The Use of the Infinitive

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July 3, 2019

The English verb has two major forms, finite and non-finite. How to use them correctly is very important to English language learners (ELL), whose native language is not English when they study English. Having taught English as a second language for many years, the writer tried to summarize and illustrate the various use of the infinitive, one of the three non-finite forms - the infinitive, the participles (which have two forms, the present participle and the past participle), and the gerund, on the basis of his extensive reading and review of different English grammar books, reference books, magazines, newspapers, books, and English dictionaries, etc., in order for English language learners to further understand how to use the infinitive properly in the English language. The infinite is the verb form that simply names the action of the verb, without any other specification, etc., (in English used with or without to). The infinitive also has two kinds of infinitive – infinitive with to (to-infinitive) and infinitive without to (bare infinitive).

“She always comes to help me,” in which to help is an infinitive with to. “I saw her leave the house,” in which leave the house is an infinitive without to or bare infinitive. We do not say “I saw her to leave the house”, because the verb see is followed by a bare infinitive when the infinitive is used.

The symbol * means that the phrase or sentence is incorrect. AmE means American English and BrE, British English. SVO means subject + verb + object, SVC, subject + verb + complement, SVO_iO_d, subject + (indirect) object + (direct) object, SVOC, subject + verb + object + complement, SVOA, subject + verb + object + adverbial, and SVOCA, subject + verb + object + complement + adverbial.

1
The finite verb versus the non-finite verb

A finite verb phrase is one that can be the main verb of a sentence. A non-finite verb phrase is an infinitive, participles (present and past), or a gerund. In the sentence “Many people stay up late
at night”, we have “stay up late at night” as its predicate, in which the verb “stay up” is a finite verb. In the sentence “He went to see his father yesterday”, went is a finite verb and to see is a non-finite verb to express purpose. A finite verb is one which predicates something of the subject of the sentence in which it is. A verb is not necessarily, however, always used as a finite verb. It can be used as a non-finite verb as well. In fact, the whole predicate including the verb may be transplanted into other sentences, where it is to have the function not of a predicate but of a subject, an object, a predicative, a complement, an attributive, an adverbial, or an independent element, as the case may be. In that case, it will be non-finite, i.e., a gerund (if it is tantamount to a noun) or an infinitive (if it is tantamount to a noun, an adjective or an adverb) or a participle (if it is tantamount to an adjective or an adverb). To continue with one of the above examples, which contains the predicate “stay up last at night”, we can for illustration apply the same phrase in non-finite forms as follows:

a. To stay up late at night is harmful to health.
   (Infinitive used as noun, being the subject to the verb is.)
b. Staying up late at night is harmful to health.
   (Gerund, being the subject to the verb is.)
c. I don’t like staying up late at night.
   (Gerund, being the subject to the verb like.)
d. I don’t like to stay up late at night.
   (Infinite used as a noun, being the object of the verb like.)
e. I don’t hold with the idea of staying up late at night.
   (Gerund, being object of the preposition of.)
f. There is no need to stay up late at night.
   (Infinitive used as adjective, post-modifying the noun need.)
g. To stay up late at night, we relaid the fire with coal.
   (Infinitive as adverb, modifying the verb relaid, showing the purpose, we relaid....)
h. Often staying up late at night, he has been failing fast in health.
   (Present participle used as adverbially, modifying the verb phrase has been failing fast in the health, showing the cause of failure.)
i. Those staying up late at night do not realize the evils of doing so.
   (Present participle is functioned as adjective, post-modifying the pronoun those.)
j. What will impair your health is staying/to stay up at night.
   (Gerund or infinitive is functioned as predicative.)

There are three non-finites in English – the infinitive, the participles (which have two forms, the present participle and the past participle), and the gerund, as described from the above examples. Some people use both the present participle and the gerund as the –ing form because they look the same in form – both having the –ing forms, but in this article the writer will discuss the use of the infinitive only.
2
The infinitive

Infinitive forms

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From the above table, we do not usually have *to have been being written*, which sounds very awkward although it exists.

For example:

- Sandy is *to visit me next week*.
- I aim *to have finished the project by tomorrow*.
- He was seen *to be walking away*.
- He seems *to have been sitting there all day*.
- I asked for Mary *to be met by John*.
- She was found *to have been stabbed*.
- How would you like *to have been being scolded all day*? (rarely used)
- The picture is believed *to have been being painted for years*.
  (passive perfect continuous infinitive, rarely used)

--- https://www.grammaring.com/the-forms-of-the-infinitive

- Anyone with half a brain (no one you know or are related to, of course) knows that any things you sign *have been being fought for years* (even decades) before you became president.


3
The voice/tense of the non-finite for infinitives

A The tense of the infinitive expresses time relatively to that of the main (or principal) verb. If the action expressed by the infinitive is of the same time as, or of later time than, that expressed by the main verb, the indefinite or continuous/progressive forms should be used, e.g.
a. He seems to know the fact.
(= It seems that he knows the fact. Simple form shows simultaneous action, but for the progressive form to be knowing would be impossible, because know is a state verb, which is not used in a progressive form.)
b. He seemed to know the fact. (= It seemed that he knew the fact.)
c. He seems to be working hard at math.
(= It seems that he is working hard at math. Progressive form shows simultaneous action with that of seems.)
d. I’m pleased to meet you. (The pleasure and the meeting are both in the present.)
e. He was lucky to win $1,000 in a slot machine. (The luck and winnings are both in the past.)
f. That farm was reported to be producing more fish than the previous year.
(= It was reported that the farm was producing more fish than the previous year.)
g. The country is known to be rich in natural resources.
(= It is known (to all) that the country is rich in natural resources.)
h. He seems to have done a great deal of work.
(A perfect form shows prior action to that of seems. Also see the examples in B) below.)
i. He happens/appears/seems to have been knocked down by a car.
Cf. He happens/appears/seems that he has been/was knocked down by a car.
j. He happens/appears/seems to be sleeping.
Cf. He happens/appears/seems that he is sleeping.

B  Besides some examples in A, if the action expressed by the infinitive is of earlier time than that expressed by the main/principal verb, the perfect infinitive is usually used. That is, we use a perfect infinitive for something prior to the time in the main verb, e.g.

a. He is said to have gone to Las Vegas. (= It is said that he has gone to Las Vegas.)
b. The enemy was reported to have been surrounded three days before.
(= It was reported that the enemy had been surrendered three days before.)
c. Sandy is known to have been teaching in the school for the past ten years.
(= It is known (to all) that Sandy has been teaching in the school for the past ten years.)
d. I am sorry to have kept you waiting. (= I am sorry that I’ve kept you waiting.)
e. I prefer to have finished the work before she comes.
f. John seems to have seen Mary.
g. I’m glad to have met you. (The feeling is in the present, but meeting you is in the past.)
h. It’s a pity that I missed the movie; I’d like to have seen it.
(“To have seen it” has the meaning of subjunctive mood.)
i. The lady appeared to have been drinking.
Generally speaking, the perfect form and perfect progressive form refer to prior action or state, and the progressive form to simultaneous action or state in comparison with the predicative verb or predicate verb. The simple form of the infinitive has also time reference. It usually expresses simultaneous action or state in place of the progressive form, if the verb itself cannot normally have the progressive tense (see a in 3).

C The tense form of the complement infinitive

a. They found the train to have as many as 15 carriages. (Simple form shows simultaneous action, but for the progressive form *to be having would be impossible, because have here is a state verb, which does not have a progressive form in such a case.)

b. When they go to the station, they found the train to be just leaving. (A progressive form shows simultaneous action with found.)

c. When they got to the station, they found the train to have already left. (A perfect form shows prior action to that of found.)

D Like the finite verb, the non-finite verb can be put into a passive voice, if the meaning so required, as in

a. I don’t like to be fooled by flattery. Cf. I don’t like people to fool me by flattery.

b. Here are three patients to be operated on immediately. Cf. It is necessary (for us) to operate on the patient immediately.

c. It is necessary for the patient to be operated on immediately.

d. Most men die to be forgotten by posterity.

Sometimes we use a progressive infinitive from something happening over a period, as in

You’re lucky to be winning. (You’re winning at the moment.)

I am happy to be working with you. (Showing praise and personal positive colorful feelings)

We are sorry to be leaving very soon. Cf. We are sorry that we are leaving very soon. (A progressive tense indicates something happening in the near future.)

If the subject or the understood subject of the sentence is also the logical object of the non-finite verb, then passive infinitive is used as seen above (e.g. I don’t like to be fooled by flattery). More details are also described of the tenses and voice for the non-finite in each following section.
4 The infinitive used as subject

A Used like a noun

When the infinitive or the infinitive phrase is used as subject, its function is like that of a noun, as in

a. To smoke is harmful to health. (To smoke is used as subject.)
b. To see is to believe. (To see is used as subject.)
c. To know her is to like her. (To know her is used as subject.)
d. To hesitate is a pity/fatal. (To hesitate is used as subject.)
e. To turn down her offer seems rude. (To turn down her offer is used as subject.)
f. Not to go back was a mistake. (Not to go back is used as subject.)
g. For me to go there early is unnecessary. (For me to go there early is used as subject.)
h. It’s good for us to start early today. (For us to start early today is used as a real subject.)
i. It’s silly for anyone to be angry with her. (For anyone to be angry with her is used as subject.)
j. Isn’t it a relief for us to get together at last! (For us to get together at last is used as subject.)

Note that in modern English, we move the real subject and use the anticipatory it (some people call it empty subject or introductory it) to represent the real subject. Thus, we can say “It is a pity/fatal to hesitate.”

More examples:

k. It was good to see you.
l. It is a great pleasure to meet you.
m. It’s a great mistake not to invite her to dinner.
n. It’s necessary to help her. (= To help her is necessary.)
o. It didn’t occur to me to do that sort of thing.

B For + logical subject + to do construction

As examples shown from g to j in A above, we use the construction for + logical subject + to do when the logical subject of the infinitive is not the subject of the sentence (also see 21), as in
a. For us to be invited to attend the conference is a great honor.
   b. =It is a great honor for us to be invited to attend the conference next week.
      Cf. It is a great honor for them to invite us to attend the conference.

In such a case, if the construction, *for + logical subject + to do*, is long, we usually place it after
the empty subject *it* as we can see Sentence b above. For us to be invited to attend the
conference next week is longer than it is a great honor.

C For + there + to be construction

We can also use the *for + there + to be* construction as subject, as in

   a. It is impossible for there ever to be a conflict between our two nations.
      (= It is impossible that there will ever be a conflict between our two nations.)
   b. It’s a pity for there to be any disagreement in the family.
   c. It’s impossible for there to be a happier family.

Also see 17.

D Tense and voice

1. In addition to what is described in 3 above, we can use a passive infinitive. In such a
case, the passive infinitive is tantamount to a noun clause, as in

   To be attacked (=That we are attacked) by them is not a bad thing.

2. When the action in the infinitive happens before that of predicative or predicate, a
   perfect infinitive (active or passive) is used, depending on its implication, as in

   a. To have completed (=That we had completed) all work on time was a triumph to us.
   b. To have been killed (=That she was killed) in a car accident is a great loss to her
      family.

3. A passive voice is used when the logical subject of the infinitive is also the object of the
   infinitive, as in

   a. It is a good idea for John to be allowed to use a calculator for the math test.
      (= It is a good idea for the teacher to allow John to use a calculator for the math
      test.)

In the above sentence, *John* is the logical subject of the infinitive, *to be allowed*, but it is also
the logical object of the infinitive, *to allow John*.

More examples:
b. It might be a bad idea for the beautiful picture to be deleted.
   (= It might be a bad idea for us to delete the beautiful picture.)

4. Progressive and perfect tense

   a. It’s not for me to be talking like that.
   b. It’s great to have written such a wonderful report.
   c. It is a surprise to us for the girl to have completed all math problems in such a short time.
   d. Is it possible for the book to have been translated into Spanish by the end of this year?
      (= Is it possible that we will have translated the book into Spanish by the end of this year?)

5

Linking verbs + adjective + infinitive used as predicative

A John is splendid to wait.

In construction of A, the subject, John, of the linking verb, is, is also the logical subject of the non-finite to wait. In such a case, the empty subject, it, can be used with this construction, of the logical subject to do, as in

   a. John is splendid to wait.
      Cf. It is splendid of him to wait.
   b. Mary is brave to chase the running thief.
      Cf. It is brave of her to chase the running thief.
   c. The boys were clever to solve the math problem so quickly.
      Cf. It was clever of the boys to solve the math problem so quickly.

The adjectives of this kind are: brave, careless, clever, foolish, generous, good (= kind), helpful, honest, intelligent, kind, mean, nice, polite, rude, sensible, silly, stupid, wrong, etc. Also see B in 21.

B He is hard to convince.

In the construction of B, the subject, he, of the linking verb, is, is the object of the infinitive to convince. The adjective is here mainly predicating the information from the infinitive. In this construction, we can use the infinitive as a subject of the sentence or use empty subject it, as in
It is also used with exclamatory sentences, as in

  
  f. How difficult it was to find the house!
  g. Wasn’t it difficult to find the house!

If the adjective has an adverb form with the suffix -ly (i.e. easy – easily), a passive construction is possible since the subject of the main clause is also the logical object of the infinitive, as in

  
  h. She is easily deceived
  Cf. She is easy to deceive

Moreover, since the subject is the logical object of the infinitive, we cannot add another object to the infinitive; therefore, we do not say *He is easy to convenience Lucy. Adjectives of this kind are: amusing, awful, cheap, convenient, dangerous, difficult, easy, expensive, extraordinary, funny, hard, horrible, important, impossible, improper, marvelous, inconvenient, interesting, nasty, nice, pleasant, safe, splendid, strange, unimportant, useful, etc.

If the infinitive is intransitive verb, a preposition should be in its normal place (also see 3. in 12 below), as in

  
  i. Sandy is pleasant to talk to. (Sandy is the logical object of the proposition, to.)
  j. This river is dangerous to bathe in.
  k. Good conversation is interesting to listen to.
  l. This is a very good pen to write with.
  m. She is easy to get along with.
  Cf. It’s easy to get along with her. How easy it is to get along with her!

Adjectives that have antonyms (e.g. easy/difficult) occur in this construction, but this is not always the case. That man is impossible to work with is acceptable, but *That man is possible
to work with is not acceptable (Hornby 1975). However, we can say, it’s possible to work with that man. Let’s consider the following sentences:

n. Our team is impossible to defeat. (= To defeat our team is impossible.)
o. It’s (im)possible to defeat our team.

When our team is used as the logical object of the infinitive to win or to lose, we don’t use them as the subject in such a case. We do not say *Our team is possible to defeat. *To win/lose our team is (im)possible. *It is (im)possible to win/lose our team (R.A. Close 1976). However, we can say: Our team cannot win/lose/be defeated.

In this construction, we can also use the infinitive to postmodify an adjective phrase, as in

p. This is a hard nut to crack. (To crack postmodifying a hard nut)
   Cf. The nut is hard to crack.
q. She’s an impossible woman to live with.
   (To live with modifying an impossible woman)
   Cf. She’s impossible to live with. (Hornby 1975)

C Sandy is anxious to please.

The construction of C has volitional expressions, showing intention or (un)willingness, an emotional state (e.g. fear, sorrow, joy) or mental state (e.g. reluctance, surprise, etc.) or the reverse. The subject of the main verb is usually a person. Please has no logical object, but we can supply an object, e.g. Sandy is anxious to please Casey. In this construction, Sandy is not the logical object of the infinitive to please. We cannot use the infinitive as the subject or empty subject it. We can say: Sandy is anxious to please Casey, but we cannot say: *To please Sandy is anxious. *It’s anxious to please Sandy.

We can use feel, seem, etc., as a linking verb besides the linking verb be, as in

a. I am/feel (rather) prone to agree with you.
b. He is/seems reluctant/loath/disinclined/unwilling/hesitant to talk about the matter.

Here are some examples of adjectives in this construction:

Feeling: amuse, angry, content/contented, cross, desperate, fortunate, furious, glad, grateful, happy, hesitant, honored, horrified, humble, interested, jealous, likely/unlikely, miserable, pleased, proud, sad, sorry, surprised, thankful, thrilled, unhappy, etc.
Willing/unwilling: afraid, anxious, determined, eager, keen, impatient, prepared, ready, reluctant, unwilling, welcome, willing, etc. Personal qualities: mean, clever, sensible, right, silly, lucky, fortune, etc.

Participles of this kind are: ashamed, amazed, amused, annoyed, astonished, cheered, confused, delighted, determined, disappointed, dissatisfied, disinclined, disposed, disturbed, excited, flattered, gratified, grieved, honored, horrified, hurt, inclined, induced, infuriated, insulted, interested, moved, offended, pleased, prepared, provoked, relieved, satisfied, shocked, surprised, thrilled, vexed, worried, wounded, etc.

They can be also premodified by adverbs such as very, rather, quite, etc.

More examples of this construction:

c. He is happy to see her again.
   (= He is happy because/when he sees her again or has seen her. He is also the logical subject of to see her again.)
d. He is sorry to hear it (= He hears it and he is sorry).
e. He must be sorry to hear it (= I assume he’s sorry if he hears it.)
f. I was sorry to hear it (= I heard it and I was sorry.)
g. He is anxious to see you.
h. I’m glad/happy/relieved to know that she’s safe and sound.
i. I am quite prepared to help you.
j. She was rather unhappy to go there.
k. You’re welcome/free to use my computer.
l. The children were impatient to start.

If the subject or time reference is different, we must say e.g. I am sorry that you feel that way or I am sorry I was rude to you. Sometimes we can use a perfect tense in the infinitive, as in

m. I am sorry to have missed him.
   = I am sorry (that) I have missed him, or I am sorry (that) I missed him.

In this construction when the subject of the infinitive is different from the subject of the main verb (the finite verb), we use for + logical subject + to do construction, as in

n. Sandy is anxious for Casey to repair her computers in her lab.
o. I’m quite willing for your boyfriend to come join us for the dinner.

D There are a small number of adjectives expressing speaker’s opinion to make statement or ask questions - an indication of the speaker’s attitude towards the future, not the indication from the subject of the sentence. These adjectives are certain, likely, sure, etc., as in

p. Mr. Marlowe is sure/certain to see Mr. Roser.
(It is the speaker’s attitude rather than Mr. Marlowe, who is sure.)

q. Our team is *(un)likely to win.*

r. We are *sure to need help.*

s. Sandy is *certain to come.*

It is also used in *it + that*–clause construction, as in

t. *It’s certain that Mr. Marlowe will see Mr. Roser.*

u. *It’s certain that Sandy will join us.*

v. *It’s likely/unlikely that our team will win.*

*(Im)probable* is not followed by *to-*infinitive, but it is used with empty subject *it* or *that*-clause, as in

*It’s probable that the weather will be fine.*

It is *(im)probable that he will come today.*

The weather will *probably be fine.*

*The weather is probable to be fine.*

*He is (im)probable to come today.*

**E He is slow to react.**

In the construction of E, the subject of the linking verb, *is*, is also the subject of the infinitive; its function is the same as A. We can convert the adjective adverbially, as in

a. He was *slow to react.*

(= He reacted slowly.)

b. George is *quick to take offence.*

(= George takes offence quickly.)

c. The clothes are *easy to wash.*

(= It is *easy to wash the clothes.*)

d. The clothes *wash easily.* (Quirk, et al 1972)

Adjectives of this kind are *hesitant, quick, reluctant, prompt, slow, willing,* etc.

**F He is furious to hear about it.**

In the construction of F, it has attitudinal expression. The infinitive expresses reason to the rest of the sentence (also see C in 14), as in

a. I was *bored/furious to hear about it.*
(= To hear about it bored me/infuriated me. It bored me/infuriated me to hear about it.)

b. I was indignant to hear about it.
(= It made me bored/furious/indignant to hear about it.)

If an adjective like indignant above has no corresponding verb, we can use make as paraphrase (Quirk 1972). Adjectives of this kind are: angry, content, furious, glad, happy, impatient, indignant, jubilant, etc., and participles of this kind are: annoyed, astonished, bored, concerned, delighted, depressed, disappointed, disgusted, (dis)satisfied, embarrassed, excited, fascinated, overwhelmed, perturbed, puzzled, surprised, worried, etc.

G The construction It was easy to dismantle an iPhone

a. It is rare to see people still using a disk in a computer nowadays.
b. It is difficult to solve that math problem.
c. It felt very strange to be watched by so many people. (Eastwood 2002)

In this construction the anticipatory it or empty subject it represents the real subject – the infinitive phrase – in the sentence. Adjectives used in this construction are: advisable, amusing, awful, bad, better, best, careless, cheap, clever, common, confusing, convenient, dangerous, depressing, dreadful, difficult, easy, embarrassing, essential, exciting, expensive, foolish, generous, good, great, hard, helpful, horrible, important, impossible, incredible, intelligent, interesting, kind, lovely, marvelous, mean, natural, necessary, nice, normal, odd, perfect, pleasant, polite, possible, right, rude, safe, sensible, silly, stupid, terrible, vital, rare, strange, terrific, understandable, usual, wonderful, wrong, etc. Also see K below.

H We often use be to do … for an official arrangement, order or plan, as in

a. Our principal is to observe my teaching on Friday. (arrangement)
b. No one is to leave the building without permission. (order)
c. Ms. R and I are to meet at the airport at eight o’clock tomorrow. (arrangement)
d. How am I to pay my debts? (plan)
e. The new building is to be ten stories high. (plan)
f. The meeting is to be held next week. (plan)

The be is often omitted in headlines, e.g.

The President to Visit Las Vegas
Cf. The President is to visit Las Vegas.

I The constructions too +adjective or adverb + to-infinitive and the construction adjective, adverb or noun + enough + infinitive, as in
1. **Too … to do … construction**

   a. He was **too weak to climb the wall.** (after the adjective, weak)
   b. The river is **too cold to swim in.** (after the adjective, cold)
   c. The problem is **too difficult/impossible to solve.** (after the adjectives difficult/impossible)
   d. The bridge was **too narrow to cross.** (after the adjective, narrow)
   e. I came **too late to prevent him from going there.** (after the adverb, late)
   f. It moves **too quickly for most people to see (it).** (after the adverb, quickly. Quirk, et al 1972)
   g. She is **too nice a girl to refuse.**
   h. The weather in Las Vegas is **too hot for anyone to eat outside.**

Note that the subjects of some sentences above are also the logical objects of the infinitive: **to swim in the river** (in b.), **to solve the problem** (in c.), **to cross the bridge** (in d.), etc. When the logical subject is not the subject of the sentence, **for + logical subject** is used after too …to do construction, as in

   i. The bridge was **too narrow for the truck to cross.** (after the adjective, narrow)

When **too + adjective** is used, the following noun is usually a singular countable noun. It cannot be a noun in a plural form or an uncountable noun. Thus, we do not say:

   j. *They are **too nice girls to refuse.** (Girls is a noun in a plural form.)
   k. *It is **too good food** to throw away. (Food is an uncountable noun. Quirk, et al 1972)

But we can say **It's food (which is) too good to throw away.**

2. **Adjective, adverb or noun + enough + infinitive construction**

   a. The bridge was **not wide enough for the truck to cross.** (after the adjective, wide)
   b. They were driving **fast enough to attract attention.** (Fast is an adverb.)
   c. He was **not strong enough to lift the weight.** (after the adjective, strong)
   d. We have **enough money to last.**
   e. I am **fool enough to believe her.** (Fool is a noun.)
   (*I am a **fool enough to believe her.** Fool is a noun.)
   f. Are you **man enough to do this dangerous job?**
   (*Are you a **man enough to do this …?**)
   g. He was **gentleman enough to help her.**
   (*He was a **gentleman enough to help her.**)
   h. She was **scholar enough to read the inscription.**
   (*She was a scholar enough to read ….**
When *enough* is used to postmodify a countable noun in this construction, the indefinite article, *a* or *an* is not used as seen from the last four sentences (from *e* to *h*) above, but when the infinitive is not used, the indefinite article can be used, therefore, the following sentences are normal, as in

She is a good-tempered *enough girl*. (*Enough* is used to postmodify *a good-tempered*.)
She is a good-tempered girl *enough*. (*Enough* is used to postmodify *a good-tempered girl*.)

**J Voice**

After an adjective phrase in this construction above, the **active voice** in the infinitive is usually used rather than a passive, as in

*a. The table is too heavy to move.*

*b. The chair is not strong enough to sit on.*

When the *by* and the agent are used, a passive is used, as in

*c. The table is too heavy to be moved by a ten-year-old boy.*  
(= The table is too heavy for a ten-year-old boy to move.)

**K It used with verbs such as appear, feel, happen, prove, seem, sound, turn out, etc.**

The verbs above are linking verbs. Their subjects are usually introduced by anticipatory *it* (also see **G** above), as in

*a. It seems* a pity to waste so much money.

*b. It sounds* reasonable to do it this way.

*c. It appears* unlikely for us to win the game

Besides these verbs above, we also have some intransitive verbs such as *suffice*, *do*, and *remain*, etc., the subjects of which are also *it*, as in

*d. It will suffice* to get a few more people.

*e. It won’t *do* for a student to cheat in his test.*

*f. It remains* to choose a partner and to fix the date.

*g. It does* no good to say anything.

*h. It didn’t occur* to me to do that sort of thing.

The infinitive of these verbs above is not used as an object, because these verbs are intransitive verbs. They can be followed by a *that*-clause, e.g.
i. It happened that we met at the bar. (Cf. We happened to meet at the bar.)

j. It seems that her iPhone has been stolen/lost. (Cf. Her iPhone seems to have been stolen/lost.)

And the verbs relating to the expression of mood or feeling are also used this way. They are: 

*amuse, annoy, delight, cost, irk, irritate, make, need, require, take, etc.*, as in

k. *It delighted me to have met* you.

l. *It irritated her to be forced* to do it all over again.

m. *It made Mr. Marlowe excited.* (= It excited Mr. Marlowe) *to have* his greenhouse rebuilt.

n. *It took us* a few hours to complete the experiment in Sandy’s lab.

**L Wh-words followed by infinitive used as predicative**

Sometimes, some of the *wh*-words followed by infinitive can be used as predicative or subject complement (also see A in 6), as in

a. My question is *where to start the project.*

b. The problem is *which to do next.*

c. *Who to turn to* is what Mr. Marlowe wants to know.

Cf. What Mr. Marlowe wants to know is *who to turn to.*

**M The infinitive used in exclamatory sentences introduced by how and what in it +be construction**

The infinitive is used in predicative introduced by *how* and *what* in *it + be* construction, but the *it + be* is usually omitted (Hornby 1976), as in

*How* nice (it is) *to sit* here with you!

*How* much wiser (it would have been) *to reduce* speed!

*What* a pity (it is) *to waste* them!

*What* a pleasant surprise (it was) *to be told* that I’d have been promoted!

*How* hard it was for him *to live* on $300 a month!

*What* a pity it is for them not *to attend the party!*

**6 Infinitive used in predicative**

In addition to what is described in 5, we continue to discuss the use of the infinitive in SVC construction. The subject of the sentence can usually be a noun, a noun phrase, a noun clause, or an infinitive.
A  Nouns used as subject and an infinitive used as predicative

a. The first step is to remove the lid to let the water out. (The first step is a noun phrase. To remove the lid … is used as predicative.)
b. My task today is to help you. (My task today is a noun phrase.)
c. My aim was to help you. (My aim is a noun phrase.)
d. His greatest pleasure is to sit in the casino, playing games. (His greatest pleasure is a noun phrase.)
e. The most important thing is not to waste money. (The most important thing is a noun phrase.)
f. Her plan is to make better use of these medicinal herbs. (Her plan is a noun phrase.)
g. My goal is to complete the work on time.
h. Your mistake was to write her that nasty letter.
i. The point is what to do it.
j. The issue is which one to give the reward to.
k. The question is when to call the principal.

In such a case, the subject usually contains such nouns as aim, ambition, duty, hope, idea, intention, mistake, plan, purpose, suggestions, etc. The wh-words followed by the infinitive are also used as predicative as described from h to k above.

B A noun clause or wh-words (who, what, which, where, when, how, etc.) used as subject and an infinitive used in predicative

Usually an infective used as predicative after the subject introduced by a noun clause consisting of superlative words such as the best, the worst, or all (that), the only, wh-words, etc., as in

a. What I want is to get to the airport as early as possible. (What I want is a noun clause. To get to the airport … is used as predicative or subject complement.)
b. What I really wanted to do was drive all night. (bare infinitive used in predicative)
c. All I did was empty the bottle. (bare infinitive)
d. The worse you can do is become very drowsy. (bare infinitive used in predicative)
e. The best way to do was wait until the result came out. (bare infinitive used in predicative)
f. The only thing I can do now is go on by myself. (bare infinitive used in predicative)
g. What worries us most is where to find the man.

Also see for the omission of the infinitive sign, to, in 29
C Infinitive

a. To see is to believe. (To believe is used as predicative – SVC.)
b. To decide is to act. (To act is used as predicative – SVC.)
c. To be kind to the enemy is to be cruel to the people. (To be cruel to the people is used a predicative – SVC.)

Besides the linking verb be, we use the verbs such as appear, seem, happen, as in

d. He seemed not to pay much attention to what I was saying. (SVC)
e. He seemed (to be) unable to get out of the habit. (SVC)
f. I can’t seem to solve this math problem.
   (Cf. I seem (to be) unable to solve the math problem.)
g. He couldn’t seem to get out of the habit.
   (Cf. He seemed (to be) unable to get out of the habit.
      Note: When can’t or couldn’t is used with seem above, it negates the infinitive.
   h. This appears (to be) an important matter.
i. He appears to have many friends.
j. She happened to be out when I called her.
k. She happened to be killed by shark.

7
Tense and voice in predicative

Generally speaking, the tense is usually a simple tense – subject + is/was + to do, and active voice is used, too, as in

a. My task is to help you today.
b. What I wanted was to finish the work as quickly as possible.

1. Passive

Sometimes we use passive in predicative when the subject of the sentence is also the logical object of the infinitive, as in

a. He is nowhere to be seen/to be found.
   Cf. He’s nowhere for us to see/find him.
b. What she feared most was to be found out.
   Cf. She feared that people would find her out. (She may have done something dishonest.)
c. All she wanted was to be left alone.
   Cf. She wanted people to leave her alone.
When we use for + logical subject + to do construction, a passive is used as described above because the logical subject is actually the logical object of the infinitive.

More examples:

\[ d. \] Their suggestion was for the plan to be discussed by all the students.
Cf. Their suggestion was that the plan should be discussed by all the students.
\[ e. \] One of the decisions taken at the meeting was for Spanish to be taught in all schools.

Note that the sentences below from \( f \) to \( i \) are used in active voice, but they have passive meaning, as in

\[ f. \] The house is to let (= to be let) on temporary basis.
\[ g. \] I am not to blame. (= I am not at fault; the fault does not lie with me)
\[ h. \] I don’t know if Sandy is to blame.
\[ i. \] A lot remains to do.
\[ j. \] I am to be blamed for my negligence. (= I am going to be blamed.)

2. Progressive

\[ a. \] All she wants is to be working with you now.
\[ b. \] His wish is to be living in Las Vegas.
\[ c. \] All I want is for someone to be thinking about me.
\[ d. \] I am pleased to be working with you.

The progressive is used in the infinitive above to imply the emphasis of personal colorful feelings/attitude toward the statement of discourse. Also see C in 9.

3. Perfect

\[ a. \] John was to have come back yesterday, but he was sick.
\( (\text{To have come back yesterday} \) has the meaning of subjunctive mood in the construction of was/were to have done.\)
\[ b. \] His achievement is to have produced a new method of calculation.
Cf. His achievement is that he has produced a new method of calculation.
\[ c. \] The socialists seem to have been elected.
Cf. It seems that the socialists have been elected.

Sometimes the perfect infinitive is also used to postmodify a noun or noun phrase, which corresponds somewhat to a relative clause, as in

\[ d. \] Mr. Marlowe was the last to have entered the greenhouse before it caught fire.
(= Mr. Marlowe was the last who had entered/entered the greenhouse before it caught fire.)

8

The infinitive used as object

He began to work early in the morning every day. (SVO)

This is SVO construction – subject (He)+ verb (began) + object (to work …). In such a construction, the subject of the sentence is also the logical subject of the infinitive. The following verbs usually take an infinitive used as object: afford, agree, aim, apply, ask, can’t wait, choose, claim, dare, decide, demand, desire, determine, endeavor, expect, come on (begin), guarantee, hope, learn, long, manage, mean (intend), offer, pretend, promise, refuse, seek, swear, threaten, train, undertake, want, wish, etc., e.g.

a. I agreed to use a school computer to do my assignment. (SVO)
   (The logical subject of the infinitive to use is I.)
b. I expected to meet Ms. Roden. (SVO)
c. She means to do better. (SVO)
d. He wants to pay a visit to his friend in Las Vegas. (SVO)
e. She likes to get up early. (SVO)
f. What did Mr. R say she wanted to do? (SVO)
g. She pretended not to see me while she was walking by. (SVO)

We can also use the following verbs in SVOC construction: advise, allow, ask, beg, beseech, bribe, cause, challenge, command, compel, dare (=challenge), direct, drive (= compel), empower, enable, encourage, entice, entitle, entreat, expect, forbid, force, help, impel, implore, incite, induce, instruct, intend, invite, know, lead, mean (= intend), oblige, order, permit, persuade, predispose, press (= urge), recommend, remind, request, require, teach, tell, tempt, urge, warn, etc., in SVOC construction, as in

h. I expected Mr. Roser to meet you. (SVOC)
i. She told me not to go there alone. (SVOC)

Sometimes the infinitive is used as object and its function is tantamount to an object clause, as in

j. I hope to be able to attend the meeting.
   Cf. I hope that I will be able/I am able to attend the meeting.
k. I expect to have finished writing this chapter by next Friday.
   Cf. I expect that I will have finished writing this chapter by next Friday.
l. He considers her to be very trustworthy.
   Cf. He considers that she is very trustworthy.
m. I think it strange for her to meet him.
   Cf. I think it strange that she’d/will meet him.

Also see The infinitive used as part of complex object or SVOC in 16 about “I think it a good idea to go there”, where it represents the real object to go there (see SVOC in 18).

9
Tense and voice in the infinitive used as object

In SVO construction, when the infinitive is used as object, the finite verb is usually not converted into passive. Therefore, the following is incorrect:

  a. She likes to get up early.
  b. *To get up early is liked by her.

It is not easy for us to convert an object from SVO or SVOC into a passive voice. However, we can have a few verbs to convert them into passive when we use the empty subject it as subject of the passive sentence. These verbs are decided, desired, hope, intend, plan, propose, suggest, etc., as in

  c. It was proposed to hold another meeting for that student.
  d. It has been decided to enroll more students for our school next year.

A When the subject of the sentence is not the logical subject of the infinitive, but the logical object of the infinitive, a passive voice is used

  e. He asked to be sent to Iraq.
     Cf. He asked us to send him to Iraq.
  f. She doesn’t like to be criticized for nothing.
     Cf. She doesn’t like them to criticize her for nothing.
  g. The president stood up to be seen better.
     Cf. The president stood up so that other people could see him better.

B A perfect (progressive) infinitive is used when we express the action in the infinitive happens before the predicate (active or passive) or predicative (active or passive)

  a. Sandy may claim to have done 10 experiments in the past year.
     Cf. Sandy may claim that she has done 10 experiments in the past year.
  b. The girl pretended to have been the victim of the threats.
     Cf. The girl pretended that she had been/was the victim of the threats.
c. He is believed to have been working hard in the past few weeks.
   Cf. It is believed that she has been working hard in the past few weeks.
   We believe that she has been working hard in the past few weeks.

d. We considered him to have been foolish.

e. She wished to have been working hard in the school with friends.

f. They should like to have been invited, but the principal ignored them.

g. How would you like to have been being scolded all day? (rarely used)

1. A perfect infinitive (of some verbs) is used to predict that the action in the infinitive will be completed by a certain time in the (near) future, as in

   a. We hope to have completed the project by next Friday
   Cf. We hope that we will have completed the project by next Friday
   b. She expects to have finished the repair by the day after tomorrow.
   Cf. She expects that she will have finished the repair by the day after tomorrow.
   c. We expect to have been admitted into the organization by the end of this year.
   d. By the beginning of next month, I hope to have seen her.
   e. I rejoice to have finished it so soon.

2. A perfect infinitive (of some verbs) is used to indicate something that is unfulfilled, not realized, or not carried out. These verbs are usually in reference to wish or intention. They are: expect, hope, intend, mean, suppose, want, wish, and should like, was/were to have done, etc., as in

   a. I should like to have called you the other day, but I forgot.
   b. She intended to have told me about what had happened to her last week.
   c. Mr. Marlowe expected to have reached the top of the mountain by noon, but the bad weather stopped him.
   d. I meant to have told you what was going on last night, but I decided not to.
   e. I thought it wrong to have helped her. (the hypothetical)
   f. I wanted to have seen you ever so much, but I did not like to bother you.
   g. I expected the door to have opened, but it did not. It remained shut.
   h. We were to have been married in Las Vegas last year, but we didn’t get married.
   i. He was to have repaired the computer yesterday, but he didn’t.

Generally speaking, the above examples have the meaning of subjunctive mood. Moreover, we can use a perfect tense in the main clause rather than the perfect infinitive, with no practical difference in meaning, as in

   j. She had intended to tell me about what had happened to her last week.
   Cf. She intended to have told me about what had happened to her last week.
k. Mr. Marlowe had expected to reach the top of the mountain by noon, but the bad weather stopped him.  
   Cf. Mr. Marlowe expected to have reached the top of the mountain by noon, but ….  

Note that “Mr. Marlowe had expected to have reached the top of the mountain by noon, but the bad weather stopped him” is also acceptable, but we have a definitely redundant sentence.

When the verb hope is used in the past perfect tense, it indicates the past hope was not realized, as in

   We had hoped that she would soon be well again. (Hornby 1975)

C Progressive used in the infinitive

A progressive is used (in SVO and SVOC) to express or emphasize a certain action that was happening then, is happening now, or will happen in the (near) future (also see 2. In 7), as in

   a. He is believed to be coming.  
      Cf. It is believed that he is coming.  
      We believe that he is coming.
   b. He seems to be enjoying himself.  
      Cf. It seems (that) he is enjoying himself.
   c. I am glad to be meeting you.  
      Cf. I am glad that I am meeting you now.
   d. I would like to be having lunch at home now.  
   e. You don’t need to be working in a great hurry now; we have plenty of time.  
   f. They didn’t expect the boys to be sitting quietly in the classroom.  
      (The boys were sitting quietly in the classroom.)  
   g. I believe you to be sending your email to your boss.  
      Cf. You are sending your email to your boss now.
   h. I don’t want you to be working so hard like this. (You are working so hard now.)  
   i. I felt myself to be missing something.  
   j. They are said to be working diligently. They are working diligently.  
      Cf. It’s said that they are working diligently.
   k. He is supposed to be looking for something he wants to use.  
      Cf. He is looking for something he wants to use.
D Passive

The infinitive postmodifier can be passive when the postmodified noun or noun phrase is also the logical object of the infinitive. In such a case, the passive used can express tense and mood - something that will/can/must/should happen or happens, as in

a. The case to be investigated next week is of great importance to the government.
   Cf. The case that will be invited or is to be investigated next week ....

b. The animal to be found in China is dangerous.
   Cf. The animal which/that can be or is found in China is dangerous.

c. The case to be investigated is rather delicate.
   Cf. The case which/that will be investigated is rather delicate.

d. This will be the procedure to be followed.
   Cf. This will be the procedure that should be followed.

e. Here is a telegram to be sent.
   Cf. Here is the telegram that should be sent.

f. The rules to be followed by students are essential to the school safety.
   Cf. The rules that/which must or should or will be followed by students ....

g. This scholar, to be seen daily in the library, has devoted his life to the history of Nevada.
   Cf. This scholar, who can be seen ... , has devoted ....

If a verb, especially an intransitive verb, is used as a non-finite attributive, its infinitive may sometimes correspond to its present participle. Thus:

h. I’ll do my best in the months to come
   Cf. I’ll do my best in the coming months.

i. The last woman to arrive at the station was Sandy.
   Cf. The last woman arriving at the station was Sandy

Attention should be paid to the fact that when the indirect object (a person) is also the logical subject of the infinitive and the direct object (a thing) is also the logical object of the infinitive, an active voice is usually used, as in

j. Would you please lend me a book to read? (NOT to be read)

Because the action of to read is me, and me is the logical subject of the infinitive, to read, although a book is the logical object of to read, therefore, an active voice is usually used in the infinitive clause, especially for these verbs: buy, get, lend, etc. More examples:

k. She bought her daughter a Laptop to use during the conference. (NOT to be used)
l. Please get me a cup of water to drink. (NOT to be drunk)

10
Wh-words + to do and there + be constructions

The infinitive preceded by wh-words can be used as an object. These wh-words are: who, whom, which, what, where, when, how, whether (but not if or why) to form a noun phrase. The following verbs can be used with wh-words. They are: advise, ask, choose, consider, decide, discover, discuss, explain, find out, forget, guess, hear, imagine, inquire, know, learn, observe, perceive, remember, see, settle, show, teach, tell, think (= consider), understand, wonder (= to be curious to know), etc. The phrase is virtually a construction of an indirect question. The logical subject of the infinitive is also the subject of the sentences, as in

a. I don’t know what to say/where to go/who or whom to ask/when to stop/how to pay.
   Cf. I don’t know what I should say/where I should go/who(m) I should ask/when I should stop and how I should pay.

b. We haven’t decided when to hold the meeting
   Cf. We haven’t decided when we will/should hold the meeting.

c. I don’t know where to meet her.
   Cf. I don’t know where I’ll meet her.

d. We must discuss whether to follow his suggestion or not.
   Cf. We must discuss whether we should follow his suggestion or not.

e. *I don’t know why to go there. (We don’t use why in such a case.)

f. Remember when to turn in the assignment.

g. She learned (how) to use the software. (How is optional.)

h. Mr. Roser taught me (how) to solve the math problem.

When subject + verb + indirect object + direct object (SVO, O_d) is used, the logical subject of the infinitive is also the object of the main verb. Here the direct object is formed by wh-words to do construction, as in

i. Please advise me which to buy. (SVOiOd, me is the indirect object, which is also the logical subject of to buy, and which to buy the direct object.)
   Cf. Please advise me which one I’ll buy.

j. Tell her what to do next. (SVO, O_d)
   Cf. Tell her what she will do next.

k. Show me how to solve the math problem.
   Cf. Show me how I’ll/can solve the math problem.

l. Please show me how to do it
Cf. Show me how I will/should do it.

m. Can you tell me which way to go?
   Cf. Can you tell me where I should go?

In the last two sentences above, me is the object of the main verb, show and tell, respectively, but the logical subject of the following infinitives is also me. After what, which, whose, how many, and how much, a noun or noun phrase can be followed, as in

   a. Sandy did not know which way to go.
      Cf. Sandy did not know which way she should go.
   b. She was not sure how much water to add.
      Cf. She was not sure how much water she should add.
   c. I don’t know what size to buy.
   d. John did not know whose name to write.

1. The wh-words + the infinitive construction can also be used as object after a preposition, as in

   e. I was worried about what to tell her.
      (What to tell her is used as object of the proposition about.)
   f. There’s the problem of how much money to take.
      (How much … is used as object of the proposition of.)
   g. I have no idea about what to do next.

2. There to be construction used as the object (also see 17), as in

   a. The rule permits there to be no more than hundred people in the conference room.
   b. We understood there to be money available.
   c. You wouldn’t want there to be another war.
   d. I don’t want there to be any trouble.
   e. He meant there to be no indiscipline.
   f. Would you like there to be another meeting to reevaluate that project?
   g. I expect there to be no argument about the matter.
   h. I should prefer there to be another meeting for this issue.
   i. We’d prefer there to be at least three adults in charge on the field trip.

11

The infinitive used as object of a preposition
Suffice it to say that only the gerund or a noun should be used as the object of a preposition, that is, a gerund can be used as an object of a preposition, but a few prepositions can be followed by an infinitive or a bare infinitive. These prepositions are: except, but, than, rather than, about, save, besides, etc., as in

\begin{itemize}
\item[a.] He was \textit{about to die} (= near death).
\quad (To die is used as the object of the preposition, \textit{about}.)
\item[b.] They desired nothing \textit{except to succeed}.
\quad (To succeed is used as the object of the preposition, \textit{except}.)
\item[c.] They desired nothing \textit{but to succeed}.
\quad (To succeed is used as the object of the preposition, \textit{but}).
\item[d.] He seldom came \textit{except to look at my pictures}.
\item[e.] He did nothing else \textit{than laugh}. (Laugh is used as an object of the preposition, \textit{than}.)
\item[f.] You’ve done nothing \textit{but grumble all morning}.
\item[g.] As for the housework, I do everything \textit{except cook}.
\item[h.] He did nothing \textit{but (=except) laugh} (bare infinitive used after preposition, \textit{but})
\item[i.] I decided to write \textit{rather than telephone}.
\item[j.] \textit{Sooner than travel by air}, I’d prefer a week on a big liner. (Quirk, et al 1972)
\item[k.] \textit{Rather than cause trouble}, I’m going to forget the whole affair.
\item[l.] What \textit{had she done} for her father \textit{save leave} him at the first opportunity?
\item[m.] I hardly remember what I \textit{did besides read}.
\item[n.] That afternoon I had nothing to \textit{do besides answer letters}.
\item[o.] What \textit{has he done besides read} the paper?
\end{itemize}

Also see Bare infinitives used after some prepositions in 30.

\section*{12}
The infinitive used as attributive (postmodifier or premodifier)

\subsection*{A Postmodifier}

A postmodifier is a modifier that follows the noun or the noun phrase. The infinitive used as postmodifier is also (in most of the cases) comparable with a relative clause in function, but the infinitive does not show time reference except, perhaps, in the case of the passive infinitive, which nearly always has a future reference.

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] The infinitive phrase corresponding to a relative clause is usually preceded by the adjectives such as \textit{next} and \textit{last}, an ordinal number, a noun, or a superlative, e.g.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[a.] \textit{The next ship to arrive} was the Elizabeth.
\end{itemize}
Cf. The next ship which arrived was the Elizabeth.

b. Mr. Roser was always the first to come but the last to leave.
   Cf. Mr. Roser was always the first who came but the last who left.

c. An expert will be the best man to consult.
   Cf. An expert will be the best man you should consult.

d. He is not a man to bow before difficulties.
   Cf. He is not a man who bows before difficulties.

e. We need someone to help us repair the machine.
   Cf. We need someone who can help us repair the machine.

2. Sometimes, the infinitive may correspond to an elliptical relative clause in which a subject of indefinite reference has been omitted, e.g.

   a. The time to arrive is 8 p.m.
      Cf. The time when (= at which) we should arrive is 8 p.m.

   b. The place to go is Las Vegas.
      Cf. The place where you should go is Las Vegas.

   c. A good place to visit is Las Vegas.
      Cf. A good place that/which we will/should visit is Las Vegas.

3. When a noun or a noun phrase is the logical object of the preposition, the preposition comes in its normal place, e.g.

   a. There’s nothing to get excited about. (Nothing is the logical object of about.)

   b. I have nothing really to complain about. (Nothing is the logical object of about.)

   c. She has five children to look after. (Five children is the logical object of after.)

   d. Ms. R is looking for a room to live in. (A room is the logical object of in.)
      Cf. Ms. R is looking for a room where she can live.

   e. He gave me a quarter to call you with.
      Cf. He gave me a quarter with which I can call you.

   f. I’m looking for something to clean the carpet with.
      Cf. I’m looking for something with which I can clean the carpet.

   g. I use a pen to write with.

   h. I’ve bought this chair to sit in.
      Cf. I’ve bought this chair where/in which I can sit.

   i. He is not a man to trifle with.

   j. She has given me much to think about.

   But in formal English, we usually use an infinitive clause with a preposition in front, as in

   k. I need a can to put some paint in.
Cf. I need a can in which to put some paint.

l. Ms. R is looking for a room to live in
   Cf. Ms. R is looking for a room in which to live or where she can live.
m. He gave me a quarter to call you with.
   Cf. He gave me a quarter with which to call you.
n. Ms. Roden had no time left in which to pack her things.
o. It was a bad season in which to have outings.
p. After the harvest, the farmers select their best produce with which to pay their tax to the state.

When the noun is in reference to time, place, way, etc., the preposition can be omitted, as in

q. He is looking for a place to live. (in being omitted after live, especially in AmE)
   Cf. He is looking for a place where he can live.
   He is looking for a place to live in.
r. Some people say the best way to travel is on foot.
   Cf. Some people say the best way they can travel is on foot.)

4. When the infinitive is used as postmodifier, most of what is postmodified is a noun or a noun phrase, which is usually in reference to the content of the infinitive. In such a case, the noun is corresponding to a verb or adjective, as in

a. She expressed her wish to visit Las Vegas.
   (Wish is a noun. To visit Las Vegas is used to postmodify the noun phrase, her wish.)
   Cf. She wished to visit Las Vegas.
b. His refusal to help was disappointing.
   Cf. He refused to help, and this disappointed us.
c. He made a promise not to do that again.
   Cf. He promised not to do that again.
d. Her anxiety to go was obvious.
   Cf. She was obviously anxious to go.
e. He was filled with ambition to become famous.
   Cf. He was very ambitious to become famous.
f. She was dying with curiosity to know where we had been.
   Cf. She was curious to know where we had been.

For the above construction, we usually have the following words such as: ability, agreement, anxiety, aptitude, attempt, ambition, campaign, chance, claim, courage, curiosity, decision, desire, determination, eagerness, efforts, evidence, failure, fight, hope, impatience, intention, means, measures, movement, need, patience, plan, power, promise, opportunity, position,
refusal, reluctance, reason, resolution, right, skill, strength, struggle, tendency, threat, willingness, wish, etc.

B Premodifier

Generally speaking, an infinitive with to or bare infinitive cannot be used as premodifier, therefore, we do not say *a to visit boy, which does not make any sense. However, an infinitive with to or bare infinitive can be used as premodifier when a negative word such as not and never is used along with passive voice in the infinitive, sometimes used with a hyphen, as in

- this never-to-be forgotten day
- her not-to-be deprived rights
- not-to-be-tolerated cruelties
- a not to be handled iPhone
- do-or-die policy (bare infinitive)

Instead of a negative word used with passive voice used in it, sometimes we use other words, a noun, an adverb, an adjective, or a bare infinitive, etc. Such combination, a hyphen usually used, is regarded as an adjective or noun phrase. Some of them already become idiomatic expressions, as in

- the about-to-be-released prisoner
- those least-to-be-forgotten events
- the much-to-be-longed-for place
- a give-and-take policy
- a take-it-or-leave-it attitude
- a couldn’t-care-less philosophy
- soon-to-be-united country
- an easy-to-use reference book
- a difficult-to-solve math problem
- a well-to-do family
- wait-to-see attitude
- hit-and-run war
- hit-or-miss reading
- do-or-die policy
- take-home pay
- go-to-meeting costumes
- pay-as-you-earn system

His speeches were always full of pat-you-on-the-back optimism.
The mom-to-be was screaming in the passenger seat when Jean-Louis stopped his car. --- https://www.yahoo.com/news/florida-deputy-pulled-over-driver-131659207.html

13
The infinitive used as appositive

The infinitive with to (some people called it the infinitive clause) is used as apposition to the noun or noun phrase and gives the further explanation of the meaning of the noun or noun phrase. In such a case, a hyphen, or sometimes comma, is used for the non-restrictive infinitive clause, as in

a. Our task, to raise $1000.00 by selling T-shirts, was accomplished by yesterday.
b. This last appeal, to come and visit him, was never delivered. (Quirk, et al 1972)
c. Soon came the order to start the general attack.
d. We got the instruction to leave the city immediately.
e. He came to visit Las Vegas for the same reason, to win money from casinos.

This is not always the same case, sometimes we have restrictive apposition and the appositive would correspond to the finite clause introduced by a that-clause, as in

f. The appeal to join the movement was well received.
   Cf. The appeal that we should join the movement was well received.

Besides, the infinitive clause is used after a word (usually a pronoun or numeral), as in

g. We also had quite a number of visitors, some to see us off, some to fetch things, and some to do both. (Each infinitive clause is preceded with some.)
h. She has written two articles for the journal, one to be published in this issue, the other to come out in the next.

14
The Infinitive used as adverbial

An adverbial of purpose and result is usually indistinguishable, so they are treated together. An adverbial of purpose can, however, usually be expanded into in order to or so as to phrase.
A Purpose

a. He came to see the performance. (purpose)
b. To get a good seat, you’d like to arrive early. (purpose)
d. If everyone is to hear you, you must speak up. ((If ...is/are to do ... can express purpose.)
e. We ran forward (in order) to welcome the guests. (purpose)
f. In order to accomplish this project, they worked very hard day and night. (purpose)
g. The door was wide open to admit fresh air. (purpose)
h. The little boy ran off so as not to be caught. (purpose, Hornby 1997)
i. They stopped to have a rest. (purpose)
j. Ms. Roden was in a great hurry in order not to be late for the party.
k. You must do what the doctor tells you so as to get well quickly.
l. I shall go on working late today so as to be free tomorrow. (purpose and result)
m. I turned down the radio so as not to disturb you.
   Cf. I turned down the radio so that I did not disturb you.

h. He came early every morning in order to complete his work before class began. (purpose)

The infinitive can be used to express purpose or result. In order to avoid ambiguity, in order to or so as to is used when the infinitive expresses purpose. For example, he came into the room in order to disturb me. Without using “in order to”, the meaning of the sentence is confusing. When we say, “He came into the room to disturb me”, the sentence can express either purpose or result.

It is noted that when the infinitive is used to express purpose, the whole infinitive clause can be transposed or moved to the initial position (like b. and f. above) for the purpose of emphasis, although sometimes rather unnaturally:

o. I caught the train to go to New York. (purpose)
   To go to New York, I caught the train. (purpose)
p. I ran to catch the train. (purpose)
   To catch the train, I ran. (purpose)
q. To get a good seat, you’d like to arrive early. (purpose)
r. In order to catch the plane, we got up early. (purpose)
   Cf. We got up early so that we could catch the plane. (introduced by a that-clause)

So as (to) cannot be placed before the main clause, we do not say,

p. *So as not to be caught, the little boy ran off.
q. *So as to catch the bus, the man ran as fast as he could.
Moreover, the logical subject of the infinitive is usually the subject of the main clause. *I caught the train to go to New York* in which the logical subject of *to go to New York* is the subject, *I*. In order to avoid ambiguity in meaning, *for + logical subject + to do* construction is used, as in

r. I stopped *for him to speak to me*. (He spoke to me.)

Cf. I stopped *to speak to him*. (I spoke to him.)
s. The teacher opened the door *for children to come in*.
t. Textbooks are made *for students to learn from*.
u. *For us to start early*, the landlord will have to open the gate at 2:00 am.
v. *For a machine to run fast*, he adjusted the speed.

In informal English, we use *and* rather than *to* in the cases of *come/go to do* construction, the *and* functions as purpose, too. Also see E in 29.

w. Go *and get some* water for me. (= Go *to get some* ….)
x. “Come *and see me* when you come back,” he said.
y. Come *dance* with us! (*and* is omitted, especially in AmE.)

When the *go* or *come* is in past tense, the verb after *and* does not express purpose, but expresses result, e.g. *We went and met him at the airport*.

**B Result**

When the infinitive is used to express result, the infinitive clause is usually placed after the main clause. Besides the infinitive itself, we usually have *so (…) as to…, such (…) as to …, enough to …, too …to…, and (only) to* constructions used to express result, as in

a. I ran all the way *to find that he had gone*. (F.R. Palmer 1978)
b. Ms. R went abroad *never to return*. (The infinitive expresses result.)
c. He must be deaf *not to hear that*. (result)
d. That night there was a storm and I woke *to hear the rain lashing the window panes*.
   e. He lived *to be ninety*. (result)
f. The miserable old days have gone *never to return*. (result)
g. She grew up *to be a pretty young lady*. (result)
i. The peasants worked hard *(so as) to live*. (result)
j. I shall go on working late today *so as to be free tomorrow*. (purpose and result)
k. Would you be so kind *as to lend* me your pen? (result)
l. Her unknown illness is *such as to* cause great anxiety.
m. I was *such a fool as to believe* what she told me.
n. He is old *enough to know* how to handle the issue. (Also see I in 5.)
o. The wood is strong *enough to carry* the weight.
p. He is too young to know anything.
q. It was too late for us to attend the meeting. (Also see I in 5.)

When we express “an unhappy thing” after the main verb, (only) to do is used. Again see the following examples:

r. She woke early (only) to find it was raining.
s. She hurried back only to find her mother dying in a hospital.
t. He got to the airport only to be told the airplane had taken off.
u. I ran all the way to find that she had gone. (result)
v. He went home to find his friend Ms. R waiting for him. (result)
w. He went home (only) to find his iPhone stolen. (result)
x. The drunken man awoke to find himself in a ditch.

Therefore, “iPhone stolen” is bad news, and so is only to find her mother dying in a hospital, etc. It is noted that in too…to… construction, it has negative meaning for the infinitive, e.g. The rock is too heavy for me to lift, which means the rock is very heavy and I am unable to lift it. This is not always the case. The too … to … construction can be also used without negating the infinitive, as in

x. I will be only too pleased to get home.
   (= I will be very pleased to get home.)
y. It’s too kind of you to have told me that news.
   (= You are very kind to have told me that news.)

C Reason/cause

When the infinitive is used to express reason or cause, it looks the same as the expression of purpose. It depends on their implication or meaning from context. For example, She wept to hear the news (to hear the news expressing reason) and She wept to obtain sympathy (to obtain sympathy expressing purpose), as in

a. I am sorry to have kept you waiting. (reason)
b. She was a fool not to listen to me at that time. (reason)
   Cf. She was a fool because she didn’t listen to me at that time.
c. The girl wept for joy to hear that her brother was still alive. (reason)
d. I rejoiced to learn that my daughter was admitted into the university. (reason)
e. She looked happy to hear the news. (reason)
   Cf. She looked happy because she heard the news.
Besides, *with/without + noun + infinitive phrase* can be used to express reason, as in,

\[ g. \text{With only five minutes to go, they were in a great hurry to complete the work.} \]
\[ h. \text{With nobody to help the boy, he finished the work late.} \]
\[ i. \text{Without anyone to call her, she might be late for the performance.} \]

**D The infinitive to used after some conjunctions (i.e. as if, as though, etc.)**

The infinitive is used adverbially after *as if, as though, etc.*, to express something true or untrue and may have the meaning of subjunctive mood, as in

\[ a. \text{She opened her lips as though to speak.} \]
\[ b. \text{He stood up as if to leave immediately.} \]

**F Condition**

Sometimes the infinitive can be used to express condition. In such a case, the infinitive is placed before the main clause, as in

\[ \text{To hear him speak, you would think he owned the whole world.} \]
\[ (= \text{If you should hear him speak, you would think he owned the whole world.}) \]

**15**

**The logical subject of the infinitive**

The logical subject of the infinitive is usually the subject of the sentence. For example, *I caught the train to go to New York*, in which the logical subject of *to go New York* is *I*, but sometimes the logical subject of the following infinitive is not the subject of the main clause, instead, *for + logical subject + to do* is used to express purpose to avoid confusion, as in

\[ a. \text{For plants to grow properly, Mr. Marlowe always waters them regularly.} \]
\[ b. \text{Here’s the book for you to read.} \]
\[ c. \text{It was a bad day for you to call her.} \]

In order for us to avoid confusion with the uses of the infinitive, *so as or in order* is used before the infinitive. Note the differences between the following sentences:

\[ d. \text{Some people refuse/hesitate to say what they think. (SVO)} \]
\[ e. \text{Some people hesitate so as (= in order) to choose the right word. (SVA)} \]

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f. He left us, *so as (= in order) to* pay the bill. (He paid it) (SVA)
g. He left us *to pay* the bill. (We had to pay it)  (SVOC)

Sometimes it is really hard to distinguish the difference between the purpose and the result, both introduced by an infinitive clause. Again, to avoid ambiguity, we can use *in order to* or *so as to do* for the expression of purpose.

16
The infinitive used as part of complex object or SVOC

The noun or noun phrase postmodified by the infinitive (or the adjective infinitive) is usually a **logical object** of the infinitive or the receiver of the action. In such a case, the infinitive clause is tantamount to a relative clause.

For example:

a. We have no time *to lose.*
   Cf. We have no time *(that) we’ll lose.*

b. I have *something to say*
   Cf. I have/There is *something that I need to say.* *Something* is the receiver of the action *to say* or the logical object the infinitive, *to say.*

c. I’ll get *a book to read* during the vacation.
   Cf. I’ll get a book *(that)* *(I can read)* during the vacation. *(Book* is the receiver of the action *read* or the logical object of the infinitive, *to read.*)

d. Are there *any more letters to mail* today?  (*… letters that we’ll mail today?*)
   *(Letters* is the receiver of the action *to mail* or logical object of the infinitive, *to mail.*)

e. I’d like/like the paper *(to be) copied, please.*

f. She would prefer/prefers the lights *(to be) turned off*

g. Sandy wanted the carpet *(to be) cleaned.*

In the last three sentences above, *to be,* can be omitted when they are used in a passive voice. In such a case, the past participles are still used as complement after the omission of *to be.*

A Using anticipatory *it* to represent the infinitive

In SVOC construction, we use *it* as anticipatory *it* (or empty *it*) to represent the infinitive which is used as the object of the verb, as in

1. We think *it* our duty *to study and work hard for our country.*
(The infinitive phrase, to study and work hard for our country, is the real object of the verb, think, and our duty is a noun phrase used as the complement. It is SVOC.)
2. I count it one of the sweetest privileges of my life to have known and conversed with many men of genius.
   (The perfect infinitive phrase, to have known and conversed with many men of genius, is a real object of the verb, count, and the noun phrase, one of the sweetest privileges of my life, is used as the complement. (It is SVOC.))
3. Do you think it proper to treat her so badly?
4. I think it prudent to wait and see.
5. We count it an honor to serve you. (An honor is a noun used as complement. It is SVOC.)
6. I should consider it unwise to swop horses in mid-stream.
7. Do you consider it proper to treat him so badly?
8. She deemed it her duty to help her younger brother.
9. I find it difficult to explain the matter to her.
10. I’ll make it my business to help her.
11. I count it a great honor to serve the people wholeheartedly.
12. We don’t think fit to adopt his suggestion.
13. You know the situation best. Do whatever you see fit.
14. I consider it a favor for you to call on me on that account.
15. It is considered unwise to cheat in a test. (Also see passive in D below)

Note that Think fit and see fit (to do something) are fixed phrases, in which the anticipatory it is always omitted before fit as seen in Sentences 12 and 13 above.

B Infinitive used in some verbs made of a preposition or prepositional phrase

We can use the anticipatory it to represent the infinitive used as object in some phrasal verbs made of preposition or prepositional phrase. They are: take … in turn, have … in mind, leave … to, owe … to, take … upon oneself, etc., as in

a. They took it in turn to keep an eye on these disruptive kids.
   (It represents to keep an eye on these disruptive kids.)
b. How can you take it upon yourself to say so?
c. I owe it to you to explain that I did that on your account.
d. I must leave it to your own judgment to decide whether you’d marry her.

C Infinitive used after some phrase verbs
We treat some phrasal verbs as if they are transitive verbs. We can use an infinitive after them as object. These phrasal verbs are: arrange for, ask for, beckon to, call on, call upon, care for, count on, depend on, depend upon, long for, motion to, prepare for, provide for, prevail on, rely on, vote for, wait for, wave to, and wish for, etc., as in

a. The president called on us to have background checks when we purchase guns.
b. How I longed for her to come back!
c. We were waiting for them to come back.
d. You cannot rely on her to assist you.
e. Shall we ask for Mr. Roser to come, too?
f. I asked for that to be done at once.
g. I’d like for you to help me. (AmE)

D Converting the sentence into passive with the subject it

We can convert the sentence into passive with the anticipatory it, as in

a. It is considered unwise to swap horses in mid-stream
   Cf. I should consider it unwise to swap horses in mid-stream.
b. It is made possible for lost time to be recovered.
   Cf. We make it possible for lost time to be recovered.)
c. It might be thought reasonable to start the class at 8:00 a.m.
   Cf. We think it reasonable to start the class at 8:00 a.m.)

17
Have and there + be constructions
We often use have or there + be followed by an infinitive, as in

a. She has three children to look after. (Three children is the logical object of the
   infinitive to look after.)
b. He has cakes to eat. (Cake is also the logical object of the infinitive to eat.)
c. I have a whole family to support.
d. I will have the house to paint as I have got a letter from HOA (home of association).
e. He has no money to spend.
f. There are three children to take care of.
g. There is no money to spend.
h. I want a book to read.
i. I have a lot of things to do.
Obviously, *I have cakes to eat* is idiomatic, but *I have cakes to be eaten* is unidiomatic substitution for *I have cakes to eat*. However, *I have cakes to be eaten* usually means *I have some cakes to be eaten by others*, i.e. for others to eat. We sometimes use an active infinitive to talk about *jobs* we have to do as the examples seen above, so we do not use a passive voice. When the subject of the main verb is also the logical object of the infinitive, normally a passive voice is used, but in *there + be* construction, either active or passive is used, as in

\[ j. \] These windows have *to be painted*. (These windows are the logical object of *paint*.)

\[ k. \] There is a *lot of work to do/to be done* this weekend.

Cf. There is a lot of work for us to do this weekend.

\[ l. \] There are a *lot of windows to paint/be painted*.

\[ m. \] There is a lot *to be said (or to say)* about this book.

Again, we do not usually use a passive voice in *there + be* construction when it is referred to as *leisure activities*, as in

\[ n. \] There are *lots of exciting things to do here*. (John Eastwood 2002)

In addition, when the active voice is used in *there + be* construction, it implies *duty, necessity*, and the like while the passive implies *possibility* (Schibsbye 1970), as in

\[ o. \] There is nothing *to be done* about it. (possibility)

\[ p. \] There is only one thing *to be done*. (possibility)

\[ q. \] There was no time *to be lost*. (possibility)

\[ r. \] There is nothing *to be feared*. (possibility)

\[ s. \] Presently she put him down, for there was much *to be done*. (possibility)

\[ t. \] There is no time *to lose*. (necessity)

\[ u. \] There is only one thing *to do*. (duty)

\[ v. \] There is nothing *to fear*. (necessity)

But *There is a lot of work to be done by that group of people*, in which the passive should be used because of the *by-agent*. Also see 2. in 10.

18

**Used as object complement**

In SVOC construction, the object (O) is the agent of the action and the infinitive is used as complement (C). That is, the object (O) is also the logical subject of the infinitive, as in
I told her to come. (I is the subject; told is the finite verb; her is the object and to come is the infinitive used as object complement. It is SVOC.)

Verbs used like tell above in SVOC construction (some people also called complex object in SVOC construction) are: believe, consider, declare, discover, feel (= think), find (= consider), help, imagine, judge, know, prove, suppose, think, understand, etc.

More examples:

a. My wife won’t allow our children to be idle.
   (To be idle is the infinitive with to and is the complement. It is SVOC.)

b. Sandy helped me (to) clean the computer. (To is optional after the verb, help.)

c. This book helps me to see the truth.

d. The rag helps me to clean the table.

e. He teaches us to talk and write in English.
   (To talk and write in English is the complement, in which the prepositional phrase in English is used as an adverbial. It is SVOCA.)

f. I don’t mean it to be known.
   (To be known is the infinitive with to and is the complement. It is SVOC.)

g. I should prefer them to come on Sunday.
   (To come is the infinitive with to and its complement is made up of to come on Sunday, in which on Sunday is a prepositional phrase used as an adverbial of time. It is SVOCA.)

h. This led me to suspect her. (To suspect is the infinitive with to and its complement is to suspect her, in which her is the object of the infinitive to suspect. It still belongs to SVOC.)

i. We consider him to be a good teacher.

j. Ms. R declared herself to be innocent.

k. We found John to be dishonest.

l. They proved the math problem to be wrong.

m. I always thought the boy to be quiet.

n. We know/believe/judge him to be reliable.

o. I should imagine/suppose her to be sixty.

In the last seven sentences, the to be can be omitted after the verbs of consider, declare, find, prove, think, etc. In such a case, after the omission of to be, the adjective is still the complement of the object (SVOC). But when the infinitive is perfect, it is usually not permissible for such omission, as in

p. We considered him to have been foolish.
19

A noun or noun phrase postmodified by infinitive

When an infinitive is used to postmodify a noun or a noun phrase, sometimes the infinitive can replace a relative clause (also see A in 12), as in

\begin{enumerate}
\item The person to ask is Mr. Marlowe. 
    Cf. The person (whom) you should ask is Mr. Marlowe.
\item The way to handle the case is to investigate it first. 
    Cf. The way (in which/that) we should hand the case is to investigate it first.)
\item The great place to visit is Las Vegas. 
    Cf. The place (that/which) we should/will/are going to visit is Las Vegas.
\item The time to leave is after the principal finishes her speech. 
    Cf. The time when we should leave is after the principal finishes her speech.
\item The girl needs someone to look after her. 
    Cf. The girl needs someone who can look after her.)
\item Mr. Trump is the man to vote for. 
    Cf. Mr. Trump is the man for whom we should vote or Mr. Trump is the man 
    (that/whom) we should vote for.
\item Ms. R is always the first to arrive and the last to leave the school. 
    Cf. Ms. R is always the first who/that arrives and the last who/that leaves the 
    school.
\end{enumerate}

When a noun or noun phrase postmodified by the infinitive is also the logical object of the infinitive, the passive voice is usually used, as in

\begin{enumerate}
\setcounter{enumi}{8}
\item He is the only man to be trusted. (passive voice)
    Cf. He is the only man who/that can be trusted
    or He is the only man (whom/that) we can trust.
\end{enumerate}

But active voice is used with the passive meaning, as in

\begin{enumerate}
\setcounter{enumi}{9}
\item There are several people to consult first. (R. A. Close 1977)
\item Mr. Martin is really a man to trust.
\item There will be a lot of work to do/to be done first when school begins.
\end{enumerate}

When the for-phrase is added to the infinitive, it becomes the logical subject (usually a person) of the infinitive and it has the meaning of active voice, as in

\begin{enumerate}
\setcounter{enumi}{22}
\item Ms. R is the only lady for us to trust.
\item There are a lot of people for us to consult.
\end{enumerate}
The infinitive used as independent element

The infinitive can be used as independent elements (disjunctive adverbials) of the sentence. They are also called dangling or dangling infinitive phrases (Randall 1988). Such a dangling infinitive is used to modify the whole sentence (the main statement). The phrase is more or less stereotyped, though with a very few of them. They are enumerated in sentences as follows:

- a. To speak bluntly, the newly born baby is covered with fur all over his body.
- b. To cut a long story short, I think you are wrong.
- c. To use a shipping term, the ship is down by the head.
- d. The baby is rather like an animal, so to speak.
- e. He has a lot of children, nine, to be exact.
- f. To be (quite) honest with you, you should end the bad relationship with her.
- g. To tell (you) the truth, they didn’t quite like the idea.
- h. To be sure, he showed laziness in his work.
- i. To begin with, you started the quarrel.
- j. To tell you the truth, I don’t want to marry you.
- k. To be fair, she is a difficult lady to deal with.
- l. To speak frankly, you have hurt her feelings.
- m. Strange to say, we met in Las Vegas.
- n. To put it frankly, you have hurt her feelings.
- o. To be frank, you don’t make a good progress.
- p. I’m a bit tired of visiting Las Vegas, to tell you the truth.

Besides dangling participle, the dangling can occur with the infinitive and the gerund as well. Roughly speaking, the agent of the infinitive should be expressed if it is different for the subject of the sentence but omitted if it is the same. To omit it where it is necessary is inadvertence; to insert it where it is unnecessary will be redundancy (Huang 1979). The following examples show indiscriminate omission leading to dangling construction:

- In order to bring her back to normal, she underwent a full course of insulin treatment. (Say they let her undergo or they subjected her to instead of she underwent, so as to supply the infinitive with the proper agent.)

- To cut costs, lamb chops will no longer be trimmed in most butcher shops. (Say to cut costs, most butcher shops will no longer trim lamb chops or Because most butcher shops must cut costs, they will no longer trim lamb chops.)

Like the dangling participle, some kind of dangling constructions in the case of the infinitive has been accepted by usage, too. This will be the case where the subject of a sentence is inanimate
and the main verb passive, and no ambiguity, therefore, can be involved by the omission of the personal but indefinite agent of an active infinitive. The dangling is legitimate again, e.g.

The cliff must be scaled *so as to reach* the summit of the mountain.
Cf. The summit of the mountain can only be reached by scaling the cliff.

21

*For + noun (or pronoun in objective case) + infinitive*

A The preposition *for* is used to introduce a construction in which a noun (or pronoun in objective case) has an infinitive attached to it. The noun or pronoun is the logical subject of the infinitive, e.g.

1. It is very important *for her to quit smoking right now*. (subject)
   Cf. *For her to quit smoking right now* is very important.
2. It is impossible *for John/him to do the job alone*. (subject)
   Cf. *For John/him to do the job alone* is impossible.)
3. We deem it advisable *for him to go there at once*. (object)
4. I am anxious *for her to have a good rest*. (adverbial)
5. They advertised *for a young girl to look after the children*.
6. I arrange *for a taxi to meet you at the station*.
7. The time has come *for you to do a better job*. (attributive)
   Cf. The time *for you to do a better job* has come.

Verbs with *for* and an infinitive include *apply, arrange, ask, call, long, plan, pray, prepare, provide, ring, send, telephone, vote, wait*, etc.

B Care must be taken to distinguish the following from the above-mentioned construction *for + logical subject + to do*:

1. You are very kind *to help me*.
   Cf. It is very kind *of you to help me*.
2. Ms. R was careless *to break her iPhone*.
   Cf. It was careless *of Ms. R to break her iPhone*.)
3. You are kind *to say so*.
   Cf. It’s kind *of you to say so*.

We cannot place the prepositional phrase at the beginning of the sentence used as a subject, therefore we do not say, *Of you to help me is very kind*. Here the prepositional phrase *of you* goes rather with *kind* than with the infinitive that follows, though in meaning *you* is still that
logical subject of the infinitive. In such a construction, adjective of + logical subject, these adjectives include: absurd, artful, awful, brave, careless, clever, clumsy, considerate, crazy, cruel, cunning, dishonest, extravagant, foolish, generous, good (= kind), greedy, helpful, honest, horrible, idiotic, impudent, inconsiderate, intelligent, kind, lazy, mean, modest, nasty, nice, polite, reasonable, rude, selfish, sensible, silly, stupid, thoughtful, unselfish, wicked, wise, wrong, etc.

More examples:

d. It is foolish of Mr. Smith to meet her again.
   (Meaning: He is being foolish/acting foolishly by meeting her again.)

e. It’s generous of you to help me. (=You are generous to help me.)

f. It/That was mean of you not to invite her. (= You are mean not to invite her.)

g. It/That was nice of Sandy to help me. (= Sandy was nice to help me.)
   (Nice expressing a personal quality: it was a kind action by Sandy, so to speak.)

h. How careless of you to make such a mistake!

i. How dishonest of him not to tell you the truth!

j. It was crazy of you to drink so much.

k. Wasn’t it clever of the boys to solve the math problem so quickly!

l. It’s nice for you to help.

When in the exclamatory sentence, it is or it was can be omitted, e.g. How foolish of Mr. Smith to meet her again! (= How foolish of Mr. Smith (it is) to meet her again!) We can omit of +logical subject in It was silly to make such a mistake. (cf. It was silly of you to make such a mistake.) In this construction, the adjectives are used to express personal qualities as shown above, but when we say It was nice for Sandy to take the dog for a walk, it was a pleasant experience for Sandy. Sometimes that is used besides it in such a construction as seen from g and h above.

**Infinitive without to or bare infinitive**

**22**

*After all auxiliary and modal verbs except ought*

We shall/will/may/can come tomorrow.

*We shall/will/may/can to come tomorrow.

He ought to have told me about that.
23

After the object of the verbs expressing physical perception/sensation (see, hear, feel, observe, notice, watch, listen to, look at, etc.)

For example:

a. I feel my heart beat fast. But I felt it to be true. (Note: to is used after the verb be in such a case.)
b. I saw her sneak into that house. (But: She was seen to sneak into that house.)
c. I heard her open the door. Cf. She was heard to open the door.
d. Did you notice anyone come?
e. They watched the lion pass by?
f. Our principal observed me teach the students with special needs yesterday.
g. He was seen to get in the house. Cf. We saw him get in the house.

When the object of the sentence above becomes passive, the infinitive sign to is usually used, e.g. He was seen to get in the house.

24

After the object of the causative verbs (let, make, have, etc.)

The non-finite form of the object complement to the verb have is rather complicated. They are demonstrated below:

A When shall / will have means want, wish or like, or they are in negation, a bare infinitive is usually used, as in:

a. I shall have you know that.
b. I won’t have you do that.
c. I won’t have you say such things.

B When have means get or make, which is usually American usage, we take a bare infinitive:

a. Please have the boy clean out the room.
b. I’d like to have the room look clean and tidy.
c. He had them beat the carpet.
d. Don’t forget to have her come.

C Have meaning wish, arrange, experience or cause takes either a bare infinitive or a present participle according to implication:

a. I had a very strange thing happen to me yesterday. (bare infinitive)
b. The doctor had the man change his diet.
c. What would you have me do?
d. I had a happy thing happen to me last week.
e. We like to have our friends visit Las Vegas next week.
f. You should have someone check these figures.
g. He had her die. (Ge 1962)
h. We shall soon have the mist rising. (It has the progressive meaning.)
i. In a few minutes he had us all laughing again. (It has the progressive meaning.)

D Let, make

a. Let me try, please.
   Cf: I will get him to do it.
b. Don’t let there be any noise.
c. Let there be no mistake about this.
d. Let me do it, please.
e. He was let (to) do it. (To is optional here, but it’d better to keep it in passive voice.)
f. She made him suffer a lot.
g. He made me say that.
h. I was made to say that. (To is used when it is in passive voice.)
i. She had to make do with one maid.
j. I think I can make do with five students.
k. He made believe that he was rich.
l. They made believe to be generous, but they never gave us money.
m. They made believe that they were making progress in the project.

Bid, dare, know, etc.

a. The knight bade the traveler enter. (Bid occurs in old-fashioned narrative English.)
b. He bade me (to) come in.
c. Does anyone dare (to) call me a liar?
d. Would anyone dare predict when this dictatorship will end?
e. You’ll never find him (to) neglect his work. (Schibsbye 1970)
As is known to all, *dare* is both an auxiliary verb and a lexical (or regular) verb. When *dare* is used as a lexical verb, the infinitive sign, *to*, is either used or not used. Generally speaking, the omission of *to* happens when *dare* is used in either a question (frequently used after *how*) or a negative sentence or sentence with negative meaning, as in

- f. Does anyone *dare* *(to)* call me a liar? (question)
- g. How *dare* you *speak* to me so rudely? *(how)*
- h. We *have/had never known* him *lose* his temper before. *(negation)*
- i. *Have* you *ever known* him *not come*? *(question)*
- j. I *have never known* her *sing* so beautifully before. *(negation)*
- k. Would anyone *dare predict* when this dictatorship will end? *(question)*
- l. I *never dared* *(to)* *ask* him. *(negation)*
- m. He *did not dare approach* her first. *(negation)*
- n. No one *dare question/disobey* of this savage dictator. *(negation)*
- o. Cassia *did not dare ask* the Englishwoman where she was from, for fear of anger or punishment. *(negation)*

Note that *know* is usually followed by a bare infinitive when it is perfect tense or in negation or in a question, but when the infinitive *to be* is used, we retain *to be* after the verb *know*, or *to do* is retained when *know* is converted it into passive, as in

- p. I never knew him *to be* too busy to study.
- q. I have never known him *to be* too busy to study.
- r. I have known experts *make* this mistake.
- s. He *has never been known to behave* like that before. *(To* is retained in pass voice.)*
- t. I’ve never known him *behave* like this.
- u. I’ve never known her *to lose* her temper. *(Typical BrE) - Hornby 1976*
- v. She *had never known* a patient *to receive* so many flowers.
- w. I have never known her *to have failed*. *(perfect tense)*
- x. I’ve never known him *(to)* *run* faster than that.
  *(The to is optional and thus usually found in BrE.)*
- y. He *has been known to make* mistakes on occasion. *(To* is used in passive)
- z. Experts *have been known to make* this mistake. *(To* is used in passive)

26

In some idiomatic expressions
The bare infinitive is also used in: *had better* (*‘d better or better*), *had best* (*‘d best*), *would* (*or had*) *rather*, *etc*.

**Had better* (*‘d better or better*), *had best* (*‘d best*)

1. We’d better try again. (It means I think we should.)
2. She’d better be met by him.
3. You’d better have finished the job by tomorrow.
4. We’d better not stop.
5. You had better do the homework by yourself.
6. You’d best try again.
7. I hadn’t better go. (F.R. Palmer 1978)
8. We’d better be going.
9. I’d better go and so had you.
10. Had I better stay at home? (Rarely used in a question)
11. We’d better go, hadn’t we?
12. Hadn’t you better take an umbrella?
13. Better try again (= You’d better try again).
14. You had better/You’d better do the assignment by yourself.
15. You’d best try again. (This is now rather old-fashioned.)
16. Better be alone than in bad company.
   Cf. Better to die (= It is better to die) standing than to live on one’s knees.

Note that *had better* can be followed by progressive infinitive, but cannot be negated; the negation of which occurs in the infinitive and *had better* indicates the speaker or hearer (showing strong recommendation) regards as desirable, as in

17. We’d better be going.
18. We’d better not go. (*We’d not better go.*)

**27**

**Would** (*or had*) *rather*, *would sooner*, *rather than*

It is noted that in terms of discourse and subject orientation, *would rather* indicates the subject orientation, as in

a. I would rather go now.
   b. I would much rather not go.
   c. I would sooner die than consent to such a plan.
   d. I’d rather not stop yet.
e. I’d rather be lying on the beach than stuck in a traffic jam.
f. I’d rather not go.
g. I’d rather not sit at the back.
h. I’d rather (= sooner) go now. (It means “I’d prefer to go now.”)
i. Would you rather/sooner stay here? (Rarely used in a question.)
j. I had rather die than betray her.

As seen above, sometimes perfect or progressive forms are used in these constructions. The omission of the infinitive sign, to, also happens in rather than when it means would rather not, as in

k. I decided to write rather than telephone.
l. He resigned rather than take part in such a dishonest transaction.
m. Rather than travel by air, I’d prefer a week on a big liner.
n. He suffered death rather than betray the secret. (F.T. Wood 1993)
o. Rather than allow the vegetables to go bad, he sold them at half price.

28
May (just) as well, might (just) as well

May (just) as well (spoken) is used to say that you will do something that you do not really want to do, because you cannot think of anything better. Might (just) as well (usually spoken) is used to suggest doing something that you do not really want to do, because you have no better idea. For example:

A: How shall we go? Shall we walk or go by bus?
B: We may/might (just) as well walk. That’s what I suggest.

A: Isn’t the traffic slow today?
B: Yes, we might (just) as well walk/have walked. It would be just as quick.
A: I agree. We might (just) as well not take/have taken a bus at all. It’s so slow.

His appearance changed so much that you may well not recognize him. (NOT may not)
We might (just) as well not have a car at all.
I may as well go out tonight. There’s nothing on television.
If you’re not going to eat that pizza, I may as well throw it out.
It’s no good waiting for the bus. We might as well walk.
No one will eat this food; it might just as well be thrown away.

Note that may/might as well cannot be used in a question or may or might cannot be negated (*may/might not as well), but we use not to negate the following verb. However, a question or
negation can be used in *It might be (just) as well to* construction; in such a case, the infinitive with *to* is usually used as follows:

Might it be (just) as well *to send* a text message?
Might it (not) be (just) as well *to send* a telegram? (R. A. Close 1975)

29

The omission of the infinitive sign, *to*

R. Quirk, et al (1972) pointed out “The *to* of the infinitive is optionally omitted in a clause which, as complement, expands the meaning of the verb DO.” When we do not use the infinitive sign, *to*, we call it *bare infinitive* or *infinitive without to*. They mean the same. A bare infinitive occurs because the subject of each sentence contains the verb DO in the noun clause (Gu 1984). We are going to describe the detail of the omission of the infinitive sign, *to*, in various constructions below:

A In *all + subject + do … construction*

The *all+ subject + do* construction is used to introduce a noun clause. In such a case the infinitive sign, *to*, is usually omitted in its complement, as in

1. *All I did* was *(to)* turn off the gas. (*All I did* is a noun clause used as subject of the sentence.)
2. *All you do* is talk about cars. (*To* is omitted between *is* and *talk* in the sentence.)
3. *All she seems to do* is gossip with her friend.
   (*To* is omitted between *is* and *gossip* in the sentence.)
4. *All we have to do* is push the button. (*To* is omitted between *is* and *push* in the sentence.)
5. *All I could do* was beat the thug black and blue.
   (*To* is omitted between *was* and *beat* in the sentence.)
6. For now, *all he could do* was be patient and wait.
   (*To* is omitted between *was* and *be* in the sentence.)
7. *All he has to do* was bathe and dress, then take the two-hour wagon to the MacGregor plantation, where the wedding was due to start at once. --- *Roots*, p.728

B In the… thing(s)+ subject + do… Construction

In *the … thing(s)+ subject + do …* construction, we usually have *first, only, etc.*, used to premodify *thing* or *things* as in
The first thing we had to do was ask him for help.
(To is omitted between was and ask in the sentence, thing being modified by the first.)
If you ever went to the United States to study in a college or a university, one of the first things you would have to do is open a checking account.

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C In what + subject + do … construction

In what + subject + do construction, the what is tantamount to the meaning of that which or the thing(s) which/that, as in

What I really wanted to do was drive all night.
(To is omitted between was and drive in the sentence.)
What the plan does is (to) ensure a fair pension for all. (To is optional.)
What a fire-door does is (to) delay the spread of a fire long enough for people to get out. (To is optional.)
What he’ll do is spoil the whole thing.
What he does is teach.
What John did to his suit was (to) ruin it. (To is optional.)
What I really wanted to do was drive all day.

It is noted that a past participle can be used when the perfect tense is used in the subject or a gerund can be used when a progressive tense is used in the subject, as in

What he has done is spoilt the whole thing. (Spoilt is used because of has done.)
What he is doing is spoiling the whole thing. (Spoiling, a gerund, is used because of the progressive tense, is doing.)

D In the best (most, least, etc.,) … to do construction

The infinitive sign, to, can be also omitted in the best (most, least, etc.,) … to do construction, where the best means the thing(s) that is (are) best, the most, the greatest amount or the most possible thing(s), and the least, the least possible thing(s), as in
The least I can do is drive everybody else closer to the issue. 
The best way to do was wait until Richie was not entangled in a court action. 
The best she could do was remain silent. 
As long as you have air, the best thing to do is stay on the bottom and find shelter in the reef. 
The worst you can do is become very drowsy.

In the examples from A to D above, we notice that the subject of each sentence must contain the verb do form, which can be either finite or non-finite. The linking verb is usually be (is used in the present time or future time and was used in the past time) in the sentence.

More examples:

What he'll do is spoil the whole thing. (future time in the noun clause) 
What he's done is spoil the whole thing. (present perfect in the noun clause) 
All he did was talk to her patiently. (past time in the noun clause) 
All you do is think of him. (present time in the noun clause) 
What he's doing is spoiling the whole thing. (progressive tense in the noun clause, but spoiling is a gerund.) 
All we are trying to do is find the fact. (to do, non-finite form) 
The best thing she could do was remain silent. (used with an auxiliary verb) 
All I could do when we got on the ground was hug and kiss the man. 

---- Reader’s Digest, Oct. 1974, p.20
(When we got on the ground, the adverbial clause of time, is inserted between could do and was in the above sentence.) 
The only thing I can do now is go on by myself. (Now is inserted between do and is.)

In the last two sentences, something is inserted between the verb be and the infinitive. It does not affect the omission of the infinitive sign, to, in such cases. Moreover, when the subject complement is placed before the subject of the sentence for the purpose of emphasis, the infinitive sign, to, is still omitted, as in

Die is the last thing I shall do, doctor. Cf. The last thing I shall do is (to) die, doctor.

Turn off the tap was all I did. Cf. All I did was (to) turn off the tap.) (Quirk, et al 1972)

E. Come or go

Usually when come or go used in imperative sentences (but not limited) or indicative sentences or interrogative questions (also see A in 14), bare infinitives are often used (Gu 1984).
For example:
I’ll come ask her about it.
I’ll go tell her.

**Come live** with me and be my honey. (Imperative)

“Go take a look in the closet,” he told Leuci.

---- *Reader’s Digest*, August 1979, p.202

Let’s go find us a drink.
Let’s go find something to eat.
I think I’ll go lie down for a while.
I had to call my folks to come get me.
He decided to go borrow it.
She finally had to go ask for a raise.
You’d better go see a doctor about that cut.
I’d like to go hear a concert this afternoon.
Will you come join us?
Do you want to go look at yourself?

**Do come** to my house this evening!

In the last sentence above, DO is used for the emphasis of the action COME in the imperative sentence, which has nothing to do with the omission of to between **do** and come. In the above sentences except the last one, the infinitive sign to is omitted, but attention should be paid to the fact that when come or go in past form, the to is usually not omitted, so we usually do not say:*I went tell her. *He came watch the movie last night, but instead, we say *I went to tell her and *He came to watch the movie last night. We can also use and in *He came and watched the movie last night. This sentence is correct. But in this sentence, and watched the movie last night, expresses result. Also see **A Purpose** in 14. Sometimes the infinitive to is still omitted even if an adverb is used after come or go (Gu1984), e.g.

Rosasharm, you go over talk to Miss Wainwright.

*Come on get* a beer.

Can I come in watch Mrs. Morrison nurse her kid?

The omission of the infinitive to also happens in the sentences where an adverb is inserted as we see the last three sentences above (over is inserted between go and talk, on between come and get, and in between come and watch).

The omission is often seen in advertisements (especially in AmE) for the sake of brevity or in order to catch people’s attention, as in

*Come fly Korea. Come spend* a few pleasant hours as our guests.

---- *Time*, April 14, 1980, p.3
There will be pageants, parades, festivals, even royal tours. Come **celebrate** with us.

--- *Newsweek*, April 21, 1980, p.13

**F Help**

Sandy helped *me (to) clean the room*. (*To* is optional after the verb, *help.*)

This book helps me *to see the truth*.

The rag helps me *to clean the table*.

It is noted that in the sentences above: “Sandy helped me *(to) clean the room*”, where *to* is either used or omitted after *help*, but especially in American English, *to*, is usually not used in such a case. We keep the infinitive sign *to* in the last two sentences, because the subject of the sentence does not directly participate in the following action – *the book* does not see the truth – and neither does *the rag* - do the cleaning, while *Sandy* does part of her work – *cleaning the room*, so *to* is not used. In a word, when *help* is used as a main verb and the subject of the sentence does not do the work or part of the work in the infinitive, *to* is usually retained. In informal English, the infinitive sign, *to*, is often omitted after *help*. However, when *to* is not used in such a case, it does not affect the meaning of the sentence. When it is converted into passive, the *to* is usually used, as in

- *He helped me *(to) carry* the box upstairs.*
- *I was helped *(to) carry* the box upstairs.*
- *We were helped *(to) get out.*

In addition, we keep *to* when the object of *help* is long, as in

- *Can I help *(you) carry* that?*
- *Can I help *(to) carry* it for you?*
- *Help the little boys at the back of the hall *(to) carry* the chairs out.*

(*To* is used because of the long object, *the little boys at the back of the hall*.)

In the United States the verb *help* may be followed by the simple form (infinitive without *to*) … while in Great Britain, the *to* infinitive is required (Evens, et al 1957).

**30**

**Bare infinitives used after some prepositions**

A bare infinitive (also see 11) may occasionally be used after the prepositions *except, but, than, rather than, about, besides, save*, etc., as in
The child did nothing except weep.
Cf. He seldom comes except to look at my pictures.
(To is used because there is no Do form in it as described in A through D in 29.)
She will do anything for you except lend your money.
Cf. It had no effect except to make him angry.
She did nothing except complain the whole time she was here.
What could I do then except watch them carry you away?
Sandy can do everything except cook.
They could do nothing but wait for the doctor to arrive.
She can do anything but sing.
He did nothing but laugh.
They couldn’t do anything but just sit there and hope.

From the above examples, we see a bare infinitive used after the prepositions except, but, and than, because in the predicate contains the verb DO. Without the use of DO, we usually keep the infinitive sign, to, as in “He seldom comes except to look at my pictures.” “It had no effect except to make him angry.” “He desired nothing but to succeed”, etc. When do nothing else construction is used, we do not use but or except; instead, we use than instead (Gu 1984), as in

She did nothing else than laugh.
She did nothing but laugh.

She did nothing else than weep.
She did nothing except weep.

Besides what has been described above, the omission of the infinitive sign to also happens after the prepositions save, besides, etc., when the verb DO (finite or non-finite) appears, as in

What had she done for her father save leave him at the first opportunity?
I hardly remember what I did besides read.
That afternoon I had nothing to do besides answer letters.
What has he done besides read the paper?

31
Bare infinitives used in some fix phrases or idioms
The omission of the infinitive sign, to, happens in some fix phrases, e.g. go hang, go fetch (a dog), make believe, make do, hear say, hear tell, let drop, let fall, let go, let slip, let drive, let fly, etc., as in

We’ll have to make do with dry bread.
He made believe he was innocent.
Don’t let slip such a good opportunity to learn.
He let go (of) the rope.
Make that dog leave go of my coat.
I’ve heard tell of such happenings.
I hear say that there will be an earthquake soon.
We can’t let things go hang.
I dare say he’ll come later.
He let fly a torrent of abuse at me.
He drew his sword and let drive at me.
It is do or die. (bare infinitive)

In elliptical questions beginning with wh-words: how, why, why not, etc.

32
How +come + (that–clause)

How come is used to ask why something has happened or been said, especially when you are surprised by it, as in

How come you didn’t tell me about this before?
(NOT How to come ...? or How comes ...?)
(= How can it be that/why is it that you didn’t tell me about this before?)
How come they left you alone here?
(=How can it be that/why is it that they left you alone here?)
How come I never see her anymore?
How come Dave’s home? Isn’t he feeling well?

33
Why (not) + bare infinitive

Why + bare infinitive is used to introduce questions usually to suggest that it is stupid or pointless to do something while why not + bare infinitive introduces suggestions and advice, as in

Why worry? (Cf. “Why do you worry?” or “Why did you worry?”)
Why worry about such trifling matters?
Why risk breaking the law?
Why pay more at other shops?
Why not consult your supervisor? (NOT Why not to consult …?)
You’re putting on weight. Why not have your tea without sugar?
It’s cold outside. Why not close the window?
Why not take a break/a holiday?
Why not make your dress, instead of buying it?

Remember a past adverbial cannot be used with this construction; therefore, we do not say:

*Why not clean the room yesterday?

But when a past adverbial is used, we will change the structure and we can say:

Why didn’t you clean the room yesterday?

34
The split infinitive

An adverb is sometimes placed between the infinitive and its sign to. This construction is known as the split infinitive, e.g.

The delay is bound to seriously hamper the progress of rebuilding the city.

The adverb seriously is inserted between the infinitive sign to and the infinitive verb, hamper. Split infinitive constructions are quite common in English, especially in informal English. The split infinitive should have been avoided here. Some people think the use of a split infinitive incorrect. But sometimes, when the avoidance of a split infinitive involves “real ambiguity” or “patent artificially,” as Fowler put it, we should not hesitate to use one (Huang 1979). Split infinitives are common usage when we want the adverb to modify it, as in

Our object is to further cement trade relation.
He likes to half close his eyes.
I don’t expect to ever see her again.
To almost succeed is not enough.
He was too ill to really carry out his duty.
I wish to utterly forget my past.
He began to slowly get up off the floor.
It’s a sad experience to always live from hand to mouth.
I don’t expect you to suddenly change your mind.
However, certain adverbs such as *only, merely, not*, cannot be placed between although we see some people still use them. We usually do not say “I decided to *not* go there alone.” Instead, we say “I decided *not* to go there alone.”

### 35

**The omission of the infinitive after the main verb**

A We can leave an infinitive, but keep the infinitive sign *to*, in order to avoid its *repetition*, as in

I have to leave, but I don’t want *to*.
(= I have to leave, but I don’t want to *leave*. *Leave* is omitted after the main verb, *want*)
Would you please come to join us for lunch? Yes, I’d like/love *to*.)
We should like our daughter to be enrolled in a magnet program, but we don’t really expect her *to*.
Why didn’t you come last night? You were told *to*.
She opened the window, though I had told her not *to*.
You have turned off the computer in the lab. I told you *not to*, didn’t I?
Ms. R got fired, but she didn’t expect *to*.
She works harder now than she used *to* (work hard).
He was riding his bicycle in the park, but I told him not *to* (ride his bicycle in the park).
(**Note**: The verb phrase in the preceding clause or sentence may not contain the infinitive phrase as seen above.)

A: Would you like to see our baby?
B: I’d love *to* (= I’d love to see your baby.)

A: Can baby walk yet?
B: No. he can’t. He’s not able *to*.

A: Does Mr. R live here?
B: No, but he used *to*.

A: Have you finished the work yet?
B: No, but I’m going *to*.

A: Why does she get up early every day?
B: Because she has *to*.

A: May I go out this evening?
B: Yes, I allow you (to).

A: Ought she to start now?
B: Yes, she ought (to)

Note that we usually omit to after the verb like, but not would like (as seen below), e.g.

Come here if you like.
Come here if you’d like to.

But when the finite verb has an auxiliary verb or perfect tense, we usually repeat them after the infinitive sign to, e.g.

Ms. R was fired, but she didn’t expect to be. (Was is an auxiliary verb in main clause, was fired.)
I haven’t finished as much work today as I’d like to have.
(Have is an auxiliary verb in the main clause haven’t finished.)

B When and is used to link the previous verb, we do not usually use the infinitive sign to, e.g.

I will come and let you know how to do it. (= I will come to let ….)
I’ll come to get you and drive you to Las Vegas.
I learnt to read and write at the age of six.

However, to is sometimes used after and or or because of emphasis shown in comparison with or contrast with, the two or more coordination, as in

It is necessary for us to read more and to have more practice.
Mr. Roden asked you to call you or to send text message.
To be or not to be, that is the question.
Upon hearing the news, I really did not know whether to laugh or to cry.
Please go to the seaside to swim, to get suntanned.
He likes to stay with his parents, to work in the fields with them.
(To get suntanned and to work in the fields with them in the above sentences are used to express purpose, and a comma is necessary here.)

So far as the parallel construction is concerned, we keep to in the construction … better … than…, as in

It was better to laugh than to cry.
Better to die standing than to live on one’s knees.

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The absolute construction

Besides infinitives used independent elements, which are looked upon as legitimate dangling infinitives, the absolute construction of an infinitive, comparable with that of the participle, is also in existence, e.g.

Books borrowed must be returned when due, the defaulter to pay a fine of 5 cents per book per day.
Mrs. Roden went to Poland yesterday, her husband to join her next week.

Also see C in 14, the use of with + noun + infinitive phrase.

That is the end of the illustration of the use of the infinitive, one of the three non-finite forms - the infinitive, the participles (which have two forms, the present participle and the past participle), and the gerund. The infinitive also has two types of infinitives: the infinitive with to (to-infinitive) and the infinitive without to (bare infinitive). English learners whose native language is not English always find it difficult how to use the infinitive correctly. By amplifying them with various kinds of attributives and/or adverbials, A.S. Hornby expanded them into his 25 sentence constructions in Guide to Constructions and Usage in English, Oxford University Press (Oxford London, 1976). Moreover, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Great Britain: The Pitman Press, 1978) is also a good English dictionary for English learners because it tells us how to use each word correctly in English. At the end of the dictionary there is a table of codes to describe the constructions of each verb. The authors of the dictionary used simple and basic English words to define, describe, and illustrate each word in the dictionary so that English learners can easily read and understand each definition and description. In the future the writer will illustrate the other two non-finite forms - the participles (which have two forms, the present participle and the past participle), and the gerund. Any comment or critique is welcome of the article.
References


