

Vergil's Verb Tips: Gerunds and Gerundives

Gerunds are verbal nouns declined in the four oblique cases of the neuter singular. Nominative is supplied by the present active infinitive. Formation: add *-ndum* etc. to the present stem; 3rd-*iō* and 4th conjugation keep their *-i*.

	<u>1st Conj.</u>	<u>2nd Conj.</u>	<u>3rd Conj.</u>	<u>3rd-iō</u>	<u>4th Conj.</u>	<u>Translation</u>
Nom.	portāre	vidēre	crēdere	iacere	audīre	x-ing
Gen.	portandī	videndī	crēdendī	iaciendī	audiendī	of x-ing
Dat.	portandō	videndō	crēdendō	iaciendō	audiendō	to/for x-ing
Acc.	portandum	videndum	crēdendum	iaciendum	audiendum	x-ing
Abl.	portandō	videndō	crēdendō	iaciendō	audiendō	with/by/from/ in x-ing

Gerundives are verbal adjectives, identical in form to the gerund, but having all three genders, all five cases, and both numbers. They have the force of “needing to be x-ed” and are also known as the future passive participle (for details on participles, see Vergil's Verb Tips: The Participle).

<u>Nom.</u>	<u>1st Conj.</u>	<u>2nd Conj.</u>	<u>3rd Conj.</u>	<u>3rd-iō</u>	<u>4th Conj.</u>	<u>Translation</u>
Masc.	portandus	videndus	crēdendus	iacendus	audiendus	(needing) to be x-ed
Fem.	portanda	videnda	crēdenda	iacenda	audienda	
Neut.	portandum	videndum	crēdendum	iacendum	audiendum	

Special Use of Gerundive Only: Passive Periphrastic

The passive periphrastic (from the Greek for “talking around”) is a unique construction in Latin (and Mrs. Turner's favorite) formed of the gerundive + a form of *sum* (+ dative of agent). It has the force of “must.”

Mihi fugiendum est. I must flee (literally, “for me there is a need to flee”).

The force of the gerundive survives in many of its loanwords or derivatives in English. An addendum to the minutes is that which must be added. The legend on a map is that which must be read. A memorandum is that which must be remembered. A subtrahend is that amount that must be taken away from the minuend, the amount that must be reduced.

Gerund or Gerundive?

For many instances in Latin, one may use the gerund or gerundive interchangeably, but the Romans invariably preferred the gerundive adjective construction whenever there was a noun involved. Compare these examples, where **gerunds** are in this type and **gerundives** are in this type.

Genitive:	amor videndī amīcōs amor amīcōrum videndōrum	love for seeing friends same (lit., “love for friends to be seen”)
	vēnit videndī amīcōs causā/grātiā vēnit amīcōrum videndōrum causā/grātiā	he came for the reason/sake of seeing friends (lit., “for the reason/sake of friends to be seen”)
	(equivalent to ad + accusative, purpose clause, and supine [see below])	
Dative:	praefert pecūniam videndō amīcōs praefert pecūniam amīcōrum videndōrum	he prefers money to seeing his friends. (lit., “to friends to be seen”)
Accusative:	vēnit ad videndum amīcōs vēnit ad amīcōs videndōs	he came to see friends. (lit., “for friends to be seen”)
	(= vēnit ut amīcōs vidēret [purpose clause] or vēnit amīcōs vīsum [supine: see Vergil’s Verb Tips: The Supine])	
Ablative:	narrābat fābulam dē videndō amīcōs narrbat fābulam dē amīcīs videndīs	he told a story about seeing his friends. (lit., “about friends to be seen”)