

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GERUND AND A PRESENT PARTICIPLE

What is the difference between a gerund and a present participle?

Both a gerund and a present participle come from a verb, and both end in –ing. However, each has a different function. A gerund acts like a noun while a present participle acts like a verb or adjective.

Example: **snowboarding**

Snowboarding is fun (gerund). He is **snowboarding** (present participle).

Snowboarding can be a gerund or a present participle.

When *snowboarding* is a gerund, it acts like a noun. It can be a subject, an object, the object of a preposition, or a subject complement.

- **Snowboarding** is a winter sport. [**snowboarding** = subject]
- I love **snowboarding**. [**snowboarding** = object]
- I am excited by **snowboarding**. [**snowboarding** = object of a preposition]
- One popular sport is **snowboarding**. [**snowboarding** = subject complement]

When *snowboarding* is a present participle, it is part of a continuous verb tense.

- Right now, the athlete **is snowboarding**. [**is snowboarding** = present continuous]
- He **was snowboarding** yesterday afternoon. [**was snowboarding** = past continuous]

Unlike a gerund, a present participle can act like an adjective that modifies a noun or follows the ‘be’ verb.

Example: **exciting**

An exciting time was had by all!

The word *exciting* is a present participle used as an adjective to modify a noun or to follow the verb to be.

- The **exciting** ride made the people scream. [**adjective + noun**]
- People enjoyed the **exciting** roller coaster. [**adjective + noun**]
- The roller coaster is **exciting**. [**be verb + adjective**]

Now YOU try: Look at the sentences below. Decide whether the underlined – ‘ing’ word is acting like a noun, part of a verb, or an adjective.

1. What an amazing movie! I want to watch it again!

2. Speaking English well takes a long time.

3. He cares about getting a good job.

4. Shh! I am trying to sleep.

5. My friends and I were sitting in a café and talking.

6. The directions were very confusing.

7. They have been studying for a long time and want to take a break.

8. She loves travelling.