

Chapter 39

RULE 1: Gerunds are verbal nouns; gerundives are verbal adjectives.

RULE 2: Gerunds and gerundives are formed like future passive participles.

RULE 3: Gerund + object > noun + gerundive.

RULE 4: Purpose constructions: *ad* + accusative noun + accusative gerundive AND genitive noun + genitive gerundive + *causâ*

I. Grammar

In this lesson, students will complete their study of Latin verb constructions. To help them sort out and review the various types of verbal clauses and phrases they have learned, I have composed a worksheet entitled “Subordinate Clauses and Other Constructions” composed of pieces drawn from unaltered Latin (Cicero). Click [here](#) to access that worksheet. Remind students they should *not* attempt to translate the passages—much of the vocabulary will be unfamiliar—only determine the type of clause and phrase used in each underlined construction.

Also, to help students synthesize the various verb constructions in Latin, I’ve composed a sheet which overviews the major types of subordinate clauses and the moods or verbal forms each requires. Click [here](#) for that review sheet.

A. Gerunds

Without an article Latin cannot have articular infinitives, a form used with such grace and flexibility in Greek. Instead, the Romans have gerunds (nouns created from verb bases), formed by adding the suffix, *-nd-* to the present base. The form is identical to the neuter singular of the future passive participle, but the gerund lacks the sense of obligation or necessity associated with the participle.

The use of gerunds in Latin will give students little trouble since it closely parallels English usage. Students should note, however, that the gerund lacks a nominative form which is supplied by the infinitive (see Wheelock, page 187 note 3). That is, where English may say either “*Swimming* every day is good for your health” or “*To swim* every day is good for your health,” Latin has only the infinitive form of the verbal noun in the nominative and thus must use the equivalent of the latter expression.

B. Gerundives

The substitution of the Latin gerundive in constructions where the English gerund takes an object will cause students more trouble. Review with them the examples in Wheelock on page 188 and teach them to translate “of X to be Y-ed” as “of Y-ing X”, e.g. “of the city to be saved” as “of saving the city.” This simple formula is their surest guide to the correct interpretation of the Latin. Click [here](#) for a worksheet on gerund and gerundive constructions.

C. Gerundive Purpose Clauses

One of the widely attested usages of the Latin gerundive is in a phrase equivalent to a purpose clause:

***ad* + accusative noun + accusative gerundive:** literally, “toward X (which is) to be Y-ed”

It can also be expressed as:

genitive noun + genitive gerundive + causa: literally, “for the sake of X (which is) to be Y-ed.”

In better English, this construction is translated as “to YX” or “for Y-ing X” (see Wheelock’s third and fourth sets of examples on page 188 and note 4). Students should be made aware of these constructions and, for the purposes of testing them, may call either a “gerundive purpose clause.” Referring to them in an abbreviated fashion, such as “ger purp,” often dispels some of the tension of learning this unnecessarily complicated form.

D. The History of Gerunds and Gerundives

Be aware that, despite the rules, gerunds in Latin *can* take objects, but outside of early Latin they infrequently do (only with genitive gerunds in Caesar, only with genitive and ablative gerunds in Cicero). The replacement of gerund + object with noun + gerundive may have originated with an old construction in which the gerund stood in apposition to its “object,” e.g. ***quia mi item ut parentes lucis das tuendi copiam*** (Plautus *Captivi* 1008), literally “since like parents you give me an abundance of light, of the seeing (of it)”, that is, “since you give me an abundance of seeing light (life)”. In those instances where the appositive noun was masculine or neuter singular, the gerund could be construed as an adjective (gerundive), which opened the way for the gerundive construction to arise.

II. Vocabulary

- ***aedificium***: = *aed-* (*aedes*) “shrine, temple, building” + *fac-* “make, construction” + *-ium*, a noun-forming suffix. The base *aed-* is related to Greek *aith-* “burn” (cf. *either* “the empyrean”), suggesting that the *aedes* originally referred to the hearth of the house and was later extended to mean the house itself.
- ***iniuria***: = *in-* “not” + *iur-* “law” + *-ia* (abstract noun-forming suffix); thus, it means literally “lawlessness.”
- ***voco***: This verb is cognate with Greek (*v*)*epos*, “word” (Greek *p* = Latin *q(u)*, here spelled with a *-c-*).
- ***cupidus***: + a genitive noun, “desirous of . . .”
- ***neesse***: This adjective is indeclinable. It frequently appears in the impersonal construction *neesse est*, which is followed by either a complementary infinitive (see P&R 2, page 193; SA 3, page 194) or a subjunctive verb (often introduced by *ut*).
- ***vetus***: Like *potens*, this is a one-termination third-declension adjective, but unlike other third-declension adjectives it is NOT *i*-stem (abl. sing. *vetere*; neut. nom/acc. pl. *vetera*; gen. pl. *veterum*). This may be due to its origin as a neuter noun (cf. its cognate Greek (*w*)*etos* “year”) which came to be considered an adjective when used an appositive, e.g. *vinum vetus*.
- ***quasi***: This conjunction will be best known to students as a prefix: *quasi*-stellar object, *quasi*-scientific, *quasi*-historical. Students often ask or at least wonder whether “as if” has anything to do with Quasi Modo, the Hunchback of Notre Dame. The character in Victor Hugo’s novel is so named because he was abandoned and rescued at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris on the day for which the Latin mass begins “Quasi modo . . .”.
- ***experior***: This is the first fourth-conjugation deponent that students have encountered. The *per-* base meaning “trial” is seen in *periculum* also (see Chapter 4).

III. Sentences

Practice and Review

1. Indirect command
2. Future less vivid; gerundive purpose clause with *ad*
3. Future more vivid; *Si (nobis) licebit, . . .*
4. Indirect statement
5. The simplest explanation of the gerundive phrase is that *operibus* is the ablative object of *in* and *scribendis* is an adjective modifying it. That students find their way somehow to the correct translation (“in writing great works”) is more important than grammatical exegesis in this instance.
6. Relative clause of characteristic; gerundive purpose clause with *causa*
7. *Sibi* = dative with *gratus* (certain adjectives)
8. Two complementary infinitives: *cogere* with *solent*, and *tradere* with *cogere*

- 9. Relative clause of characteristic
- 10. Present simple fact

NOTE: Since there is only one more chapter to go, I hold off giving students a quiz until they have completed all grammar in Wheelock. The quiz can then serve as both a review of grammar and a trial run for the final examination.