The Gerund or Verbal Noun

Read the sentence given below.

**Reading** is my hobby.

Here **reading** is a verb ending in **–ing**. At the same time it is the subject of the verb **is** and function as a noun. Such a form of the verb ending in **–ing** and used as a noun is called a **gerund** or **verbal noun**.

**Forms of the gerund**

A gerund derived from a transitive verb has the following active and passive forms.

**Writing** is my passion. (Present, active)
She is confident of **being honored**. (Present, passive)
He was charged with **having shot** a policeman. (Present perfect, active)
There were rumors of her **having been lost** in the jungle. (Present perfect, passive)

Here the forms of the gerund given in sentences 2, 3 and 4 are called **compound gerunds**. They are not very often used. More examples are given below.

We heard of his **having won** a prize.
I will reward the boy for **having solved** the puzzle.
Everybody is desirous of **being praised**.
I don’t like **being seen** in her company.
We heard of the smugglers **having crossed** the border.

**Uses of the gerund**

**As the subject of a verb**

The gerund can be the subject of a sentence.

**Gardening** is my hobby.
**Smoking** is injurious to health.
**Reading** is my pastime.

**As subject complement**

The gerund can be the complement of verbs such as be.

My mistake was **trusting** him.
What she loves is **painting**.

**As the object of a verb**
The gerund can be used as the object of a verb.

I like riding.
She enjoys swimming.

**As the object of a preposition**

The gerund can be the object of a preposition.

She is fond of reading. (Here the gerund reading is the object of the preposition of)
He was arrested for stealing money. (Here the gerund stealing is the object of the preposition for.)
I am interested in learning to cook. (Here the gerund learning is the object of the preposition in.)
He insisted on being on the panel. (Here the gerund being is the object of the preposition on.)

**In apposition to a noun**

The gerund can be used in apposition to a noun.

His crime, trespassing into the compound, was considered serious.

**Gerunds as simple nouns**

Read the sentences given below:

**Partings** are always painful.
I would like a second **helping**.
The **lightning** struck the building.
His **paintings** have attracted rave reviews.

The words given in bold text were originally gerunds, but now they are treated as simple nouns. Note that most of these nouns take articles before them and form plurals with -s.