

Infinitive

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What is an infinitive?



‘To’ followed by a simple form of the [verb](#) is known as an infinitive. It is the base form of a verb with ‘to’. Infinitives can be used as an [adjective](#), noun or [adverb](#).

Example:

- The child was trying **to slurp** his soup.
- Jason braved the cold **to pick** berries for dessert.

Though infinitives always begin with ‘to’ there are exceptions. An infinitive loses ‘to’ when it follows certain verbs like hear, feel, let, make, see and watch.

Example:

- When Rita **heard** the bell, she rushed to class.
- She **made** me tidy the room since I had left it in a mess.

There are certain verbs that are only followed by infinitives. They are: hesitate, offer, promise, want.

Infinitives are often used to answer ‘why’ questions.



For general or habitual actions infinitives in [subject position](#) are used.

Example:

- She volunteered **to teach** the street children.
- I am prepared **to face** the music.

List of infinitives

Verb + infinitive

Claim choose fail

Appear	regret	decide
Consent	neglect	need
Arrange	attempt	ask
Forget	continue	afford
Cease	agree	neglect
Dare	start	prefer

Forms of infinitives

There are four forms of infinitives.

1. The perfect infinitive

To have+ past participle

Example:

- I would like **to have seen the Red Fort when I was in Delhi.**
- She pretended **to have read the book.**

2. The continuous infinitive

To be + [present participle](#)

Example:

- They happened **to be swimming** in the same pool.
- I wouldn't like **to be joking** with you.

3. The perfect continuous infinitive

To have been + present participle

Example:

- The baby seems **to have been crying.**
- She must **have been waiting** all afternoon.

4. The passive infinitive

To be + [past participle](#)

Example:

- The door ought **to be closed.**
- I am hoping **to be given** a post in the committee.

Examples of infinitives

- **The best way to understand his lecture is to listen carefully.**
- **To drop her home he took a detour.**
- **To finish the project is her only goal this week.**

- They offered to help the poor children.

What is the difference between infinitives and gerunds?



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Reference Links:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Determiner_%28linguistics%29
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T4xw5C74Ps>
- <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/gerunds.htm>
- <http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/410/grammar/gerinf.htm>
- <http://www.grammaruntied.com/verbals/infinitive.html>

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