

Infinitives are nouns with certain qualities of a verb that is either in the form of 'to + V<sub>1</sub>' (infinitive) or 'V<sub>1</sub>' (direct infinitive).

Infinitives can come after another verb, subject, object or complement of a sentence.

Infinitives { **Verb** - A verb takes an object if it is transitive.  
- A verb is qualified by an adverb.  
**Noun** - A noun comes in place of a subject and an object.

See the following examples-

1. I want to go home. (Infinitive  
verb infinitive  
after a verb)
2. It's not easy to learn  
adjective infinitive  
swimming. (Infinitive after an  
adjective)
3. We need some time to sort  
noun infinitive  
out the issues. (Infinitive after a noun)
4. To err is human, to forgive  
subject  
divine. (Infinitive as the subject)
5. He wants to sing. (As object  
verb object  
of a transitive verb).
6. His greatest pleasure is to gamble.  
(infinitives as the complement of  
verb).

**Infinitive are nouns but have not left the qualities of a verb.**

Now let us see how we can say infinitives are verb-noun.

If by the help of examples, we can prove that infinitives can show the qualities of both, we can comfortably say that infinitives are verb-noun.

**Examples-**

1. To err is human.  
subject
2. I love to dance.  
object
3. To respect women is our moral duty.  
In this sentence 'to respect' is a noun as it comes in the place of subject but like a verb, it takes an object 'women'.
4. I decided to teach English.  
In this sentence 'to teach' like a noun is the object of the verb 'decided' but like a verb it takes an object 'English'.
5. I decided to leave the job immediately.  
In this sentence 'to leave' is an object of the verb 'decided' but like a verb it takes an object 'job' and is also modified by an adverb 'immediately'.

From the examples given above we can comfortably say that infinitives act as both noun and verb.

#### Forms of infinitives-

1. I come here **to study**.  
(Active voice → 'to + V<sub>1</sub>')
2. She wanted **to be flattered**.  
(Passive voice → 'to + be + V<sub>3</sub>')
3. He admitted **to have misused** his rights. (Perfect infinitive)
4. He seemed **to have been cheated**.  
(Perfect passive voice)
5. They pretended **to be running** out of time. (continuous infinitive → 'to + be + V<sub>1</sub> + ing')
6. He admitted **to have been maltreating** his wife since their marriage. (Perfect continuous → 'to + have + been + V<sub>1</sub> + ing')

From the examples given above, we can say that infinitives can be used in both active and passive voice and in all types of tenses.

- ☞ When infinitives are used to express manner, the full form of the infinitive is 'how to + V<sub>1</sub>'. We can use any 'Wh + to + V<sub>1</sub>' too in other cases.

The verbs are-

**Ask, explain, discover, know, learn, teach, wonder.**

- E.g:
1. I wondered what to do.
  2. I know how to swim.
  3. He taught me how to speak Japanese.
  4. I forgot what to write in the application.

If a noun is followed by an infinitive, we need to use an appropriate preposition (if needed) after the noun.

- ☞ See the examples given below:

1. I have no bed to sleep  
noun infinitive

in  
prep.

2. She needed a chair to sit  
noun infinitive

on  
prep.

#### Direct or Bare Infinitive:

Infinitives without 'to' is called 'direct' or 'bare infinitives'.

- ☞ 'Direct infinitives' are used after 'had sooner', 'had better', 'had rather', 'would rather', 'sooner than' and 'rather than'.

- E.g:
1. You **had better** leave now.
  2. I **would rather** die than beg.
  3. They **had sooner** talk than part ways.

- ☞ Direct infinitive are used after the following verbs when they are used in active voice - 'Bid', 'make', 'help', 'feel', 'see', 'watch', 'hear'.

- E.g:
1. I bade him go out.  
Direct infinitive
  2. My mother **made** me do the home work.  
Direct infinitive
  3. I **watched** him go.  
Direct infinitive

When these verbs are used in passive voice they take 'to + V<sub>1</sub>' (Infinitive) and not 'V<sub>1</sub>' (Direct Infinitive) after them.

- E.g:
1. I was **made** to wash all the clothes.  
infinitive

2. I was **bidden** to leave the room  
infinitive  
at once.

**Remember:-**

Bid (when 'bid' means 'to pay a  
 $V_1$   
certain price')

bid bid  
 $V_2$   $V_3$

**E.g:** He bid \$2000 for the painting.  
 $V_2$

Bid (to command, to utter as a  
 $V_1$   
greeting)

bade bidden  
 $V_2$   $V_3$

**E.g:** I bade him leave the room.  
 $V_2$

☞ **'Let' takes direct infinitives** in both active and passive voice.

**E.g:**

1. I will not **let** him go.  
Direct infinitive  
(Active voice)

2. Bad habits must be **let** go.  
Direct infinitive

(Passive voice)

☞ **See the examples given below:**

1. You need not to worry. (×)  
You need not worry. (✓)
  2. We dare not to disobey the traffic rules. (×)  
We dare not disobey the traffic rules. (✓)
- B.** Need I to take this exam? (×)  
Need I take this exam? (✓)

From the examples given above, we can say that **'Need'** and **'Dare'** take direct infinitives when they are used as **auxiliary verbs in negative and interrogative sentences**.

However we know that **modals take 'V<sub>1</sub>' after them. (See Chapter -1 'Verb' of Volume -1)**

☞ Phrases **'why'** and **'why not'** take **direct infinitives**.

**E.g:** 1. Why not stop now?  
Direct infinitive

2. Why surrender before  
Direct infinitive  
dictators?

☞ When **'have+ object'** is used in the sense of expressing wish, it is **followed by direct infinitives**.

**E.g:** 1. I will **have him speak** the truth.

☞ **Perfect Infinitives** ⇒ Perfect infinitives should come if the action expressed by the infinitive precedes the action of the finite verb.

**E.g:** He admitted **to have violated** anti-corruption law many times.  
Here the action of 'violating anti-corruption' law is prior to the action of 'admitting'.

☞ **Split Infinitive ('to' and 'V<sub>1</sub>' separated from each other by an adverb, a word or a phrase) ⇒**  
Though many grammarians believe that splitting Infinitives is wrong, it is imperative to mention here that it is completely acceptable in modern English.



See the examples given below:-

1. To boldly go where no man has gone before.  
(Here adverb 'boldly' splits the infinitive 'to go')
2. The population is expected to more than double in the next ten years.  
(Here more than one word 'more than' split the infinitive 'to double')

- E.g: 1. We **prohibit** smoking here.
2. We **prohibit** people **to smoke** here.  
object
3. I wouldn't **advise** taking the car to Chandi Chowk.
4. I wouldn't **advise** anyone **to take** the car to Chandi Chowk.  
object

See the following examples to understand how the use of 'infinitive' and 'gerund' changes the meaning of the sentence.

1. Go on  $\Rightarrow$  (a) Go on + ' $V_1$  + ing'  $\rightarrow$  Means to continue.  
E.g: he went on talking.  
(b) Go on + ' $to + V_1$ '  $\rightarrow$  Refers to a change of activity.  
E.g: He stopped talking about the problems and went on to describe the possible solutions.

4. See, watch and hear  
If these verbs are followed by ' $V_1$  + ing' form, it suggests that one pays attention to 'events' or 'actions' that are already going on.  
E.g: I saw the old man crossing the road.

If these verbs refer to 'complete events or actions' which are seen or heard from beginning to end, direct infinitive will follow.

- E.g: I saw the old man cross the road and disappear in the moor.

2. Regret  $\Rightarrow$  (a) Regret + ' $V_1$  + ing' - This form looks back at the past.  
E.g: He regrets leaving his job.  
(b) Regret + ' $to + V_1$ '  $\rightarrow$  used mostly in announcement of undesirable news.  
E.g: We regret to inform you that the flight has been cancelled due to bad weather.

5. Try  
Try + ' $V_1$  + ing' - Means to do something to see what will happen when we talk about performing an experiment.

- E.g: 1. I tried writing an essay but in vain.  
2. I keep calling her up but she doesn't respond.

Try + ' $to + V_1$ ' - when we talk about making an effort to do something difficult, we can use either 'try +  $to + V_1$ ' or 'try + ing'.

- E.g: 1. I tried to hold the rope but my hands were too cold.  
2. I tried changing the wheel but the nuts were too tight.

6. **Mean**

**'Mean + V<sub>1</sub> ing'** → If 'mean' is used in the sense of 'involve', or 'to have a result', 'mean' will be followed by 'V<sub>1</sub> ing' form.

**E.g:** If you want to get good marks, it will **mean working** very hard.

**Mean + to+V<sub>1</sub>** → If 'mean' is used in the sense of 'intend', it will be followed by an infinitive.

**E.g:** I **mean to say** that it is not as difficult as it seems to be.

7. **Learn and teach**

These verb will be followed by 'V<sub>1</sub> + ing' form when we are referring to 'lessons' or 'subject of study'.

**E.g:** 1. She goes to **learn dancing**.

2. I **taught typing** when I was in Jaipur. 'Learn' and 'teach' come with 'to + V<sub>1</sub>' form when we talk about 'the result of the study' i.e. about successfully learning a skill.

**E.g:** 1. I **learnt to speak** Japanese when I was in Japan.

8. **'Sorry'**

**Sorry for/about + ing** ⇒ Refers to past things that one regrets.

**E.g:** I am **sorry for keeping** your application pending for such a long time.

**Note:** **Sorry + perfect infinitive (more formal)** can be used with the same meaning.

**E.g:** I'm sorry to have kept your waiting.

9. **Begin and start**

Both begin and start can be followed by 'V<sub>1</sub> + ing' or 'to + V<sub>1</sub>' form with no difference in meaning.

**E.g:** 1. I **began to play** chess.

2. He **started looking** for a new job. After progressive forms of 'begin' and 'start' infinitives are preferred.

**Ex.** I'm **starting to learn** it now. In case of **understand, realise and know**, we use the infinitive form after 'begin' and 'start'.

**E.g:** 1. He **began to realise** his mistakes but it was too late.

2. He **started to know** the consequences of his actions after his initial failures.

10. **Like, live, hate and prefer**

These verbs are followed by both 'V<sub>1</sub> + ing' and 'to+V<sub>1</sub>' form without much difference in meaning.

**E.g:** 1. I **love to take** hot shower bath after a day long work.

2. Children **enjoy watching** television. But after **would + like /prefer /love /hate, infinitives are preferred.**

**E.g:** 1. I **would like to meet** the manager.

2. I **would love to do** it if you permit me.

11. **Stop**

(a) **Stop + 'V<sub>1</sub> + ing'** - Means to stop doing the activity mentioned.

**E.g:** I stopped playing cricket.

(b) **Stop + 'to+V<sub>1</sub>'** → Means to stop in order to do the activity mentioned.

**E.g:** I stopped to play cricket.

**Exercise**

**Exercise based on Infinitive & Gerund.**

- I feel like (A)/ to go (B)/ to a movie (C)/ No error (D)
- It isn't wrong(A)/to defend (B)/oneself (C) No error (D)
- I think (A)/defending (B)/oneself is the right thing to do (C)/if one is not wrong, /No error (D)
- I can't imagine \_\_\_\_\_ out of a flying plane.  
(A) To jump (B) jumping  
(C) jump (D) to be jumped
- I feel (A)/ like to eat (B)/something now.(C)/ No error (D)
- They are relieved \_\_\_\_\_ the traffic \_\_\_\_\_ more easily.  
(A) to find, flowing  
(B) to find, to flow  
(C) find, following  
(D) find, flow



7. On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2003, a congestion charge for \_\_\_\_\_ in Central London was introduced. The aim was \_\_\_\_\_ the number of vehicles in the city of London.  
(A) drive, to reduce  
(B) driving, to reduce  
(C) to drive, to reduce  
(D) driving, reducing
8. I wonder, is it right to charge people to driving in the city.  
(A) Charging, driving  
(B) to charge, for driving  
(C) Charge, drive  
(D) No improvement
9. I Look forward at meeting the President of America.  
(A) to meeting (B) to meet  
(C) meet (D) No improvement
10. Do you object to mine working on Sundays?  
(A) my (B) me  
(C) I (D) no improvement
11. I am not used to get up early in the morning.  
(A) to got (B) to getting  
(C) about getting  
(D) No improvement
12. I prefer to take metro than driving.  
(A) taking, to (B) take, over  
(C) about taking, than  
(D) No improvement
13. I regret \_\_\_\_\_ the exam due to illness.  
(A) missing  
(B) to missing  
(C) missed  
(D) about missing
14. I regret \_\_\_\_\_ you that your son has been detained.  
(A) to informing (B) to inform  
(C) about informing  
(D) No word needed.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ cannot go together.  
(A) drinking, drive  
(B) drinking, driving  
(C) to drink, to drive  
(D) drink, drive
16. I wouldn't advise you taking the car to Janpath.  
(A) to take (B) take  
(C) to taking (D) No improvement
17. She enjoys \_\_\_\_\_ Science fiction.  
(A) reading (B) to read  
(C) having reading  
(D) read
18. Sheela suggested \_\_\_\_\_ a movie after work.  
(A) to see (B) seeing  
(C) about seeing  
(D) to seeing
19. Where did you learn \_\_\_\_\_ German ?  
(A) speaking (B) to speak  
(C) speak (D) to speaking
20. Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_ me write an application ?  
(A) to help (B) helping  
(C) help (D) to helping
21. The models practised walking with a book balanced on their heads.  
(A) to walk (B) to walking  
(C) walk (D) No improvement
22. My friend promised \_\_\_\_\_ care of my pet while I was on vacation.  
(A) to take (B) taking  
(C) take (D) to have taken care
23. Witnesses reported \_\_\_\_\_ the bank robbers while they were scaling the wall.  
(A) to see (B) to have seen  
(C) to seeing (D) saw
24. I dislike him(A)/eavesdropping habits (B)/ so much that I cannot stand it any more. (C)/ No error (D)
25. We must avoid(A)/to use cell phones(B)/ while we are in court rooms.(C)/ No error.
26. I don't mind(A)/cooking(B)/ when my servant is not well.(C)/ No error (D)
27. I would like (A)/to try (B)/ a new look now. (C)/ No error (D)
28. I wasn't sure of him(A)/contesting (B)/ the Lok Sabha election. (C)/ No error (D)
29. I can't stand \_\_\_\_\_ all the time.  
(A) he complaining  
(B) him complaining  
(C) his complaining  
(D) him complain

30. Our teacher won't allow us to use calculators.  
(A) using (B) to using  
(C) use (D) No improvement
31. She prefers \_\_\_\_\_ dinner as she is not good at cooking.  
(A) my making (B) me making  
(C) me to make (D) me make
32. I hope you don't mind \_\_\_\_\_ while you sleep.  
(A) my listening to music  
(B) me listening to music  
(C) me to listen music  
(D) mine listening to music
33. She likes to go \_\_\_\_\_.  
(A) fishing (B) surfing the internet  
(C) learning foreign language  
(D) missing
34. The passing marks(A)/that we needed (B)/ seemed a distant dream for most of us.  
(C)/No error (D).
35. He said that(A)/his wife didn't have (B)/ dressing sense. (C)/No error (D).
36. I remember (A)/to go for trekking (B)/ when I was a kid.(C)/No error (D).
37. Your hair needs \_\_\_\_\_.  
(A) Cutting (B) to cut  
(C) cut (D) to be cut down
38. I tried lifting (A)/the suitcase but it (B)/ was too heavy. (C)/No error (D).
39. Due to me (A)/being an unknown face (B)/ I was refused admittance. (C)/No error (D).
40. I don't have (A)/a pen(B)/ to write.(C)/No error (D).
41. She has (A)/no bed (B)/ to sleep.(C)/No error (D).
42. This project is not (A)/ worth to risk (B)/ all your money.(C)/No error (D).

## Answer-key

1. (C); Change 'to go' into 'going'  
2. (D); 3. (D); 4. (B);  
5. (B); Change 'to eat' into 'eating'  
6. (A); 7. (B); 8. (B); 9. (A);  
10. (A); 11. (B); 12. (A); 13. (A);  
14. (B); 15. (B); 16. (A); 17. (A);  
18. (B); 19. (B); 20. (B); 21. (D);  
22. (A); 23. (B);  
24. (A); Change 'him' into 'his'. We use a possessive adjective before a noun.  
25. (B); Change 'to use' into 'using'. 'Avoid' is followed by a gerund.  
26. (D);  
27. (B); 'like' is followed by a 'gerund' but 'would like' is followed by an infinitive.  
28. (A); 'Contesting' (a gerund) will be preceded by a Possessive Adjective (his) and not a Pronoun (him).  
29. (C); 30. (D); 31. (A);  
32. (A); 33. (A);  
34. (A); Change 'passing marks' into 'pass marks'. 'Passing marks' is wrong English.  
35. (C); Change 'dressing sense' into 'dress' sense. 'Dressing sense' is wrong English.  
36. (B); Change 'to go' into 'going'. 'Remember' is followed by a gerund.  
37. (A);  
38. (A); Change 'lifting' into 'to lift'.  
39. (A); Change 'me' into 'my'. 'Being' is preceded by a Possessive Adjective (my). 'Due to' is acceptable in modern English though a sentence should start with 'owing to' if we strictly follow traditional English.  
40. (C); Add 'with' after 'write'. If a noun is followed by an infinitive, an appropriate preposition must follow.  
41. (C); Add 'in' after 'sleep'. (See explanation of 39).  
42. (B); Change 'to risk' into 'risking'. 'Worth' is followed by a 'gerund'.