

Verbal Noun With Pronoun Object

"Hitting it," "Kissing me", etc.

You already know that when a verbal noun is directly followed by an object, also a noun, that second noun will be in the genitive: *Tá sé ag ól beorach*, "He is drinking beer."

But how do we say, "He is drinking it"? **You Cannot Say: *Tá sé ag ól í !!!*** Instead:

1. Replace *ag* with *do* (no, I don't have the foggiest idea why).
2. Follow that *do* with the appropriate possessive pronoun, that is, matching the object in gender and number.
3. Naturally, the usual mutations that follow possessives apply.
4. Generally speaking, *do* combines with *ár* to form *dár*, and with *a* to form *dá*, BUT . . . *dá* is reduced to *á* in the standard, and comes out as *dhá* in Conamara. (To make things slightly worse, in some parts of Conamara, at least, since all the plural possessives tend to collapse to *a*, all of the plural forms of this construction end up as *dhá*.)

So, "He is drinking it" becomes *Tá sé á ól*.

Here's the classic paradigm for "Cáit is hitting Y":

Tá Cáit do mo bhualadh.	Tá Cáit dár mbualadh.
Tá Cáit do do bhualadh.	Tá Cáit do bhur mbualadh.
Tá Cáit á bhualadh.	Tá Cáit á mbualadh.
Tá Cáit á bualadh.	

Additional Notes

Passive: This construction is also commonly used to express a passive verb. In this case, the subject of the sentence and the possessive refer to the same thing/person, and if an agent is needed, *ag* is used:

<i>Tá an bheoir á ól</i>	"The beer is being drunk."
<i>Tá an bheoir á ól ag an gcat.</i>	"The beer is being drunk by the cat."

This can lead to some confusion in the third person, especially if there is no *ag* agent. After all, *Tá sé á chiceáil* could mean "He is kicking it" (the cat) or "He is being kicked." Context will tell, or use the *ag* construction to be more specific when necessary.

You already know the autonomous or impersonal form can be used to translate an English passive. But those forms cannot handle a **progressive** (-ing) construction, so this is what we use.

Careful! Watch out for verbs that require prepositions in Irish, e.g., "watch" takes a direct object in English, but in Irish we are going to have a construction with *ar* in it: *Tá mé ag breathnú air*.

Ongoing Practice

A simple, effective, way to get used to this is to watch and listen for the construction:

ag + V.N. + Object (genitive) *Bhí an bhean ag pógadh sagairt.*

And when you find it, rewrite it according to the guidelines above:

Bhí an bhean á phógadh. or *Bhí sí á phógadh.*

EXERCISE

Again, you cannot follow *ag* + *V.N.* with *é, í, iad*, or any of those things. But you're going to be sorely tempted to think that way.

So let's tackle the problem head on, by explicitly dealing with what we think in English. Basically, we need to get from "He is drinking it" to "He is to its drinking."

Look at the list of things below that you *cannot* say in Irish: these are all big no-no's. For each one:

1. Mentally translate the phrase into English ("drinking it").
2. Rearrange the English thought ("to its drinking").
3. Cough up the Irish version (*á ó!*).

Don't underestimate the importance of step 2! We want to associate the correct form with the English thought, so that when you want to express that concept in Irish, you can get there quickly.

If you skip that step, then what happens is this: you think, "Xing it", whatever the verb; the first thing that comes to mind is *ag X é*, or something similar; and then you realize that's wrong, and you re-write it in your head. That's much less efficient, and just creates a longer internal dialogue in English.

So, do the work to connect the correct forms directly to the corresponding English phrase.

ag ithe í	ag lasadh é
ag bualadh mé	ag glanadh iad
ag oscailt iad	ag ní í
ag péinteáil é	ag ullmhú é
ag déanamh í	ag marú muid
ag moladh tú	ag brú é
ag cloisteáil muid	ag bailiú iad
ag gortú sibh	ag baint iad
ag cabhrú iad	ag clúdach í
ag blaiseadh é	ag foghlaim é
ag goid í	ag tuiscint muid
ag troid mé	ag ceartú iad
ag mallachtú iad	ag cóipeáil é
ag críochnú é	ag míniú é
ag beannú tú	ag lorg mé
ag scrúdú í	ag díol é
ag síniú é	ag seoladh í
ag tógáil iad	ag gearradh iad