

64 Remember, regret, try, etc.

With some verbs, the choice of a to-infinitive or an -ing form depends on the meaning.

1 Remember and forget

I must remember to post this letter today. It's important.

The clothes are still dirty because I forgot to switch on the machine.

We use remember/forget to do for necessary actions. The remembering is before the action.

I can remember posting the letter. I posted it on Friday morning.

I'll never forget flying over the Grand Canyon. It was wonderful.

We use remember/forget doing for memories of the past. The action is before the remembering.

2 Regret

We regret to inform you that we are not taking on any new staff at present.

Regret to do something means to be sorry for something you are doing, e.g. giving bad news.

I regret spending all that money. I've got none left.

Regret doing something means to be sorry because of something that happened in the past.

3 Try

I'm trying to run this computer program.

Try to do something means to attempt something, to do your best.

I tried clicking on the box, but it doesn't work.

Try doing something means to do something which might solve a problem.

4 Stop

An old man walking along the road stopped to talk to us.

Stop to do something means to stop so that you can do it.

There's too much noise. Can you all stop talking, please?

Stop doing something means to end an action, to finish doing it.

5 Mean

I think Nick meant to break that glass. It didn't look like an accident.

Mean to do something is the same as to intend to do it.

I'm applying for a visa. It means filling in this form.

Means doing something expresses the idea of one thing resulting in another.

6 Go on

The teacher introduced herself and went on to explain about the course.

Go on to do something means to do something else, to do the next thing.

The teacher told everyone to be quiet, but they just went on talking.

Go on doing something means to continue doing it.

7 Need

I need to clean my shoes.

This means that I must clean my shoes, I have to clean them.

My shoes need cleaning.

This means that my shoes need to be cleaned (see Unit 59.2).

Practice

Remember and forget (1)

Put in the to-infinitive or the -ing form of the verbs.

Laura: Did you remember **(▶)** to pick **(pick)** up those photos today?

Trevor: What photos?

Laura: Oh, no. I can remember (1) **(mention)** it to you only this morning.

Trevor: I can't remember (2) **(agree)** to pick up some photos.

Laura: Well, don't forget (3) **(call)** at the shop for them tomorrow.

Trevor: You've got a terrible memory. Yesterday you forgot (4) **(lock)** the door.

Laura: I'm sure I didn't forget (5) **(lock)** it. I can clearly remember (6) **(lock)** for my keys. They were in my pocket.

Trevor: You ought to write notes to yourself to remind you.

Laura: That wouldn't be any good. I'd never remember (7) **(look)** at them!

B Remember, regret, try, etc. (1-7)

Put in the to-infinitive or the -ing form of the verbs.

I used to like going to our local cinema. It was old and rather uncomfortable, but it had character. Now they've stopped **(▶)** showing **(show)** films there. The owner would like to go on

(1) **(run)** the cinema, but he would need (2) **(spend)** tens of thousands of pounds.

improvements, which would mean (3) **(watch)** the last film at the cinema. It was a murder mystery. It was

I remember (4) **(work)** out who the murderer was five minutes from the end, and we were trying (5) **(work)** out who the murderer was

when suddenly all the lights went out and the film stopped. We sat in the dark for a few minutes, and

then the owner appeared with a torch. 'I regret (6) **(tell)** you,' he said, 'that our

electricity has failed. I don't mean (7) **(disappoint)** you, but I'm afraid we can't

show you the end of the film. We've tried (8) **(phone)** the electricity company, but

they say they can't help.' He went on (9) **(explain)** to the audience how the film

ended. I didn't understand the story. But I don't regret (10) **(go)** to the cinema on

that last evening.

C Remember, regret, try, etc. (1-7)

Write each pair of sentences as one. Use a to-infinitive or an -ing form.

▶ Trevor didn't ring Laura. He forgot.
Trevor forgot to ring Laura.

▶ Tom and Nick had been playing cards for hours. But they went on with the game.
Tom and Nick went on playing cards.

1 Harriet didn't think she could move the piano. She didn't even try.

2 Mike once saw a spaceship. He'll never forget it.

3 What about painting the walls? They need it.

4 Natasha was unkind to Jessica. But she didn't mean it.

5 Andrew was studying. He went on through the night.

6 When Mark was driving, he needed to make a phone call. So he stopped.