An English word that ends in the letters “ing” can function as a **Verb**, **Noun**, or **Adjective**.

**VERB**

A **present participle** is the form of a verb that ends in “ing” and is used to form a progressive tense; here are examples of the 8 progressive tenses in English (which some people call continuous tenses):

* **Past Progressive Tense** – You were eating pizza.

(verb “to be” in past tense + present participle)

* **Present Progressive Tense** – We are studying English.

(verb “to be” in present tense + present participle)

* **Conditional Progressive Tense** – I would be speaking, but I don’t want an F in this class.

(would be + present participle)

* **Future Progressive Tense** – They will be travelling to Saudi Arabia.

(will be + present participle)

* **Past Perfect Progressive** – I had been speaking to Juan.

(had + past participle “been” + present participle)

* **Present Perfect Progressive** – She has been walking to school.

(have/has + past participle “been” + present participle)

* **Conditional Perfect Progressive** – I would have been sleeping, but I had to teach English.

(would have + past participle “been” + present participle)

* **Future Perfect Progressive** – In 2 more hours, you will have been talking for 8 total hours.

(will have + past participle “been” + present participle)

**NOUN**

When a present participle functions as a **noun** in a sentence, it is called a **gerund**. So, a word that ends in “ing” can function as a thing or idea. (A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea). Here are some examples:

**Reading helps you learn English**. The word “Reading” is the subject of this sentence, and in this sentence we are talking about the thing we call “reading.”

**He enjoys reading**. In this case, the word “reading” is not the subject but the object in the sentence … and we’re still talking about a thing.

**I don’t suggest that you spend the day not reading**. (Make a gerund negative by adding the word “not" to it). **Not reading books is a bad idea**. (Something we call “not reading” is definitely a bad idea for students).

**Swimming** is a good for you. He enjoys **working**. The best thing for your health is **not smoking**. **Driving** too fast is dangerous. **Walking** is good for you. Your **knitting** it beautiful. She is good at **painting**. I like **cooking**.

**ADJECTIVE**

A present participle can be used as an **adjective** to describe a noun. Some books call this a **present participial adjective**.

Everyone on the airplane could hear the **crying** baby. (The word “crying” functions as an adjective that describes the noun ”baby”). Did you read that **amazing** book? His English class is **boring** … it is a **boring** class. You can get **breaking** news on the Internet. He escaped the **burning** house. I think a **setting** sun is one of the most beautiful things in the world.

**PAST PARTICIPLE as ADJECTIVE**

Just as a present participle can function as an **adjective** that describes a noun, so can a past participle describe a noun. Maria’s iPod is broken … it is a **broken** iPod. Teacher Keith has **bored** students – he needs to give them more caffeine.

The **mangled** pair of sunglasses, **bruised** face, and **broken** arm meant that Ahmed had taken another spill on his mountain bike. Which pair of sunglasses? The **mangled** pair. Which face? The **bruised** one. Which arm? The **broken** one.

**GERUNDS and INFINITIVES as NOUNS**

Both gerunds and infinitives can be used as a noun. A gerund sounds better as a noun, it is more common and sounds more like spoken English. The infinitive form used as a noun sounds more formal, and it is less common.

**Learning** is important. (The word “Learning” functions as a noun, and it is the subject of this sentence).

**To learn** is important. (The infinitive “To Learn” is the noun and also subject of the sentence).

The most important thing is **learning**. (The word “learning” is a noun, and in this case the object in the sentence).

The most important thing is **to learn**. (The object in the sentence is “to learn,” and this infinitive is a noun in this sentence).