English Starter Pack (mixed)

A mixed sampler across every question type — ideal for a cover lesson or a quick diagnostic.

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1. Mastering -ing Forms and Infinitives

Gerunds & infinitives · Everyday situations across work, study, travel, health, technology, relationships and money

For questions 1–8, complete each sentence with the -ing form or the infinitive, with or without to, of the verb in brackets.

1. After years of putting it off, she finally finished _____ (clear) out the cluttered garage.

2. The manager promised _____ (address) the team's concerns about overtime pay at the next meeting.

3. Her tutor advised her _____ (submit) the essay a week before the deadline so she'd have time to revise it.

4. The long queue at passport control made us _____ (wait) for almost two hours before we could board.

5. You'd better _____ (see) a doctor about that cough before it gets any worse.

6. Many users complain about _____ (receive) constant notifications from apps they barely use.

7. It would be thoughtful of him _____ (bring) flowers to his wife on their anniversary next week.

8. On her way home, she stopped _____ (withdraw) some cash from the ATM before the shops closed for the day.

2. Gerunds and Infinitives in Everyday Situations

Gerunds & infinitives · Gerunds and infinitives across everyday life, work, study, travel, health, technology, relationships and money

For questions 1–8, complete each sentence with the -ing form or the infinitive, with or without to, of the verb in brackets.

1. After years of commuting by car, she finally gave up _____ (drive) to work and started cycling instead.

2. The manager agreed _____ (extend) the deadline after the team explained the delay.

3. The tutor advised the students _____ (revise) their essays before submitting them.

4. At the airport, the security staff made every passenger _____ (remove) their shoes before going through the scanner.

5. You've had a bad cough for weeks now - you'd better _____ (see) a doctor soon.

6. Instead of _____ (type) long messages, he just records short voice notes and sends them.

7. He was eager _____ (meet) his girlfriend's parents for the first time, even though he felt nervous about it.

8. He stopped _____ (check) his bank balance every day once he realised it only made him anxious.

3. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

Idiomatic expressions & collocations · Idiomatic expressions and collocations across everyday situations: work, study, travel, health, technology, relationships, money and home

For questions 1–8, choose the word (A, B, C or D) that best completes the idiom or collocation in each sentence.

1. Everyone on the team needs to pull their _____ if we're going to finish the project on time.

A) share B) effort C) weight D) load

2. I really need to brush _____ on my French before the business trip next month.

A) back B) up C) over D) through

3. After the long flight to Tokyo, she was suffering from terrible jet _____ and slept for most of the day.

A) shock B) strain C) lag D) delay

4. I think I'll skip the gym tonight - I've been feeling a bit under the _____ since yesterday.

A) climate B) cold C) flu D) weather

5. It's getting harder to _____ up with how fast smartphone technology changes every year.

A) maintain B) stay C) keep D) hold

6. After their big argument, it took weeks for them to _____ things up and start talking again.

A) mend B) sort C) repair D) patch

7. With rent going up again, we're struggling to make _____ meet this month.

A) ends B) ways C) bills D) means

8. Please, make yourself at _____ - treat the place as if it were your own.

A) ease B) peace C) home D) odds

4. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

Idiomatic expressions & collocations · Idiomatic expressions and collocations across work, study, travel, health, technology, relationships, money and the environment

For questions 1–8, choose the word (A, B, C or D) that best completes the idiom or collocation in each sentence.

1. After months of training, finishing the marathon in under four hours felt like a piece of _____ for her now that she was so fit.

A) slice B) cake C) pie D) bread

2. She crammed all weekend, trying to _____ up on the lectures she had missed earlier in the term.

A) pick B) make C) catch D) get

3. By booking the flights and the hotel together, we managed to _____ two birds with one stone.

A) catch B) kill C) hit D) strike

4. I've had a terrible cold all week and I'm feeling really under the _____ today.

A) climate B) forecast C) weather D) sky

5. The prototype kept overheating, so the engineers had to go back to the _____ board and rethink the whole design.

A) planning B) drawing C) sketch D) design

6. After years of not speaking, the two brothers finally agreed to bury the _____ and start over.

A) weapon B) sword C) hatchet D) axe

7. With rent rising every year, it's getting harder for young families to make _____ meet.

A) ties B) ends C) edges D) sides

8. The council's decision to ban single-use plastics is seen as a step in the right _____.

A) direction B) path C) route D) way

5. Key Word Transformations: Lighthouses and Their Keepers

Key word transformation · The decline of lighthouse keepers and the automation of coastal navigation

For questions 1–8, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using between two and five words, including the word given, which you must not change.

1. People say that the keeper rescued a ship's crew during the great storm of 1912.

Key word: SAID

During the great storm of 1912, the keeper _____ have rescued a ship's crew.

2. It's possible that engineers chose this clifftop because of the dangerous rocks below.

Key word: MAY

Because of the dangerous rocks below, engineers _____ this clifftop.

3. Although the winds were extremely strong, the keeper managed to light the lamp every evening.

Key word: SPITE

The keeper managed to light the lamp every evening _____ the extremely strong winds.

4. The old oil lamp was far less reliable than today's automated beacon.

Key word: NEAR

The old oil lamp wasn't _____ as reliable as today's automated beacon.

5. I regret that I never visited the lighthouse before it was decommissioned.

Key word: WISH

Looking back, _____ the lighthouse before it was decommissioned.

6. The keeper's family had to tolerate complete isolation on the remote island for years.

Key word: UP

The keeper's family had to _____ with complete isolation on the remote island for years.

7. The lighthouse used to have a live-in keeper, but it has been fully automated for the past ten years.

Key word: LONGER

The lighthouse _____ a live-in keeper, having been fully automated for the past ten years.

8. The council paid workers to restore the old lighthouse last year.

Key word: HAD

Last year, the council _____ by workers.

6. Key Word Transformations: Life on a Modern Ranch

Key word transformation · Yellowstone - western- Cowboy - cowgirl valued series

For questions 1–8, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using between two and five words, including the word given, which you must not change.

1. The snowstorm was so severe that the tour group visiting Yellowstone had to turn back.

Key word: SUCH

It was _____ snowstorm that the tour group visiting Yellowstone had to turn back.

2. Even though her grandmother disapproved, Lily decided to marry the rodeo rider she had met at the county fair.

Key word: DESPITE

Lily decided to marry the rodeo rider she had met at the county fair, _____ disapproval.

3. I regret that I have never ridden a horse across the Yellowstone plains.

Key word: WISH

I _____ ridden a horse across the Yellowstone plains.

4. The drone crashed into the cliff just seconds after it began filming the cowboy chase scene.

Key word: NO

During the shoot, _____ the drone begun filming the cowboy chase scene than it crashed into the cliff.

5. 'I rode my first bronco when I was sixteen,' Lucy, the head wrangler, told the documentary crew.

Key word: SAID

Lucy, the head wrangler, _____ ridden her first bronco when she was sixteen.

6. The investors agreed to fund the Daltons' dude ranch project only if the family repaid the loan within five years.

Key word: PROVIDED

The investors agreed to fund the Daltons' dude ranch project _____ repaid the loan within five years.

7. A doctor treated Noah's broken arm after the stunt accident on set.

Key word: HAD

After the stunt accident on set, Noah _____ broken arm treated by a doctor.

8. It was wrong of the location manager not to warn the film crew about the unstable cliff edge.

Key word: SHOULD

The location manager _____ the film crew about the unstable cliff edge.

7. Key Word Transformations: Urban Beekeeping

Key word transformation · Urban beekeeping and its impact on city ecosystems

For questions 1–8, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using between two and five words, including the word given, which you must not change.

1. The number of urban beehives in this city rose by 40% last year.

Key word: RISE

There was _____ the number of urban beehives in this city last year.

2. Even though the beekeeper wasn't insured, she sold honey at the local market.

Key word: DESPITE

She sold honey at the local market _____ insured.

3. Transporting the hives to the rooftop was so complicated a job that the company hired a specialist team.

Key word: SUCH

Transporting the hives to the rooftop was _____ that the company hired a specialist team.

4. Regulations state that inspectors must check every hive once a week.

Key word: SUPPOSED

According to regulations, every hive _____ by inspectors once a week.

5. A professional roofer replaced the storm-damaged hive stand for the beekeepers.

Key word: HAD

The beekeepers _____ by a professional roofer.

6. I'm sorry that I don't know much about queen rearing.

Key word: WISH

I _____ more about queen rearing.

7. People say that three new rooftop apiaries have opened in the city centre this month.

Key word: REPORTED

Three new rooftop apiaries _____ in the city centre this month.

8. A rooftop hive costs half as much as a traditional garden to maintain.

Key word: EXPENSIVE

A traditional garden is _____ a rooftop hive to maintain.

8. Key Word Transformations: The Corpse Flower

Key word transformation · The corpse flower (Rafflesia/Amorphophallus titanum) – the world's largest and smelliest bloom

For questions 1–8, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using between two and five words, including the word given, which you must not change.

1. 'The flower will open within 24 hours,' said the botanist to the visitors.

Key word: TOLD

The botanist _____ the flower would open within 24 hours.

2. Maria is responsible for recording when the corpse flower blooms at the botanical garden.

Key word: JOB

It _____ to record when the corpse flower blooms at the botanical garden.

3. It's a bad idea to visit the corpse flower exhibit without covering your nose because of the smell.

Key word: OUGHT

Because of the smell, you _____ visit the corpse flower exhibit without covering your nose.

4. People call the plant 'titan arum' because of its enormous flower.

Key word: KNOWN

Because of its enormous flower, the plant _____ 'titan arum'.

5. If there aren't at least ten visitors interested, the garden won't open the corpse flower exhibit on weekends.

Key word: UNLESS

The garden won't open the corpse flower exhibit on weekends _____ at least ten visitors interested.

6. The corpse flower is the heaviest flower in the world.

Key word: THAN

The corpse flower weighs _____ any other flower in the world.

7. Although the smell was overpowering, journalists stayed to film the corpse flower blooming for the evening news.

Key word: SPITE

Journalists stayed to film the corpse flower blooming for the evening news, _____ the overpowering smell.

8. The corpse flower probably won't bloom again for another ten years.

Key word: UNLIKELY

In the next ten years, the corpse flower _____ bloom again.

Answer Key

1. Mastering -ing Forms and Infinitives

1. clearing
2. to address
3. to submit
4. wait
5. see
6. receiving
7. to bring
8. to withdraw

1. Finish is always followed by the -ing form when it means to complete an activity, so 'finished clearing' is correct; finish never takes a to-infinitive.

2. Promise is followed by a to-infinitive to talk about a future commitment, so 'promised to address' is the only correct form.

3. Advise someone to do something follows the verb + object + to-infinitive pattern, so 'advised her to submit' is required.

4. Make someone do something is followed by the infinitive without to, so 'made us wait' is correct; a to-infinitive would be wrong after make.

5. Had better is always followed by the bare infinitive to give strong advice, so 'you'd better see' is correct.

6. A verb following a preposition such as about must take the -ing form, so 'complain about receiving' is correct.

7. After it + would be + adjective + of + person, the to-infinitive is used to say what someone should do; since the anniversary is next week, only the simple infinitive 'to bring' fits, not a perfect form referring to a completed action.

8. Stop + to-infinitive means pausing one activity in order to do something else, as she interrupts her journey home to get cash; stop + -ing would mean she gave up the habit of withdrawing money altogether, which makes no sense alongside 'before the shops closed', a clear one-time purpose.

2. Gerunds and Infinitives in Everyday Situations

1. driving
2. to extend
3. to revise
4. remove
5. see
6. typing
7. to meet
8. checking

1. "Give up" is followed by the -ing form when it means stopping a habit; "to drive" is never used after this phrasal verb.

2. "Agree" is always followed by a to-infinitive to state what someone consents to do.

3. When "advise" has an object (the students), it is followed by a to-infinitive to show what they are told to do.

4. "Make + object" is followed by the infinitive without to, showing someone is forced to do something.

5. "Had better" is a fixed expression for strong advice and is always followed by the bare infinitive.

6. "Instead of" acts like a preposition, and prepositions are always followed by the -ing form, never a to-infinitive.

7. Adjectives expressing attitude, such as "eager", are followed by a to-infinitive to show what someone wants to do; a perfect infinitive would wrongly suggest the meeting had already happened before the feeling, which contradicts "for the first time".

8. "Stop + -ing" means ending a habit, which matches the idea of no longer checking the balance; "stop + to-infinitive" would mean pausing in order to do something else.

3. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

1. C) weight
2. B) up
3. C) lag
4. D) weather
5. C) keep
6. D) patch
7. A) ends
8. C) home

1. 'Pull your weight' means to do your fair share of work in a group. 'Load' can follow verbs like 'carry' or 'share', but English speakers don't say 'pull your load' to mean contributing fairly.

2. 'Brush up on something' means to improve a skill you haven't practised recently. 'Brush over' exists as a different phrasal verb meaning to deal with something quickly, but it doesn't combine with 'on' in this sense.

3. 'Jet lag' is the fixed term for the tiredness and confusion caused by flying across time zones. 'Jet strain' sounds plausible but isn't a real expression - strain describes pressure on muscles or relationships, not time-zone fatigue.

4. 'Under the weather' means feeling slightly unwell. 'Climate' refers to long-term weather patterns in a region, not personal health, so it cannot replace 'weather' in this fixed idiom.

5. 'Keep up with' means to stay level with something that is changing or progressing quickly. 'Hold up with' sounds similar but isn't a standard combination - 'hold up' means to delay or support, not to match a pace.

6. 'Patch things up' means to resolve a disagreement and restore a relationship. 'Repair' is close in meaning but is normally used with a direct object such as 'repair the relationship', not combined with 'things up' in this idiomatic sense.

7. 'Make ends meet' means to have just enough money to cover basic living costs. 'Means' appears in the separate expression 'live within your means', but you can't 'make means meet'.

8. 'Make yourself at home' is a fixed invitation telling a guest to feel comfortable, as the following clause about treating the place as their own confirms. 'At ease' is a real expression, but it describes feeling calm or relaxed, not being invited to treat someone's house as your own.

4. Idioms and Collocations in Everyday Situations

1. B) cake
2. C) catch
3. B) kill
4. C) weather
5. B) drawing
6. C) hatchet
7. B) ends
8. A) direction

1. 'A piece of cake' is an idiom meaning something very easy to do; 'pie' is confused with the separate idiom 'easy as pie', while 'bread' and 'slice' don't form any recognised expression with 'piece of'.

2. 'Catch up on' means to spend time doing something you missed in order to be up to date; 'get up on', 'pick up on' (which means to notice something) and 'make up on' are not natural collocations here.

3. 'Kill two birds with one stone' means to achieve two results with a single action; 'hit', 'strike' and 'catch' two birds with one stone are not standard forms of this idiom.

4. 'Under the weather' is an idiom meaning slightly unwell; 'climate', 'sky' and 'forecast' are all related to weather but don't form this fixed expression.

5. 'Back to the drawing board' means to start a plan or design again from the beginning after failure; 'design', 'sketch' and 'planning' board are not the established collocation.

6. 'Bury the hatchet' means to end a conflict and make peace; 'axe', 'sword' and 'weapon' are related objects but don't form this fixed idiom.

7. 'Make ends meet' means to have just enough money to cover your basic expenses; 'edges', 'sides' and 'ties' meet is not the recognised expression.

8. 'A step in the right direction' describes a positive move toward achieving a goal; 'way', 'path' and 'route' don't complete this fixed phrase, even though they relate to movement.

5. Key Word Transformations: Lighthouses and Their Keepers

1. is said to
2. may have chosen
3. in spite of
4. anywhere near
5. I wish I had visited (also: I wish I'd visited)

6. put up

7. no longer has

8. had the old lighthouse restored (also: had it restored, had the lighthouse restored)

1. The passive reporting structure 'is said to have + past participle' reports exactly what people generally say about a past event, matching 'People say that the keeper rescued...' in both meaning and certainty, without adding or removing any sense of doubt.

2. 'May have + past participle' expresses a present guess about a past decision, matching 'It's possible that engineers chose...' without turning the guess into certainty; 'must have chosen' would wrongly suggest strong certainty rather than mere possibility.

3. The clause 'Although the winds were extremely strong' is turned into the prepositional phrase 'in spite of the extremely strong winds'; 'in spite of' must be followed directly by a noun phrase, not a clause with a verb, which is why no other wording built from the keyword fits here.

4. 'Wasn't anywhere near as + adjective + as' makes a strong negative comparison showing the oil lamp fell far short of the beacon's reliability, matching 'far less reliable than' in the first sentence. 'Nowhere near' cannot follow the contracted negative 'wasn't' here, since the two negatives would clash rather than combine naturally.

5. 'Wish + past perfect' expresses regret about something that did not happen in the past, matching 'I regret that I never visited...' exactly in time and meaning.

6. The fixed phrasal verb 'put up with' means to tolerate something unpleasant; only 'put up' slots naturally before the preposition 'with' already in the sentence, matching 'tolerate complete isolation' in meaning and register. A verb like 'faced up' would need 'to', not 'with', so it cannot fit this slot.

7. 'No longer' placed before the present-simple verb 'has' shows that a situation which used to be true has now ended, matching 'used to have... but... has been automated', while keeping the same subject and verb as the original.

8. 'Have something done' describes arranging for someone else to do a job; 'had the old lighthouse restored' replaces 'paid workers to restore the old lighthouse', keeping the same agent introduced by 'by workers'.

6. Key Word Transformations: Life on a Modern Ranch

1. such a severe

2. despite her grandmother's (also: despite Lily's grandmother's)

3. wish I had (also: wish I'd, wish that I had, wish that I'd)

4. no sooner had

5. said she had (also: said she'd, said that she had, said that she'd)

6. provided they (also: provided that they, provided the Daltons, provided that the Daltons, provided the family, provided that the family)

7. had his (also: had the)

8. should have warned

1. The 'so + adjective + that' pattern becomes 'such a/an + adjective + noun + that' when rewritten with 'such', keeping the same idea that the snowstorm's severity directly caused the group to turn back.

2. 'Despite' is followed by a noun phrase rather than a finite clause, so 'her grandmother disapproved' becomes 'her grandmother's disapproval'; this keeps the meaning that Lily married the rider even though her grandmother was against it.

3. 'Wish + subject + past perfect' expresses regret about something that never happened, matching the idea of never having ridden across the plains.

4. 'No sooner had + subject + past participle ... than' shows one event following another almost immediately, matching the idea that the drone crashed only seconds after it started filming.

5. Reported speech requires backshifting a past simple verb ('rode') to the past perfect ('had ridden') when the reporting verb itself is in the past tense, showing the action happened before Lucy spoke; 'said she had' carries out this shift while matching the pronoun to Lucy.

6. 'Provided (that)' introduces a necessary condition, equivalent to 'only if'; 'they' refers back to the Daltons, keeping the meaning that the funding depended on the family repaying the loan in time.

7. The phrase 'had his broken arm treated by a doctor' shows that the treatment was carried out for Noah by someone else rather than by Noah himself, so the possessive 'his' (or 'the') must come straight after the key word to complete this meaning.

8. 'Should have + past participle' expresses a past obligation that was not fulfilled, matching the idea that it was wrong of the location manager to fail to warn the crew.

7. Key Word Transformations: Urban Beekeeping

1. a 40% rise in (also: a 40 percent rise in, a forty percent rise in, a rise of 40% in)

2. despite not being (also: despite her not being)

3. such a complicated job

4. is supposed to be checked

5. had the stand replaced (also: had the hive stand replaced, had their stand replaced, had their hive stand replaced, had it replaced, had the storm-damaged stand replaced, had their storm-damaged stand replaced)

6. wish I knew (also: wish that I knew)

7. are reported to have opened

8. twice as expensive as (also: two times as expensive as, 2 times as expensive as)

1. An increase is often expressed with 'there was + a [figure] rise in + noun phrase'; since the first sentence gives an exact figure (40%), that same figure must appear unchanged to keep the facts identical.

2. DESPITE is followed by a gerund; since 'wasn't insured' describes a state at the time of selling, the negative state survives as 'not being insured', giving 'despite not being insured' — the same concessive link as 'Even though she wasn't insured'.

3. With SUCH, the pattern 'so + adjective + a + noun' becomes 'such + a + adjective + noun', so 'so complicated a job' is rewritten as 'such a complicated job', keeping the identical meaning and degree of difficulty.

4. 'Be supposed to' expresses an official duty or expectation, matching 'must' in the original; turning the active 'inspectors must check' into the passive keeps the hive as the one being checked while 'by inspectors' still names who carries the duty out.

5. The causative pattern with this keyword (subject + had + object + past participle) shows that someone else performed the action; since a roofer did the work, 'had the stand replaced' reports that the beekeepers got it done rather than doing it

themselves.

6. WISH followed by a past simple verb expresses regret about a present state, so 'don't know' becomes 'wish I knew' to show the same lack of knowledge now, not something already finished.

7. The pattern 'be reported to have + past participle' replaces an impersonal 'people say that + present perfect', shifting the apiaries into subject position while the perfect infinitive keeps the same sense that the opening already happened before now.

8. If a rooftop hive costs half as much, the garden must cost exactly twice as much, so the multiplier pattern 'twice as expensive as' with this keyword keeps the same precise cost relationship as 'half as much as'.

8. Key Word Transformations: The Corpse Flower

1. told the visitors (also: told them, told the visitors that, told them that)
2. is Maria's job (also: is her job)
3. ought not to
4. is known as (also: 's known as)
5. unless there are
6. more than
7. in spite of
8. is unlikely to (also: 's unlikely to)

1. TOLD is a reporting verb that needs an object showing who heard the statement, so 'the visitors' or the pronoun 'them' follows it directly; because the reporting verb is past, the original 'will' backshifts to 'would' in the reported clause.

2. The fixed structure 'it is someone's job to do something' expresses the same ongoing responsibility as 'is responsible for'; JOB must follow a possessive form (Maria's or her) and the whole phrase comes right after 'It is', before the infinitive 'to record'.

3. 'It's a bad idea to do something' gives negative advice, rephrased with the modal phrase 'ought not to' before the base verb 'visit'; unlike 'should', 'ought' always takes 'to' before the main verb, and the key word must stay exactly as given, so no contracted form is possible here.

4. 'People call something X' becomes 'something is known as X', dropping the general subject 'people'; 'known' always takes the preposition 'as' before a name, never 'by' or 'for'.

5. 'Unless' means 'if not', so the negative condition 'if there aren't' becomes 'unless there are', keeping the same existential structure and the plural verb agreeing with 'ten visitors'.

6. The superlative 'the heaviest' can be rewritten with the verb 'weighs' plus a comparative phrase, since 'weighs' cannot take an adjective like 'heavier' directly before a noun phrase.

7. 'Although' introduces a full clause ('the smell was overpowering'), but the given word's fixed expression must be followed directly by a noun phrase ('the overpowering smell'); this is the standard way to turn an although-clause into this shorter concession phrase.

8. 'Probably won't' expresses a confident negative prediction, rephrased with 'is unlikely to' before the main verb 'bloom'; because 'unlikely' already carries the negative meaning, no additional 'not' is needed or correct.

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