

Grammar: Gerunds and gerundives

Gerunds

Gerunds are nouns formed from verbs, *portandum*. They are active in meaning, and have no plural. They decline like *templum* (2nd declension neuter).

Case	Latin
Accusative	portandum
Genitive	portandi
Dative	portando
Ablative	portando

They are translated as 'the act of doing' so that *portandum* = 'carrying'.

They can be found in all cases except the nominative. When this is required, use an infinitive instead:

facile est pugnare

it is easy to fight / fighting is easy

videre est credere

seeing is believing

- in the accusative, the gerund follows *ad* (or *ob*, *inter*) to form a purpose clause:

ad bibendum

in order to drink

profecti sumus ad pugnandum

we set out to fight

- in the genitive the gerund follows either abstract nouns governing the infinitive or *causa* (for the sake of - placed *after* the gerund):

amor legendi non omnibus datur

The love of reading is not given to everyone

ars scribendi discitur

The art of writing is learned

Quintus venandi causa profectus est

Quintus set out for the sake of hunting

- c. In the dative the gerund follows verbs or phrases that regularly take the dative: *operam legendo dat, operam pugnando dederunt*
- d. in the ablative, the gerund expresses instrument of cause, often following *ab, ex, in, de*.

bene laborando, vos omnes sapientissimi eritis

By working well you will become wise

Gerundives

Gerundives are adjectives formed from verbs, *portandus*. They decline like *bonus, a, um*. They are passive (indeed they are sometimes called future passive participles) and include an implication of necessity.

Therefore:

portandus

necessary to be carried

ad pacem petendam

in order to seek peace (for peace which must be sought)

The gerundive of attraction

If a gerund requires a direct object, it becomes a gerundive instead:

profecti sumus ad Romanos necandos

We set out to kill the Romans (lit. to the Romans needing to be killed)

nullam spem piscis ibi capiendi habemus
We have no hope of catching fish there.

The gerundive of obligation

This is the most frequently encountered use of the gerundive, utilising the implication of necessity:

Carthago delenda est
Carthage must be destroyed.

Spartacus necandus erat
Spartacus must be killed.

If an agent is needed for the verb, it is expressed in the dative:

Caesar nobis necandus est
Caesar must be killed by us (We must kill Caesar).

Examples drawn from Cicero

1. illi autem, qui erant ad propinquum investigandum et recuperandum profecti, litteras Larinum ad Aurius ... mittunt.
Pro Cluentio VIII.23
2. vivis, et vivis non ad dependam, sed ad confirmandam audaciam.
In Catilinam 1.II.4
3. non est saepius in uno homine summa salus periclitanda rei publicae.
In Catilinam 1.V.11
4. tu non solum ad neglegendas leges et quaestiones, verum etiam ad evertendas perfringendasque valuisti.
In Catilinam 1.VII.18
5. Vellem aliquis ex vobis robustioribus hunc male dicendi locum suscepisset;
Pro Caelio 7
6. ceteris non modo nihil ignoscendum sed etiam acriter est resistendum.
Pro Caelio 2
7. Ego vero omnia quae gerebam, iam tum in gerendo spargere me ac disseminare arbitrabar in orbis terrae memoriam sempiternam.
Pro Archia 30
8. Qui sedulitatem mali poetae duxerit aliquo tamen praemio dignam, huius ingenium et virtutem in scribendo et copiam non expetisset?
Pro Caelio 25

9. Hunc ego non diligam? non admirer? non omni ratione defendendum putem! *Pro Caelio 18*
10. praesertim cum omne olim studium atque omne ingenium contulerit Archias ad populi Romani gloriam laudemque celebrandam? *Pro Caelio 19*