

Read and Discover

Verbals: Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

Lesson 17

- a. Plants and animals **can threaten** established ecosystems by **becoming** invasive.
- b. **Controlling** invasive species **can be** a difficult task.

Circle the simple predicate in each sentence. Draw a box around each verb form ending in *-ing*. Is either *-ing* form part of a simple predicate? no

Is the boldfaced phrase in sentence a. the sentence subject, an indirect object, or the object of a preposition? the object of a preposition

Is the boldfaced phrase in sentence b. the sentence subject, a predicate noun phrase, or the object of a preposition? the sentence subject

A **gerund** is a verbal that acts as a noun. All gerunds are verb forms that end with *-ing*. A **gerund phrase** is made up of a gerund and the other words that complete its meaning. In the sentences above, *becoming invasive* and *Controlling invasive species* are gerund phrases.

See Handbook Section 25a

Part 1

Underline each gerund phrase. Draw a box around the gerund itself.

1. Non-native species become invasive by **taking** over resources and by **harming** native species.
2. **Competing** with native species for food is one example of how invasive species can unbalance an ecosystem.
3. Non-native tree frogs called *coqui* are skilled at **hunting** Hawaii's snails, insects, and spiders.
4. These tree frogs may impact native Hawaiian birds by **consuming** the birds' preferred prey.
5. The frogs may also harm native birds by **sustaining** large populations of the birds' predators.
6. Introduced predators can reduce populations of native animals by **preying** on them.
7. The brown tree snake has negatively impacted the ecology of Guam by **eating** large numbers of lizards and birds.
8. **Hanging** on power lines is another way brown tree snakes cause damage.
9. Invasive plant species can harm native plants by **blocking** their sunlight.
10. The salvinia plant presents a threat by **covering** the surfaces of ponds and lakes.
11. The salvinia kills underwater plants by **blocking** off all light.
12. Sometimes scientists can find animals that are ideally suited for **controlling** an invasive species.
13. Scientists have used salvinia weevils to control salvinia by **introducing** the weevil to heavily infested areas.
14. The weevil larvae kill the salvinia plants by **burrowing** into their buds and stems.



The salvinia weevil eats only the salvinia plant, so it is safe to introduce as a biological control agent.