

LESSON 8

Verbal Nouns, the Present Participle, and the Infinitive

Verbal Nouns

Verbal nouns, like other nouns, are either masculine or feminine (although the vast majority are masculine). Here are some basic guidelines to gender of verbal nouns:

Masculine	the word ends in -adh (the most common ending)	sgriobhadh - writing
	the last vowel is broad i.e. either a , o or u	ceannach - buying
Feminine	the word ends in -achd	coiseachd - walking
	the last vowel is narrow i.e. either e or i	seinn - singing

The verbal nouns are used in the same way as they are in English:

anns an sgrìobhadh - in the writing

seinn mhath - good singing

le coiseachd - by walking

The Present Participle

The present participle is formed from the verbal noun by adding either **ag** or **a'**. The **ag** is placed before a verbal noun beginning with a vowel, and **a'** in all other cases.

The present participle is used in much the same way as in English to convey a continuous action in the present tense:

Tha mi ag obair - I am working

A bheil sibh a' cluich? - Are you playing?

Chan eil e a' sgrìobhadh - He isn't writing

Bha iad a' fuireach - They were staying

An robh iad a' seinn - Were they singing?

Cha robh mi ag ithe - I wasn't eating

In spoken Gàidhlig the **a** in **a'** and **ag** is hardly pronounced, particularly if the preceding word ends in a vowel:

Written

Tha e ag iarraidh

Tha mi a' coiseachd

Pronounced

Tha e **ki**arraidh

Tha mi coiseachd

Using the present participle and the past tense of the verb **To Be** conveys a continuous action in the past:

Bha mi a' seinn - I was singing

An robh e ag òl? - Was he drinking?

Cha robh iad a' dol - They were not going

There are a number of common Present Participles that do not always express continuous actions :

Present Participles

Action

ag iarraidh - wanting

Tha mi ag iarraidh airgead - I want some money

Bha mi ag iarraidh airgead - I wanted some money

ag obair - working

Tha mi ag obair ann am banca - I am working in a bank/I work in a bank

Bha mi ag obair ann am banca - I was working in a bank/ I worked in a bank

a' creidsinn - believing

Tha mi a' creidsinn sin - I believe that

Bha mi a' creidsinn sin - I believed that

a' smaointinn - thinking

Tha e a' smaointinn - He is thinking/He thinks

Bha e a' smaointinn - He was thinking/He thought

a' ciallachadh - meaning

Tha e a' ciallachadh - It means

Bha e a' ciallachadh - It meant

Infinitives

The infinitive is formed from the verbal noun preceded by **a**. This **a** is the remains of the preposition **do** (meaning **to**) and like **do** will lenite an initial consonant whenever possible.

Lenition of initial consonant after the preposition **a**:

a bhith - to be

a dhol - to go

a chluiche - to play

a sheinn - to sing

a thogail - to build, to lift

Lenited **fh** is silent and like verbal nouns beginning with a vowel lenition is marked by adding **dh'** immediately after the preposition **a**:

a dh'fhuireach - to stay

a dh'ithe - to eat

a dh'òl - to drink

Verbal nouns beginning with **l**, **n**, **r**, **sg**, **sm**, **sp** or **st** cannot be lenited in writing:

a leughadh - to read

a nighe - to wash

a ruith - to run

a sgrìobhadh - to write

As in English it is possible to convey the future tense by using the verbal noun **a' dol - going** followed by an infinitive:

Tha mi a' dol - I am going

Tha mi a' dol a sheinn aig a' chèilidh - I am going to sing at the ceilidh

Tha mi a' dol a cheannach leabhar - I am going to buy a book

Tha mi a' dol a dh'fhaicinn an duine - I am going to see the man

The present participle **iarraidh** is followed by the verbal noun. Three exceptions to this rule are with **a thighinn - to come**, **a dhol - to go** and **a bhith - to be** :

Tha mi ag iarraidh coiseachd air an fheur - I want to walk on the grass

Tha i ag iarraidh a dhol dhan phàirc - She wants to go to the park

Tha e ag iarraidh a thighinn dhachaigh - He wants to come home

Tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith trang - They want to be busy

NEW WORDS

Conjunctions

no - or

Nouns

airgead (m) - money, silver

òrd (m) - hammer

pàirc (f) - park

banca (m) - bank

talla (m) - hall

Placenames

Dun Deagh - Dundee

Peairt - Perth

Struighle - Stirling

Obar Dheathain - Aberdeen

Portrigh - Portree

Tairbeart - Tarbert

Verbs

The first element is the verb root (equivalent to the second person imperative) followed by the verbal noun.

bruidhinn, bruidhinn (ri) - speak (to)

ceannaich, ceannach (do) - buy (for)

coisich, coiseachd - walk

fàg, fàgail - leave

fuirich, fuireach (ri) - stay, wait (for)

iasgaich, iasgach - fish

ith, ithe - eat

leum, leum - jump, leap

òl, òl - drink

ruith, ruith - run

sgrìobh, sgrìobhadh (gu) - write (to)

tog, togail - build, lift

buail, bualadh - strike

cluich, cluiche - play

cuir, cur - put, place

faic, faicinn - see

iarr, iarraidh (air) - want, ask (for)

ionnsaich, ionnsachadh - learn

leugh, leughadh (ri) - read (to)

obraich, obair - work, operate

rach, dol - go

seinn, seinn - sing

till, tilleadh - return

tòisich, tòiseachadh (ri) - start, begin (to)

EXERCISE 1 Translate into English

1. An robh sibh ag iarraidh seinn aig a' chèilidh? Bha
2. Bha a' chaileag a' cluich leis a' chù
3. Chan eil iad a' fuireach ann an Struighle
4. Tha mi a' leughadh pàipear aig an uinneig
5. Chan eil iad a' tilleadh gus a' mhadainn

6. A bheil sinn a' dol dhan talla? Tha
7. Bha an gille ag iasgach aig a' mhuir
8. Nach robh thu a' ruith air an rathad? Cha robh
9. Nach eil i ag obair aig an taigh?
10. Tha i ag iarraidh sgrìobhadh gun fhear sin
11. Tha mi ag iarraidh a dhol gu Dun Deagh
12. Tha iad a' cur iasg ann an uisge
13. Bha iad ag ithe mun bhòrd
14. Tha Màiri a' dol a dh'ithe anns an taigh-òsta

EXERCISE 2 Translate into Gàidhlig

1. He was speaking to (ri) Calum
2. The car is not starting
3. He was learning Gàidhlig
4. I want to go to the park with the dog
5. Do you want to return to the beginning
6. The bad boy was running in (air) the street
7. Was it wet or dry on the moor? It was wet and cold
8. They stay in Perth, but they are from (à) Portree
9. I am going to buy a new book with the money
10. He was striking with the hammer
11. I am going to leave Tarbert because I am going to Aberdeen
12. The fish (na h-èisg) were leaping out of (a-mach às) the water

1. Bha e a' bruidhinn ri Calum
2. Chan eil an càr a' Tòiseachadh
3. Bha e ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig
4. Tha mi ag iarraidh a dhol dhan phàirc leis a' chù
5. A bheil sibh ag iarraidh tilleadh dhan tòiseachadh
6. Bha am balach dona a' ruith air an t-sràid
7. An robh e fliuch no tioram air a' mhonadh? Bha e fliuch agus fuar
8. Tha iad a' fuireach ann am Peairt, ach tha iad a' Portrigh
9. Tha mi a' dol a cheannach leabhar ùr leis an airgead
10. Bha e a' bualach leis an òrd
11. Tha mi a' dol a dh'fhàgail Tairbeart oir tha mi a' dol gu Obar Dheathain
12. Bha na h-èisg a' leum a-mach às an uisge

LESSON 8: ANSWERS 2

1. Were you wanting to sing at the ceilidh? Yes
2. The girl was playing with the dog
3. They don't live (stay) in Stirling
4. I am reading a paper at the window
5. They aren't returning until (the) morning
6. Are we going to the hall? Yes
7. The boy was fishing at (the) sea
8. Were you not running on the road? No
9. Is she not working at home (the house)?
10. She wants to write to that man
11. I want to go to Dundee
12. They are putting a fish in water
13. They were eating around (about) the table
14. Màiri is going to eat in the hotel

LESSON 8: ANSWERS 1