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English In A Minute

Verbs of perception: See & Hear



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

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Hi! Saskia for BBC Learning English here, and today I'm going to tell you about how we use verbs of perception in English.

There are a number of these verbs but I'm just going to look at two with you now: **see** and **hear**. When we use these verbs, this is the form:

- First, the verb of perception.
- Then, the object of the sentence.
- Then we have either the infinitive without to or the -ing form.

Here's an example: **I heard him go down the stairs.**

Or: **I heard him going down the stairs.**

There's a slight difference between these two forms:

- When we use the infinitive, it suggests that we hear or see the whole action or event.
- Using the -ing form suggests that we hear or see something in progress.

'**I saw her cross the street**' means I saw her cross from one side to the other.

'**I saw her crossing the street**' means I saw her in the middle – on the way across.