Verbs in Disguise: Gerunds, Participles, Infinitives

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 8
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Verbals
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn the jobs of gerunds, participles, and infinitives. They sort verbals and explain each one's job in sentences.

Curriculum links

- Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will define verbal and describe general jobs of gerunds, participles, infinitives.
- Students will identify verbals in sentences and explain their noun, adjective, or adverb job.

Success criteria

- I can name the three verbals and tell the job each one does.
- I can label a verbal in a sentence and explain its job.
- I can use a gerund, participle, and infinitive correctly in writing.

What students already know

Ask: What does a main verb do in a sentence? Show: The student runs. vs Running is fun. Ask thumbs up if running is the action.

Key words

verbal	a word made from an action word that does a different job [17]
gerund	an -ing form that works like a thing-word in a sentence [17]
participle	a verb form that works like a describing word [17]
infinitive	to plus the plain form of an action word [4]

Materials

- word cards
- three labeled bins
- whiteboard
- projector and Slides 1-7, 9-11
- Video clip 1 ready to play
- one-page chart with gerund, participle, infinitive examples
- Worksheet Task G copies
- Noun or Adjective cards for pairs

Before the lesson

- Print word cards like swimming, broken window, to study and one-page charts
- Label three bins Gerund, Participle, Infinitive and test whiteboard markers
- Test Video clip 1 (0:00–5:00) — on slide 6 and load Slides 1-7, 9-11
- Print Worksheet Task G copies for plenary table

Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

Hook interest and recall that verbs can look like verbs but do other jobs.

YOU DO

1. Welcome class with hook and show Slide 1 title.
2. Show Slide 2 big idea and read it aloud.
3. Ask what a verb usually does and take two quick answers.
4. Preview that they will catch verbs in disguise and name the job.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to hook and look at title and big idea.
2. Turn and talk: what does a main verb do?
3. Share one idea with the class.

Say: I found some verbs pretending not to be verbs. Can you catch them in disguise? A verbal looks like a verb but does a different job. Today we catch three types and name the job.

Ask: What does a main verb usually do in a sentence? (It shows the action or what the subject does or is.) · If a word looks like a verb but is not the action, what else could it do? (It could work like a noun, adjective, or adverb.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up or down: Running is the action in Running is fun? Reteach main verb if many miss.

Support: Point to the main verb in two short sentences on the whiteboard first. **Stretch:** Ask to suggest another -ing word and guess if it names or describes.

Use: Slides 1–2

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5–20 min **Teaching** 15 min · Whole class

Explain the general function of each verbal type with clear models.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 key words and define verbal as formed from a verb that acts as noun, adjective, or adverb [17].
2. Teach three kinds: gerunds, participles, and infinitives [17] with Slide 4 steps.
3. Play Video clip 1 and tell students to listen for noun, adjective, adverb jobs.
4. Model Slide 7 examples and label each job on the whiteboard.

STUDENTS DO

1. Copy the three definitions on the one-page chart.
2. Watch video and jot one school example of each type.
3. Choral respond noun, adjective, or adverb for each model.

Say: A gerund ends in -ing and acts as a noun. A participle acts as an adjective. An infinitive is to plus the verb and can act as a noun, adjective, or adverb. We will find it, check if it is the main action, then name its job.

Worked example: Swimming builds strength in the pool. Step 1: swimming looks like a verb. Step 2: builds is the main action, not swimming. Step 3: swimming is the subject, a noun job, tested by replacing with something. So swimming is a gerund [7][11][17]. The broken cup sat on the shelf. Broken describes cup, so adjective job, so past participle [4][17].

Ask: In Swimming builds strength in the pool, why is Swimming not the verb? (Builds is the main action; Swimming is the subject doing a noun job.) · What job does broken do in The broken cup sat on the shelf? (Adjective job describing cup, so participle.) · What form makes an infinitive? (To followed by the base form of the verb [4].)

Check understanding: Mini whiteboards: write N, ADJ, or ADV for each new example; reteach chart if split.

Support: Give a one-page chart with examples: -ing as noun for gerund, -ing or -ed as describing word for participle, to plus verb for infinitive [4]. **Stretch:** Have students expand the single word into a phrase, like swimming in the pool after school, and explain how the whole phrase keeps the same job.

Use: Slides 3–4, 6–7, Video clip 1 (0:00–5:00) — on slide 6

20–30 min **Guided Practice** 10 min · Pairs

Practice telling gerunds apart from present participles in pairs.

YOU DO

1. Project Slide 5 question pair and read both sentences aloud.
2. Think aloud with Slide 4 steps: find -ing, check main verb, ask noun or adjective.
3. Have pairs hold up Noun or Adjective cards and justify choice.
4. Confirm gerunds act as nouns while participles act as adjectives though both can end in -ing [16].

STUDENTS DO

1. Read both sentences with partner.
2. Hold up Noun or Adjective card for each swimming.
3. Say what the participle describes or what noun job the gerund does.

Say: Look at Swimming is fun. and The swimming fish darted away. Use the steps. Is swimming the action? Does it name a thing or describe a thing? Hold up your card and prove it.

Worked example: Swimming is fun. Is is the main verb, swimming is the subject, so noun job, so gerund [17]. The swimming fish darted away. Darted is the main verb, swimming describes fish, so adjective job, so present participle [17].

Ask: Same word swimming, why different labels? (Different job: names activity in first, describes fish in second.) · How can you test if Swimming is fun has a gerund? (Replace Swimming with something; sentence still works, so noun [11].)

Check understanding: Scan Noun or Adjective cards; if mixed, remodel with sentence frames before moving on.

Support: Provide sentence frames: This word names ___, so it is a gerund, or This word describes ___, so it is a participle. **Stretch:** Ask to change one word so a gerund becomes a participle, then explain how meaning shifted.

Use: Slides 4–5

30–50 min **Main Activity** 20 min · Groups

Sort verbals and explain their function in particular sentences.

YOU DO

1. Hand each team word cards and point to three labeled bins.
2. Time 8 minutes for sorting swimming, broken window, to study type cards, then flip to check function note.
3. Direct teams to Slide 9 task: write one sentence per bin and label G, P, or I plus job.
4. Circulate, ask why for each label, and pick two teams to share.

STUDENTS DO

1. In teams sort cards into three bins and discuss the job.
2. Write three sentences, one from each bin, in notebooks.
3. Label each verbal G, P, or I and write noun, adjective, or adverb.

Say: Sort each card into gerund, participle, or infinitive. Check the back for the job clue. Then write one sentence using a card from each bin and label the verbal and whether it acts as noun, adjective, or adverb.

Worked example: Team sentence: To write takes practice. To write is to plus verb, not the main action takes, it is the subject, so noun job, so infinitive [3][7]. The barking dog woke us. Barking describes dog, so adjective job, so participle [4]. Swimming is fun. Swimming is subject, so noun job, so gerund.

Ask: Your card is to study. How do you know the type? (To plus base verb form makes an infinitive [4].) · How do you prove its job in your sentence? (Show what it connects to: subject or object for noun, describes noun for adjective, tells why or purpose for adverb.)

Check understanding: Collect one sentence per team on whiteboard and check labels together; pull small group if gerund vs participle confused.

Support: Give a one-page chart with examples: -ing as noun for gerund, -ing or -ed as describing word for participle, to plus verb for infinitive [4]. **Stretch:** Have students expand the single word into a phrase, like swimming in the pool after school, and explain how the whole phrase keeps the same job.

Use: Slide 9

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50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

Review tricks and check each student can explain verbal functions.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 bullets: progressive verbs are not gerunds, keep participles close, keep to and verb together [3].
2. Run Slide 11 quick quiz orally with whiteboards.
3. Hand Worksheet Task G table and have students fill missing type or job in pairs.
4. Close by restating objectives and previewing homework.

STUDENTS DO

1. Answer quiz on whiteboards and correct tricks.
2. Complete Worksheet Task G table with partner.
3. Self-rate against success criteria with fingers 1 to 3.

Say: Do not get tricked. Is running is a verb, not a gerund. Keep participles close to the noun they describe. Keep to and the verb together; do not split them. Now show me each job one last time.

Worked example: Is running is a verb because is plus running is the progressive action, not a gerund [3][17]. In Tired after practice, the team rested, tired is a past participle describing team and sits near team [3].

Ask: Why is running in The student is running not a gerund? (It is with is as the main progressive verb, not acting as a noun [3].) · Where should a participle go? (Near the noun it modifies, either before or after it [3].)

Check understanding: Check Task G tables and quiz boards; reteach infinitive adverb test in order if adverb missed.

Support: Circle the to plus verb first so students focus only on deciding the job, not finding it. **Stretch:** Ask to add in order before the adverb infinitive to prove purpose, like in order to ask for help [3].

Use: Slides 10–11, Worksheet Task G

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Calling is running or are swimming a gerund	See helper verb am, is, are, was, were with -ing as the action	Remove helper test: without helper it would be participle or gerund; with helper it is progressive verb, not a verbal [3]
Labeling every -ing word the same	Student labels both Swimming is fun and swimming fish as gerunds	Ask naming or describing and replace with something to prove noun job; if it describes a noun it is a participle [11][16]
Splitting infinitives or placing participles far from nouns	To carefully mark or a participle describing the wrong noun	Keep to and verb together and keep participles close to the noun they modify [3][4]

Support

- Give a one-page chart with examples: -ing as noun for gerund, -ing or -ed as describing word for participle, to plus verb for infinitive.
- Start with clear subject gerunds at the front, like Swimming is fun, before objects.

Stretch

- Have students expand the single word into a phrase, like swimming in the pool after school, and explain how the whole phrase keeps the same job.
- Have students write a sentence where the same -ing form is a verb with a helper and explain why it is not a gerund.

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For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target group during sorting; prompt with naming or describing question and something replacement test; pre-highlight verbals on their cards.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
In Swimming builds strength, what is Swimming and its job?	Gerund acting as noun subject.
In The barking dog woke us, what is barking and its job?	Present participle acting as adjective describing dog.
In To write takes practice, what is To write and its job?	Infinitive acting as noun subject.

Homework

Write three sentences using one gerund, one participle, and one infinitive; label type and job.

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