

# INFINITIVE WITH AND WITHOUT TO

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# FORM

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The infinitive of a verb has two forms: the *to*-infinitive and the infinitive without *to*.

The *to*-form consists of *to* plus the base form of the verb:

- *I want **to speak** to you.*
- *We came here **to work**, not **to play**.*

The form without *to* consists of the base form of the verb:

- *She made us **wait** for half an hour.*
- *John lets the dog **sleep** on the sofa.*

# TO-INFINITIVE

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- We use the *to*-infinitive after a number of common main verbs.  
For example:

|          |        |         |          |
|----------|--------|---------|----------|
| agree    | demand | long    | pretend  |
| aim      | fail   | love    | promise  |
| arrange  | forget | manage  | propose  |
| ask      | hate   | mean    | refuse   |
| begin    | help   | need    | remember |
| choose   | hope   | offer   | try      |
| claim    | intend | plan    | want     |
| continue | learn  | prefer  | wish     |
| decide   | like   | prepare |          |

# TO-INFINITIVE

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# TO-INFINITIVE

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- We arranged **to see** the bank manager and applied for a loan.
- Mrs Harding asked us **to call** in on our way home.
- Did you remember **to post** the letter to your mother?
- He just wants everyone **to be** happy.

Tip: Some of these verbs are also often followed by *-ing*.



# TO-INFINITIVE

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We can use the *to*-infinitive in a clause with a verb that has no subject (a non-finite clause). The *to*-infinitive focuses on the idea of an action or the results of an action, rather than the action in itself:

- **To work** *in a developing country had always been her ambition.*
- **To get** *there before lunch, you would have to take the seven o'clock train.*

# INFINITIVE WITHOUT TO

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We use the infinitive without *to* after modal verbs *can, could, may, might, will, shall, would, should, must*:

- *She can **sleep** in the guest room tonight.*
- *Will you **need** to rent a car during your stay?*

We also use the infinitive without *to* after *let, make* and (optionally) *help*:

- *He lets us **use** some of his land to grow vegetables.*
- *You can't make a cat **do** anything it doesn't want to do.*
- *I just want to help you **(to) understand** the situation better.*



# TYPICAL MISTAKES

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We don't use the *to*-infinitive after modal verbs:

- *We might buy a new sofa.*
- Not: ~~We might to buy a new sofa.~~

We don't use the infinitive (with or without *to*) after prepositions:

- *Lemon juice is useful **for cleaning** stained surfaces in the kitchen.*
- Not: ... ~~is useful for clean~~ ... or ... ~~for to clean~~

