

The Verbal Noun (*An tAinm Briathartha*) is the equivalent of the English infinitive (e.g. *to do*) and gerund (e.g. *doing*). There are many different patterns for forming the verbal noun, so the appropriate form for each verb must be learned. Many verbs in Irish are more commonly used as verbal nouns than as inflected forms (e.g. *damhsa* = *dance*, *péinteáil* = *paint*, *gáire* = *laugh*).

The word *ag* (*at*) followed by a verbal noun usually corresponds to the gerund in English and expresses continuous activity. Generally, this form is used together with some form of the verb *bí* (*to be*).

Táim ag ithe .	I'm eating .
Níl sé ag gáire .	He's not laughing .
Bhí siad ag damhsa le chéile.	They were dancing together.

When an object of a verb is used with a verbal noun, the object comes after the verbal noun and must be in the genitive case. The genitive forms of nouns must be learned for each noun, though there are some common patterns.

D'ól mé beoir.	I drank beer.
Bhí mé ag ól beorach.	I was drinking beer.
Ithim arán gach lá.	I eat bread every day.
Táim ag ithe aráin anois.	I'm eating bread now.

A few common verbs describing a state that you are in use the preposition *i* (*in*) with a possessive pronoun (*i mo* = *in my*, *i do* = *in your*, *ina* = *in his*, *ina* = *in her*, *inár* = *in our*, *in bhur* = *in y'all's*, *ina* = *in their*) followed by the verbal noun. The verbal noun is lenited after *mo*, *do* and *a* (*his*), an *h* is prefixed to vowels after *a* (*her*) and the verbal noun is eclipsed after *ár*, *bur* and *a* (*their*).

Táim i mo shuí .	I am sitting (or awake).
An bhfuil tú i do sheasamh ?	Are you standing ?
Tá sé ina chónaí i gCorcaigh.	He lives in Cork.
Tá sí ina dúiseacht .	She is awake .
Táimid inár seasamh .	We are standing .
An bhfuil sibh in bhur gcodladh ?	Are y'all asleep ?
Tá siad ina ndúiseacht .	They are awake .

A few relatively fixed expressions use the verbal noun after *ar* (*on*).

Tá an pictiúr ar crochadh ar an mballa.	The picture is hanging on the wall.
Tá mo ghuthán nua ar iarraidh .	My new phone is missing .
Tá sé ar fáil saor in aisce.	It's available for free.
Tá an fón nua ar díol sa siopa seo.	The new phone is on sale at this store.
Bhí sé ar crith leis an bhfuacht.	He was shaking from the cold.

The verbal noun without *ag* is usually equivalent to the English infinitive and is used with many expressions in Irish.

Ba mhaith liom dul abhaile.	I'd like to go home.
Tá orm fanacht sa bhaile.	I have to stay at home.
Tá mé in ann scríobh as Gaeilge.	I can write in Irish.

When an object is used with the infinitive in Irish, it precedes the verbal noun and the word *a* comes between it and the verbal noun, causing the verbal noun to be lenited.

Ba mhaith liom bainne a ól .	I'd like to drink milk.
B'fhearr liom arán a ithe .	I'd rather eat bread.
Níor mhaith liom é a dhéanamh .	I wouldn't want to do it.
An féidir leat úll a fháil dom?	Can you get an apple for me?

The word *gan* (*without*) is used to make infinitive constructions negative.

B'fhearr liom gan an t-arán a ithe .	I'd rather not eat the bread.
Ba mhaith liom gan é a fheiceáil .	I would like not to see it.

When the object of an infinitive is a personal pronoun, a special form is used in Irish, consisting of the word *do* (*for, to*), a possessive pronoun and the verbal noun. The forms for *him, her* and *them* often use *á* instead of *dá*.

Tá sé do mo bhualadh .	He's hitting me .
An bhfuil sé do do bhualadh ?	Is he hitting you ?
Tá sí á bhualadh .	She's hitting him .
Tá sé á bualadh .	He's hitting her .
Tá sé dár mbualadh .	He's hitting us .
An bhuil sé do bhur mbualadh ?	Is he hitting y'all ?
Tá sé á mbualadh .	He's hitting them .

The combination of the preposition *ar* (*on*) followed by the verbal noun and the preposition *do* (*for*) is one way to express the idea of when something had been done. The words *tar éis* with a verbal noun and the preposition *do* are used to express the idea of what happens after doing an action.

Ar theacht abhaile dom , d'ith mé ceapaire.	When I had come home, I ate a sandwich.
Tar éis duit dul isteach, céard a rinne tú?	After you went in, what did you do?
Tar éis dó é a ól , thit sé ina chodladh.	After drinking it, he fell asleep.
Ar dhul amach di , chonaic sí an cat.	When she went out, she saw the cat.
Tar éis breathnú ar an gclár dúinn , d'imíomar linn.	After watching the program, we left.
Ar éirí daoibh , céard a chonaic sibh?	When y'all got up , what did y'all see?
Tar éis dóibh an teach a fhágáil , bhuailead siad lena gcairde.	After leaving the house, they met their friends.

Below are samples of several common endings for verbal nouns. Many verbs ending in *-igh* use the *-ú* ending, but for the most part you'll have to learn the verbal noun form for each verb.

-ú	tosaigh breathnaigh cruinnigh	tosú breathnú cruinniú	start watch gather
-adh	glan bris	glanadh briseadh	clean break
-acht	fan imigh	fanacht imeacht	stay, wait leave (go away)
-áil	fág coinnigh	fágáil coinneáil	leave (something) keep
-t	imir oscail	imirt oscailt	play open
-amh	déan léigh	déanamh léamh	make, do read
no change	ól rith	ól rith	drink run
broaden word	cuir siúil	cur siúl	put walk
irregular	téigh tar bí abair faigh	dul teacht bheith rá fáil	go come be say get

<p>Is fearr liom an samhradh ná séasúr ar bith eile. Bím ar mo laethanta saoire ón scoil i mí an Mheithimh, Iúil agus Lúnasa. Bíonn an aimsir go hálainn. Ní bhíonn ceachtanna ar bith le déanamh agam. Bíonn an saol go haoibhinn ar fad. Táim i mo chónaí in aice na farraige. Téim ag snámh go minic sa samhradh. Caithim cuid mhaith ama ag imirt peile ar an trá le mo chairde. Tá bád ag m’athair agus tugann sé mé amach ag iascaireacht leis go minic tráthnóna samhraidh. Le cúpla bliain anuas téim féin agus mo chairde go coláiste samhraidh sa Gaeltacht. Bíonn saol aoibhinn againn ann. Bíonn gach cineál spóirt againn ansin. Bíonn comhlúadar breá againn agus roinnt mhaith Gaeilge ag filleadh abhaile. Caithim mí Lúnasa ar fheirm m’uncail faoin tuath. Is breá liom obair na feirme sa samhradh. Caithim cúpla lá sa phortach agus tamall leis an bhféar. Is saol breá folláin é. Is fuath liom deireadh mí Lúnasa. Bím gruama go leor i mo sheasamh i líne taobh amuigh de shiopa leabhar agus mo liosta i mo lámh. Mothaím saoirse an tsamhraidh ag sleamhnú uaim.</p>	<p>I like summer more than any other season. I’m on holiday from school in June, July and August. The weather is beautiful. I don’t have any lessons to do. Life is completely delightful. I live next to the ocean. I go swimming often in the summer. I spend a good amount of time playing football on the beach with my friends. My father has a boat and he takes me out fishing with him often on summer evenings. For a few years my friends and I have been going to a summer college in the Gaeltacht. We have a wonderful life there. We have every kind of fun there. We have good company and a good amount of Irish on returning home. I spend August on my uncle’s farm in the country. I love the farm work in the summer. I spend a few days in the bog and some time with the hay. It’s a fine, healthy life. I hate the end of August. I’m quite depressed standing in line outside a book store and my list in my hand. I feel the freedom of summer slipping from me.</p>
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<p>is fearr liom – I prefer is – is fearr – better maith – good liom – with me samhradh – summer ná – than séasúr – season ar bith – any, at all eile - other bím – I do be bí – be! ar – on mo – my laethanta – days lá – day saoire – vacation saor – free ón – from the scoil – school i – in mí – month Meithimh – of June Meitheamh – June Iúil – July agus – and Lúnasa – August bíonn – does be</p>	<p>aimsir – weather go hálainn – beautiful ceachtanna – lessons ceacht – lesson le déanamh – to do le – with déan – do! agam – at me ag – at saol – life, world go haoibhinn – delightful ar fad – altogether táim – I am cónaí – living in aice – next to na – of the farraige – ocean téim – I go téigh – go! ag snámh – swimming go minic – often sa – in the caithim – I spend caith – spend! cuid – portion maith – good ama – of time am – time</p>	<p>ag imirt – playing imir – play! peile – of football peil – football trá – beach cairde – friends cara – friend tá – is bád – boat m’athair – my father athair – father agus – and tugann – gives, takes sé – he mé – me amach – out ag iascaireacht – fishing iasc – fish leis – with him tráthnóna – evening samhraidh – of summer cúpla – a few bliain – year le ... anuas – since, for féin – self coláiste – college Gaeltacht – Gaeltacht againn – at us</p>	<p>leis an – with the féar – grass, hay ann – there gach – every cineál – kind spóirt – of fun spórt – sport, fun ansin – there comhlúadar – company breá – great roinnt mhaith – a good amount Gaeilge – Irish ag filleadh – returning abhaile – homewards feirm – farm m’uncail – my uncle uncail – uncle faoin tuath – in the country faoin – under the faoi – under tuath – countryside is breá liom – I love obair – work na feirme – of the farm portach – bog tamall – period of time</p>	<p>folláin – healthy é – it is fuath liom – I hate fuath – hatred deireadh – end gruama – depressed gruaim – gloom go leor – quite seasamh – standing seas – stand! líne – line taobh amuigh – outside taobh – side amuigh – outside de – of siopa – shop leabhar – book, of books liosta – list lámh – hand mothaím – I feel mothaigh – feel! saoirse – freedom an tsamhraidh – of summer ag sleamhnú – slipping sleamhnaigh – slip! uaim – from me</p>
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Cé acu is fearr leat ...?

Which do you prefer ...?

Is fearr liom ...
Ní maith liom ... ná ...
Is cuma liom ... nó ...

I prefer ...
I don't like to ... or ...
I don't mind ... or ...

1. éirí go moch nó éirí go déanach? to get up early or to get up late?
2. tae a ól nó caife a ól? to drink tea or to drink coffee?
3. iris a léamh nó leabhar a léamh? to read a magazine or to read a book?
4. bheith i do shuí nó i do sheasamh? to be sitting or standing?
5. torthaí a ithe nó glasraí a ithe? to eat fruit or to eat vegetables?
6. breathnú ar scannán nó ar an teilifís? to watch a movie or the television?
7. cártaí a imirt nó peil a imirt? to play cards or to play football?
8. bheith ag siúl nó bheith ag rith? to walk or to run?
9. éisteacht le ceol tíre nó snagcheol? to listen to country music or jazz?
10. scéal a scríobh nó dán a scríobh? to write a story or to write a poem?
11. scéal a léamh nó dán a léamh? to read a story or to read a poem?
12. dul go hÉirinn nó fanacht sa bhaile? to go to Ireland or stay at home?
13. siúl ar an trá nó leadóg a imirt? to walk on the beach or play tennis?
14. dul chuig bialann nó ithe sa bhaile? to go to a restaurant or eat at home?
15. litir a scríobh nó litir a fháil? to write a letter or to get a letter?
16. dinnéar a ithe nó pionta a ól? to eat dinner or to drink a pint?
17. bheith ag damhsa nó ag canadh? to dance or to sing?