

1. Infinitive Phrases : Definition and Forms

- Infinitive phrases are the third type of non-finite, verbal constructions that are used to present information in a more compacted way. As participial and gerund phrases, infinitive phrases have no tense or modality, and they lack an explicit subject and a subordinating conjunction.
- An infinitive phrase is basically constituted with the particle *to*, the base form of the verb in addition to modifiers, complements, and objects.
 - The first step is (**to collect all the required information**). (**infinitive phrase= infinitive form of the verb + direct object**)
- The infinitive phrase may have a perfect construction, a continuous, a perfect continuous as well as a passive perfect form.
 - **To have reconsidered his priorities** made him more organized. (**perfect construction**)
 - He seemed **to be waiting for the right moment** to invite them. (**continuous**)
 - He seemed **to have been working all the night**. (**perfect continuous**)
 - He did not answer all the questions because he considered them **to have already been dealt with in the previous courses**. (**passive perfect**)
- The infinitive phrase might also have a passive construction in which the agent either appears in a prepositional phrase following the infinitive or not mentioned at all. This form is called the passive infinitive.
 - The analysis is **to be conducted by different specialists**. (**passive infinitive + agent**)
 - The analysis is **to be conducted later**. (**passive infinitive / no agent**)
- Infinitive phrases are negated by placing *not* in front of the phrase.
 - It is important **not to waste any more time**. (**negative infinitive phrase**)

- A variant of the infinitive phrase begins with *for* followed by a personal noun or pronoun. This form is used when the reference is specific to a person that must be mentioned so as to clarify the context.
 - It was not easy **for Mark/ for him to do the job alone.** (*The context specifically refers to Mark or to him*)
- Infinitive phrases and one word infinitives should not be confused.
 - He did not want **to leave.** (*one word infinitive*)
 - He wants **to improve his reading skills.** (*infinitive phrase*)

2. The Grammatical Functions of Infinitive Phrases

- Infinitive phrases have a variety of syntactic roles in sentences. With the proper understanding of where the infinitive phrases appear and how they are used, sentences can be structured with clarity and precision.
- Infinitive phrases can function as nouns fulfilling different nominal functions :
 - **Not to participate in the competition** was her personal decision. (*The infinitive phrase functions as subject.*)
 - His dream is **to buy an apartment near his parents' house.** (*The infinitive phrase functions as subject complement.*)
 - All parents want **to see their children happy.** (*The infinitive phrase functions as direct object.*)
 - He considered him **to be the best qualified employer for the job.** (*The infinitive phrase functions as an objective complement.*)
- Infinitives can also be placed after nouns; in this case the infinitive phrase functions as an adjective modifying a preceding noun or noun phrase.
 - The teacher assigned **several exercises to be completed before the end of the week.** (*The infinitive phrase functions as an adjective qualifying the noun several exercises.*)
- Infinitive phrases can also function as adverbs, modifying any verb in the sentence.

- A little group of children had gathered **to watch the training of the team.** (The infinitive phrase functions as *adverb modifying the verb* had gathered and *expressing the reason.*)
- **To appropriately prepare for the presentation,** you must research both sides of the debate. (The infinitive phrase functions as an *adverb explaining the purpose.*)

3. Infinitives with Delayed Subjects (Extraposed infinitive phrases)

- Sentences in English must have subjects but sometimes dummy or empty subjects are used instead of the real subjects. *It* and *there* are the two dummy subjects used in English grammar.
- Sentences with delayed subjects begin with the dummy *it* which takes the place of the infinitive phrase; in this case the real subject of the sentence is the infinitive phrase which is referred to as extraposed infinitive phrase. The infinitive phrase is placed at the end of the sentence as a delayed subject.
 - It is still an adventure **to travel down the river in a small boat.** (The dummy subject is *it* and the real subject is *the infinitive phrase.*)
 - **To travel down the river in a small boat** is still an adventure.
- Extraposed infinitive phrases commonly appear after: ***to be + a subject predicative noun phrase*** or after ***adjectives marking necessity and importance, ease and difficulty as well as evaluation*** .
 - It is still **an adventure** (to travel down the river in a small boat). (*to be + a subject predicative noun phrase*)
 - It is **important** (to consider your parents' opinion first). (*adjective marking importance*)
 - It is **useful** (to write down all the required information). (*adjective marking evaluation*)
 - It was **not easy** to consult the meaning of each single word. (*adjective marking difficulty*)

4. Infinitives Versus Gerunds

- Some verbs can be only followed by gerunds; other verbs must only be followed by infinitives.
- Some verbs might be followed by both gerunds and infinitives with no difference in meaning (begin, continue, hate, like, prefer and start,....) while other verbs might be followed by both but with a change in meaning (forget, go on, mean, try, remember and stop). The examples below explain these cases.

- I enjoy **reading** literary works. → **Not** I enjoy **to read** literary works.
 - I wanted **to go** with them. → **Not** I wanted **going** with them.
 - She prefers **to work/ working** in groups.
 - Go on **to read** the book. (**start something new**)
 - Go on **reading** the book. (**carry on the same action**)
- Gerunds can be placed after prepositions while infinitives cannot.
 - **I am happy about going with them.** → **Not I am happy about to go with them.**
 - Some verbs can follow the pattern *verb + infinitive*; other verbs follow the pattern *verb + object + infinitive* while other verbs might take both patterns.
 - **He agreed to stay with us. (verb + infinitive)**
 - **He convinced her not to buy the car. (verb + object + infinitive)**
 - **I wanted to see the new car. I wanted my father to see the new car. (Both patterns are used.)**

5. Verb List for Infinitives /Gerunds

A. Verbs Followed by an Infinitive

agree	care	fail	leave	proceed
aim	consent	happen	offer	start
appear	dare	have	ought	stop
arrange	decide	hesitate	plan	swear
ask	deserve	hope	prefer	try
attempt	detest	hurry	prepare	use
be able	dislike	intend	promise	wait
beg	expect	like	propose	want
begin	forget	mean	refuse	wish
choose	get	neglect	say	

B. Verbs Followed by an Object and an Infinitive

advice	choose	have	motivate	remind
allow	command	hire	order	require
ask	dare	instruct	pay	send
beg	direct	invite	permit	teach

bring	encourage	lead	persuade	tell
build	expect	leave	prepare	urge
buy	forbid	let	promise	want
challenge	force	like	request	warn

C. Verbs Followed by a Gerund

admit	delay	finish	permit	resist
advice	deny	forbid	postpone	resume
appreciate	detest	get through	practice	risk
avoid	dislike	have	quit	spend (time)
can't help	enjoy	imagine	recall	suggest
complete	escape	mind	report	tolerate
consider	excuse	miss	resent	waste (time)

D. Verbs Followed by a Preposition and a Gerund

admit to	depend on	plan on
approve of	disapprove of	prevent(someone) from
argue about	discourage from	refrain from
believe in	dream about	succeed in
care about	feel like	talk about
complain about	forget about	think about
concentrate on	insist on	worry about
confess to	object to	