

Verb Patterns

Sometimes in a sentence, one verb follows another. For example, *I want to buy an electric car*. The **first verb** is 'want', the **second verb** is 'buy'.

In sentences like this, there are different possible patterns. For example:

(a) I want **to buy** an electric car.

(b) I hate **driving**.

In sentence A, the first verb is followed by **an infinitive**.

In sentence B, the first verb is followed by **a gerund (-ing) form**.

The verb patterns are dependent upon the first verb. There are **several different types of pattern**. When you learn a new verb, you need to learn the verb pattern. Unfortunately, some verbs have more than one possible pattern! Sometimes, if a verb has two patterns, each pattern can have a different meaning or use.

Here are examples of some of the patterns:

Verb + to + verb:

These verbs all use this pattern: want, hope, decide, agree.

I **want to work** with Dr. Laver.

Tim **hopes to leave** the stockroom soon.

Helen **decided to go** out with Michal.

Alice might **agree to change** wards.

Verb + verb + ing:

These verbs all use this pattern: enjoy, mind, consider.

I **enjoy working** on the emergency ward.

Alice **doesn't mind working** with children.

Tim **is considering changing** his job.

Verb + preposition + verb +ing

These verbs all use this pattern: specialise, think.

He **specialises in helping** children.

Michal **is thinking about cooking** dinner.

Verb + object + verb:

These verbs all use this pattern: let, make.

Dad **let me keep** the cat.

She **made me say** sorry.

Verbs with two patterns and different meanings:

These verbs have two possible patterns, and there is a difference in meaning between the patterns: like, hate, regret.

I **like to swim** every day = I think it is a good idea to do this

I **like swimming** every day = I enjoy the activity. It gives me pleasure

I **hate to tell** you this = I am sorry to tell you this

I **hate flying** = I do not like this activity

I **regret to tell** you this - I am sorry to tell you this

I **regret leaving** London - I left London in the past, and I am sorry that I did that