Let’s remember that a gerund is a verb +ing:

- **Sing** → Singing
- **Play** → Playing
- **Run** → Running
- **Eat** → Eating
- **Study** → Studying
- **Love** → Loving

We use a possessive before a gerund to indicate the performer of the action:

1. **Possessive (‘s / ’)** → Formal
   - My brother doesn’t clean his bedroom. I’m really annoyed by it.
   
   WHAT’S THE ACTION? **CLEAN**
   WHO IS THE PERFORMER? **MY BROTHER**
   I’m annoyed by **my brother’s not cleaning** his bedroom.

2. **Possessive adjective** → Less formal
   - He smokes cigarettes. The doctor objects to it.
   
   WHAT’S THE ACTION? **SMOKES CIGARETTES**
   WHO IS THE PERFORMER? **HE**
   The doctor objects to **his smoking** cigarettes.

3. **Object pronoun** → Informal
   - He plays his MP3 player in the library. I don’t appreciate that.
   
   WHAT’S THE ACTION? **PLAYS HIS MP3 PLAYER IN THE LIBRARY**
   WHO IS THE PERFORMER? **HE**
   I don’t appreciate **him playing** his MP3 player in the library.

4. **Noun** → Informal
   - Sue talks on the cell phone all the time. We don’t mind it.
   
   WHAT’S THE ACTION? **TALKS ON THE CELL PHONE ALL THE TIME**
   WHO IS THE PERFORMER? **SUE**
   We don’t mind **Sue talking** on the cell phone all the time.
Exercise 1: Combine the pairs of sentences. Change that fact to a gerund phrase. Use formal English, and write in brackets the informal use of it.

1. Mary won a scholarship. We are excited about that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

2. He didn’t want to go. I couldn’t understand that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

3. You took the time to help us. We greatly appreciate that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

4. We talked about him behind his back. The boy resented that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

5. They ran away to get married. That fact shocked everyone.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

6. You are late to work every morning. I will no longer tolerate that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

7. Ann borrowed Sally’s clothes without asking her first. Sally complained about that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

8. Helen is here to answer our questions about the company’s new insurance plan. We should take advantage of that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

9. We came to class late. Mr. Lee complained about that fact.
   ⇒ _____________________________________________

10. You asked my opinion on that matter. I really appreciate that fact.
    ⇒ _____________________________________________

Exercise 2: For each of the following sentences, fill in the blank with the possessive adjective which agrees with the noun or pronoun shown in brackets.

1. _____ barking kept us awake. (the dog)

2. _____ arriving on time was fortunate. (we)

3. _____ swooping and darting was a sign that it would rain. (the swallows)

4. _____ following the guidelines was a good idea. (you)

5. _____ agreeing to forward the mail was helpful. (the students)

6. _____ answering the questions so easily was unexpected. (he)

7. _____ driving the car saved a great deal of time. (I)

8. _____ speaking so forcefully impressed the audience. (the woman)

9. _____ entering the race was intended as a gesture of goodwill. (we)

10. _____ chiming told us the time. (the clock)