

UNIT 67

-ing clauses – 'Feeling tired, I went to bed early.'

a) A *clause* is a part of a sentence. Some sentences have two clauses:

- **Feeling tired**, I went to bed early.

In this sentence, 'I went to bed early' is the *main clause*.

Feeling tired is the *-ing clause*.

b) When two things happen at the same time, you can use **-ing** for one of the verbs. The main clause usually comes first:

- She was sitting in an armchair **reading** a book. (= she was sitting and she was reading)
- I ran out of the house **shouting**. (= I was shouting when I ran out of the house)

We also use **-ing** when one action happens during another. Use **-ing** for the longer action. The longer action is the second part of the sentence.

- Jim hurt his arm **playing** tennis. (= while he was playing)
- I cut myself **shaving**. (= while I was shaving)

You can also use **-ing** after **while** or **when**:

- Jim hurt his arm **while playing** tennis. (= while he was playing)
- Be careful **when crossing** the road. (= when you are crossing)

c) When one action happens before another action, you can use **having (done)** for the first action:

- **Having found** a hotel, they looked for somewhere to have dinner.
- **Having finished** our work, we went home.

You could also say **After -ing**:

- **After finishing** our work, we went home.

If the second action happens immediately after the first, you can use the simple **-ing** form (**doing** instead of **having done**):

- **Taking** a key out of his pocket, he opened the door.

These structures are used mainly in written English.

d) You can also use an **-ing** clause to explain something or to say why someone did something. The **-ing** clause usually comes first:

- **Feeling tired**, I went to bed early. (= because I felt tired)
- **Being unemployed**, he hasn't got much money. (= because he is unemployed)
- **Not having** a car, she finds it difficult to get around. (= because she doesn't have a car)
- **Having already seen** the film twice, I didn't want to go to the cinema. (= because I had already seen it twice)

These structures are used more in written than in spoken English.

UNIT 67 Exercises

67.1 From each pair of sentences make one sentence using an **-ing** clause.

Example: She was sitting in an armchair. She was reading a book.

She was sitting in an armchair reading a book.

- 1 Jill was lying on the bed. She was crying. Jill was
- 2 I got home. I was feeling very tired. I got
- 3 The old man was walking along the street. He was talking to himself.
The old man

In these sentences one thing happens during another.

Example: Jim was playing tennis. He hurt his arm. *Jim hurt his arm playing tennis.*

- 4 Ann was watching television. She fell asleep. Ann
- 5 The man slipped. He was getting off the bus. The man
- 6 The boy was crossing the road. He was knocked over.
The boy
- 7 The fireman was overcome by smoke. He was trying to put out the fire.
The fireman

67.2 This time make sentences beginning **Having ...**

Example: We finished our work. We went home. *Having finished our work, we went home.*

- 1 We bought our tickets. Then we went into the theatre.
.....
- 2 They had dinner. Then they continued on their journey.
.....
- 3 Sue did all her shopping. Then she went for a cup of coffee.
.....

67.3 Now make sentences beginning **-ing** or **Not -ing** (as in section d).

Example: I felt tired. So I went to bed early. *Feeling tired, I went to bed early.*

- 1 I thought they might be hungry. So I offered them something to eat.
Thinking
- 2 She is a foreigner. So she needs a visa to stay in this country.
.....
- 3 I didn't know his address. So I couldn't contact him.
Not
- 4 The man wasn't able to understand English. So he didn't know what I said.
.....
- 5 He has travelled a lot. So he knows a lot about other countries.
Having
- 6 We had spent nearly all our money. So we couldn't afford to stay in a hotel.
.....