met)*	

Part C – Rewrite Using the Form Indicated

> **Rewrite the sentence using the gerund form in brackets.**

1. "Someone interrupted him and he didn't like it." → passive gerund

   _____

2. "She was dismissed unfairly and she complained about it." → perfect passive gerund

   _____

3. "They had already decided the issue before the meeting." → perfect gerund (after *admitted*)

   _____

4. "Nobody consulted us and we resented it." → passive gerund

   _____

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Gerund vs Infinitive — Subtle Contrasts

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Beyond the Basic Rules

At B2, many verb + gerund vs infinitive choices involve **nuance of meaning**, **register**, or **aspect** rather than fixed rules.

Pattern	The contrast	Example
like + gerund vs like + infinitive	Gerund: general enjoyment. Infinitive: habitual choice / preference with *would*.	I like *swimming*. (I enjoy it) / I'd like *to swim* now. (specific wish)
Sentence-initial gerund vs *it* + infinitive	Gerund subject: more direct, topic-like. *It* + infinitive: more typical in neutral spoken English.	*Swimming every day* is hard. / *It is hard to swim* every day.
Aspect: gerund implies ongoing; infinitive implies single event	Not a rule, but a tendency with some verbs.	I hate *waiting* in queues. (general) / I would hate *to wait* for hours. (specific)
need + gerund vs need + infinitive	*need* + *-ing* = passive meaning: something needs to be done. *need* + *to-inf* = active: someone needs to do it.	The car *needs servicing*. (= needs to be serviced) / She *needs to service* the car.
want + gerund (indirect object construction)	*want* + *obj* + *-ing* is non-standard; use *want* + *obj* + *to-inf*.	✓ I want *him to leave*. ✗ I want *him leaving*.

Part A – Need: Active or Passive?

> **Write the correct form. Consider whether the meaning is active or passive.**

1. This report _____ carefully before it's sent. *(need / proofread)*
2. She _____ the situation before it gets worse. *(need / address)*
3. The window _____ — it's letting in a draught. *(need / fix)*
4. These plants _____ more often in summer. *(need / water)*

Part B – Gerund Subject vs *It* + Infinitive

> **Rewrite each sentence using the alternative structure. Comment briefly on any difference in register or emphasis.**

1. It is sometimes difficult to admit you were wrong.

_____

_____

2. Spending more time outdoors improves mental health.

3. It can be dangerous to assume everyone shares your values.

Part C – Precision Choices

> **Both options are grammatically possible. Choose the one that fits the context better and justify your choice.**

#	Sentence	Best choice & reason
1	She likes (swimming / to swim) before breakfast. *(general habit)*	
2	"I'd like (speaking / to speak) to the manager, please." *(specific request)*	
3	The pipes (need replacing / need to replace). *(passive meaning)*	
4	I hate (being / to be) kept waiting. *(general, ongoing)*	

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Analysis and Extended Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Part A – Text Analysis

Having worked in education for over twenty years, I have grown accustomed to being asked what the secret of effective teaching is. My answer has never changed: it lies in persuading students that their own curiosity is worth trusting. Telling them what to think is far less productive than encouraging their asking questions — their own questions, not the ones we set. The risk of being wrong, of having misunderstood something, needs to be reframed as a step in the process rather than a failure. A student who is used to acknowledging gaps in their knowledge is, I would argue, better equipped than one who has learnt to perform certainty.

Questions

1. List every gerund or gerund phrase. For each, state: its form (simple/perfect/passive/perfect passive), and its grammatical function (subject, object, object of preposition, subject complement).

2. The writer uses *their asking questions*. Is this possessive + gerund or something else? What does the possessive signal in this context?

3. Find a *need* construction. Is it active or passive in meaning? Rewrite it using the alternative structure.

4. Comment on the stylistic effect of beginning with *Having worked…* rather than *Because I have worked…*

Part B – Extended Writing

Write a formal paragraph (**160–190 words**) on one of the following. You must include and underline: (1) possessive + gerund; (2) a perfect gerund; (3) a passive gerund; (4) a gerund as sentence subject; (5) *need* + gerund (passive meaning).

A: The role of risk-taking in learning. **B:** Whether remote working benefits employees more than employers.

Topic: ___ A ___ B Word count: _____ Features: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — B2 Level, Gerunds

Worksheet 1 – Part A

1 I don't approve of his staying out so late. **2** She was annoyed by their making so much noise. **3** We were surprised by the company's closing so suddenly. **4** Do you mind my opening the window? **5** The chance of their winning seemed remote.

Worksheet 1 – Part B

#	F / I	Context
1	F	Appropriate: formal board / business report
2	I	Appropriate: informal conversation
3	F	Appropriate: legal or academic writing
4	I	Appropriate: polite everyday speech

Worksheet 1 – Part C

#	Error and correction
1	"him's" is not a possessive form — use "his proposing". Grammatical error.
2	"you to help" — after *appreciate*, use gerund: "I appreciate your / you helping me." Grammatical error.
3	"His arrive" — gerund needed: "His arriving late every day is unprofessional." Grammatical error (bare infinitive used instead of gerund).
4	"them campaign" — needs possessive: "their campaign's success" or restructure. Grammatical error.

Worksheet 2 – Part A

1 perfect · 2 passive · 3 simple · 4 perfect passive · 5 passive · 6 perfect

Worksheet 2 – Part B

#	Answer
1	Both possible: *writing* (simple) is more neutral; *having written* (perfect) emphasises that the act is prior and complete — useful if the denial is strongly contested.
2	Both possible: *not telling* is more colloquial; *not having told* makes the pastness explicit and is preferred in formal writing.
3	Both possible: *meeting* is more neutral; *having met* emphasises the temporal gap — they had met some time before the point of remembering.

> *The simple and perfect gerunds are often interchangeable after verbs of recollection and denial. The perfect form is not required but adds precision about temporal order. Encourage students to use it in formal writing.*

Worksheet 2 – Part C

1 He hates being interrupted. **2** She complained about having been dismissed unfairly. **3** They admitted having (already) decided the issue before the meeting. **4** We resented not being consulted.

Worksheet 3 – Part A

1 needs proofreading (passive — report can't proofread itself) **2** needs to address (active — she will do it) **3** needs fixing / needs to be fixed (passive — both correct) **4** need watering (passive)

Worksheet 3 – Part B (model answers)

1 Admitting you were wrong is sometimes difficult. — The gerund subject is more direct and topic-like; the *it* construction is more typical in speech.
2 It improves mental health to spend more time outdoors. — The gerund subject gives the activity more prominence; the *it* version is more neutral.
3 Assuming everyone shares your values can be dangerous. — Gerund version slightly more assertive.

Worksheet 3 – Part C

1 swimming (general habit) **2** to speak (specific, polite request = *would like*) **3** need replacing (passive — pipes can't replace themselves) **4** being (general ongoing aversion)

Worksheet 4 – Part A

#	Gerund / form / function
1	**Having worked — perfect; subject of participial clause (adverbial)**
2	**being asked — passive simple; object of *accustomed to* (preposition)**
3	**persuading — simple; object of *lies in* (preposition)**
4	**Telling — simple; subject**
5	**encouraging — simple; object of *than***
6	**their asking questions — possessive + simple; object of *encouraging***
7	**being wrong — passive simple; object of *risk of***
8	**having misunderstood — perfect; object of *of***
9	**reframed — passive (part of *needs to be reframed*); *needs* + infinitive here (active subject)**
10	**acknowledging — simple; object of *used to***

Q2: Possessive: *their* specifies that the students — not the teacher — ask the questions. It is a genuine possessive + gerund construction, not merely informal. The possessive creates a crucial

meaning distinction here.
Q3: *needs to be reframed* — active infinitive construction (formal); could be rewritten as *needs reframing* (passive gerund, equally formal).
Q4: *Having worked* is more concise and establishes authority economically; *Because I have worked* is more explicit but more plodding in formal prose.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Possessive + gerund	Correct possessive form; formal register maintained	0–5
Perfect gerund	*having* + *pp* used correctly; temporal precedence clear	0–5
Passive gerund	*being* + *pp* or *having been* + *pp* used correctly	0–5
Gerund as subject	Gerund phrase as sentence subject; singular verb agreement	0–5
***need* + gerund**	Passive meaning correct; not confused with active *need to*	0–5
Task & register	160–190 words; consistently formal; argument developed	0–5