

Decoding the Action: Mastering Russian Gerunds (Д"ДмДмДзН€Д, Н†Д°Н□Н,Д, Н□)

Materials Needed:

- Notebook or paper
- Pen or pencil
- Access to online Russian dictionary (e.g., Reverso Context, Multitran)
- A good Russian grammar reference (book or online resource)
- Prepared handout or digital document with Russian text excerpts containing gerunds (examples provided below)
- List of Russian verbs for practice (provided below)

Introduction: The Action Within the Action (5-10 minutes)

Д"ДмДмДзН€Д, Д²ДмН, ! Ever notice how Russian sentences can pack a lot of action into a small space? One of the secrets is the mighty 'Д'ДмДмДзН€Д, Н†Д°Н□Н,Д, Дм' (gerund). Think of it like the Russian equivalent of English '-ing' forms used adverbially, like '*Smiling*, she entered the room' or '*Having finished his work*, he went home.' These little words add dynamism and flair, describing a secondary action performed by the same subject as the main verb. Today, we'll unlock the secrets of forming and using these powerful words!

Activity 1: Gerund Spotting (15 minutes)

Let's become detectives! Read the following short sentences/excerpts. Can you spot the word that seems to describe *how* or *when* the main action is done, often ending in -Д°, -Н□, -Д², -Д²Н^Д, , or -Н^Д, ? Underline or list them.

1. ДœД°Д»Н€Н†Д, Д° Н†Д, Н, Д°ДмН, Д°Д¹²Д, Д³Нf, Н□Д, Д ´Н□ Нf Д³⁄₄Д°Д¹²Д°. (The boy reads a book, sitting by the window.)
2. Д Д°Д±Д³⁄₄Н, Д°Н□, Д³⁄₄Д¹² Н□Д»НfН^Д°Д» Д¹⁄₄НfД·Н<Д°Нf. (While working, he listened to music.)
3. Д"ДмДмДзН€Д³⁄₄Н†Д, Н, Д°Д² ДзД, Н□Н€Д¹⁄₄Д³⁄₄, Д³⁄₄Д¹²Д° Д·Д°ДзД»Д°Д°Д»Д°. (Having read the letter, she cried.)
4. Д'ДмН€Д¹⁄₂НfД²Н^Д, Н□Н€ Д'Д³⁄₄Д¹⁄₄Д³⁄₄Д¹, Н□ Н□Н€Д°Д·Нf Д»Н'Д³ Н□ДзД°Н, Н€€. (Having returned home, I immediately went to bed.)

Discuss: What do these highlighted words tell us? Do they describe an action happening at the same time as the main verb, or before it?

Explanation: Forming the Gerunds (20 minutes)

Okay, detective work done! Let's learn the rules. Russian has two main types of gerunds, linked to verb aspect:

- **Imperfective Gerunds (Д"ДмДмДзН€Д, Н†Д°Н□Н,Д, Н□)**

Д½ДмН□Д¾Д²ДмН€Н^ДмД½Д½Д¾Д³Д¾ Д²Д, Д´Д°): Describe an action happening *at the same time* as the main verb ('while doing something'). Usually formed from the 3rd person plural (Д¾Д½Д,) present tense stem by replacing the ending (-НfН,, -НЗН,, -Д°Н,, -Н□Н,) with **-Д°** (after Д¶, Н±, Н^, Н%o) or **-Н□** (after other consonants and vowels).

- Example: Н±Д, Н, Д°Н, Н€ (to read) -> Д¾Д½Д, Н±Д, Н, Д°НЗН, -> Н±Д, Н, Д°Н□ (reading)
- Example: Д³Д¾Д²Д¾Н€Д, Н, Н€ (to speak) -> Д¾Д½Д, Д³Д¾Д²Д¾Н€Н□Н, -> Д³Д¾Д²Д¾Н€Н□ (speaking)
- Example: Д´Н<Н^Д°Н, Н€ (to breathe) -> Д¾Д½Д, Д´Н<Н^Д°Н, -> Д´Н<Н^Д° (breathing)
- *Special case: Д±Н<Н, Н€ -> Д±НfД´НfН±Д, (being)*

• **Perfective Gerunds (Д"ДмДмДлН€Д, Н±Д°Н□Н, Д, Н□ Н□Д¾Д²ДмН€Н^ДмД½Д½Д¾Д³Д¾ Д²Д, Д´Д°):** Describe an action completed *before* the main verb ('having done something'). Usually formed from the past tense stem (masculine form) by adding **-Д²** (if stem ends in a vowel) or **-Н^Д,** (if stem ends in a consonant). Sometimes **-Д²Н^Д,** is used after a vowel if reflexive (-Н□Н□).

- Example: ДлН€Д¾Н±Д, Н, Д°Н, Н€ (to read pf.) -> Д¾Д½ ДлН€Д¾Н±Д, Н, Д°Д» -> ДлН€Д¾Н±Д, Н, Д°Д² (having read)
- Example: Д½Д°ДлД, Н□Д°Н, Н€ (to write pf.) -> Д¾Д½ Д½Д°ДлД, Н□Д°Д» -> Д½Д°ДлД, Н□Д°Д² (having written)
- Example: ДлН€Д, Д½ДмН□Н, Д, (to bring pf.) -> Д¾Д½ ДлН€Д, Д½Н´Н□ -> ДлН€Д, Д½Н´Н□Н^Д, (having brought)
- Example: Д²ДмН€Д½НfН, Н€Н□Н□ (to return pf.) -> Д¾Д½ Д²ДмН€Д½НfД»Н□Н□ -> Д²ДмН€Д½НfД²Н^Д, Н□Н€ (having returned)

Key point: The gerund describes an additional action of the *same subject* performing the main verb action. They don't change form (no declension!).

Activity 2: Gerund Factory (15 minutes)

Time to practice! Try forming the gerunds from these verbs. Identify if it should be imperfective or perfective based on the verb given.

- Д"ДмД»Д°Н, Н€ (impf. to do) -> ?
- ДиД´ДмД»Д°Н, Н€ (pf. to do/make) -> ?
- ДиД¼Д¾Н, Н€ДмН, Н€ (impf. to watch) -> ?
- ДЙД¾Н□Д¼Д¾Н, Н€ДмН, Н€ (pf. to watch) -> ?
- Д-Д, Н, Н€ (impf. to live) -> ?
- ДžН, Д°Н€Н<Н, Н€ (pf. to open) -> ?
- Д—Д°Д°Н€Н<Д²Д°Н, Н€ (impf. to close) -> ?
- Д£Д»Н<Д±Д°Н, Н€Н□Н□ (impf. reflexive, to smile) -> ?
- Д£Д»Н<Д±Д½НfН, Н€Н□Н□ (pf. reflexive, to smile) -> ?

(Check answers using grammar reference or dictionary if needed)

Activity 3: Reading in Action & Sentence Building (20 minutes)

Let's see gerunds in their natural habitat â€" literature! Read this excerpt from Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' (Д'Д¾Д¹Д½Д° Д, Д¼Д, Н€). Identify the gerunds and think about how they enhance the description.

А«ДšД½ЊД·ЊЄ ДД½Д'ЊЄДмД¹ [...] Д²Д³⁄₄Њ^Њ'Д» Д² ДлД°Д»Д°Њ, Д°Њф. [...] ДšЊфЊ, ЊфД·Д³⁄₄Д² ЊД, Д'ДмД» [...] Д½Д° ДлД³⁄₄Д°ЊЄЊЊ, Д³⁄₄Д¹⁄₄ Д²Д³⁄₄Д²ЊЄДм ЊД°Д»Д°Д' Д½Д³⁄₄Д¹⁄₄ ЊДЊ, ЊфД»Дм, ДлД³⁄₄Д¹⁄₄Д²ЊфЊЄД, Д² ЊД²Д³⁄₄ДЊž ЊДмД'ЊфЊž Д³⁄₄Д»Д³⁄₄Д²Њф Д, Д³⁄₄ДлЊфЊЊ, Д, Д² ЊД²Д³⁄₄Д' Њ, ЊфЊЊД½Д³⁄₄Дм Њ, ДмД»Д³⁄₄. ДžД½ [...] Д½Дм ДлД³⁄₄Њ^ДмД²ДмД»Д, Д»ЊДЊ, Д½Дм Д²Д·Д³Д»ЊД½ЊфД² Д'Д°ДфДм Д½Д° Д²Д³⁄₄Њ^ДмД'Њ^ДмД³Д³⁄₄.А»

(Prince Andrei entered the tent. Kutuzov sat on a folding chair covered with a carpet, *having bowed* his grey head and *having lowered* his stout body. He didn't stir, not even *having glanced* at the person who entered.)

Discuss: How do 'ДлД³⁄₄Д¹⁄₄Д²ЊфЊЄД, Д²', 'Д³⁄₄ДлЊфЊЊ, Д, Д²', and 'Д½Дм Д²Д·Д³Д»ЊД½ЊфД²' add to the image of Kutuzov? What actions are simultaneous? What actions are completed before the main (or implied main) action?

Sentence Building: Now, translate these ideas into Russian using gerunds:

1. While walking down the street, I saw my friend.
2. Having finished her homework, she went for a walk.
3. He explained the rule, using examples.
4. Having woken up, he drank coffee.

Wrap-up & Creative Application (10 minutes)

Quick review: What's the difference between imperfective and perfective gerunds? How are they typically formed?

Challenge: Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) describing a simple scene (e.g., someone entering a room, someone preparing breakfast). Try to use at least two different gerunds (one imperfective, one perfective if possible) to make your description more dynamic!

ДœД³⁄₄Д»Д³⁄₄Д'ДмЊ†! You've taken a big step in understanding the flow and elegance of the Russian language!