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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

STRUCTURES WITH IT

EXPLANATION

- **INFINITIVES** (such as **to go; to think; to be able to**) are extremely common in English, and IELTS candidates make many errors with **INFINITIVES** in their Speaking and Writing Tests.
- IELTS candidates who use **INFINITIVES** accurately generally get higher grades for Writing and Speaking.
- **INFINITIVES** can be used in structures with **it**.

USING INFINITIVES IN STRUCTURES WITH ADJECTIVES

It is common to use the structure **it + to be/seem/appear/become + adjective + infinitive**, when the infinitive is the subject of the sentence:

- **It is essential/vital to understand** the difference between a well-paid job and satisfying employment. (= To understand the difference between a well-paid job and satisfying employment is vital)
- **It is important/necessary to make sure** that all members of society feel they have a say in how the county is governed. (= To make sure that all members of society feel they have a say...)
- **It is extremely difficult/tricky to ensure** fairness, equality and justice within a society. (= To ensure fairness, equality and justice...)
- **It is easy/simple to govern** in theory, but far more difficult in practice. (= To govern is easy/simple in theory,...)

USING INFINITIVES IN STRUCTURES WITH ADJECTIVES

- **It is fascinating/interesting to consider** what would have happened if The United States had not entered World War 2.
- In the near future, **it will become/be unusual to find** meat-eaters.
- Over recent years, **it has been fascinating to note** how the spread of technology has affected the types of relationships we have.
- **It used to be** significantly **easier to find** a well-paid job.
- **It would be** extremely **difficult to move** to another country if you had spent your entire life in one place.
- **It seems/appears hard to predict** the results of elections.
- Nowadays, **it has become normal to wear** clothes once, before discarding them.

USING INFINITIVES IN STRUCTURES WITH NOUNS

A similar structure can be used with a noun:

- It should be an offence to swear in public. (= To swear in public should be an offence)
- It is a pity to live in a foreign country and not learn the language. (= To live in a foreign country and not learn the language is a pity)
- To be honest, it was a shock/surprise to see you after so long. (= To see you after so long was a shock/surprise)
- It was a mistake to move to Athens. (= To move to Athens was a mistake)
- It would be a crime to pollute the oceans so badly that they could no longer support life. (= To pollute the oceans...would be a crime)



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

STRUCTURES WITH TWO VERBS (part 1)

EXPLANATION

- **INFINITIVES** (such as **to go; to think; to be able to**) are extremely common in English, and IELTS candidates make many errors with **INFINITIVES** in their Speaking and Writing Tests.
- IELTS candidates who use **INFINITIVES** accurately generally get higher grades for Writing and Speaking.
- **INFINITIVES** can be used in **structures with two verbs**.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

Infinitive forms are often used after certain verbs::

- agree; ask; claim; demand; refuse; threaten; offer
- aim; arrange; aspire; expect; prepare; hope; vow; promise; guarantee; resolve; intend; plan
- choose; decide; learn; remember; forget; opt; pretend
- like; love; dislike; hate; yearn; long; would like; would love; wish; want; prefer; bother; regret; can't stand; can't bear; dread

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

COMMUNICATION

- Employees often **agree to do** overtime to top up their basic income. This is especially the case for workers who are poorly remunerated.
- I would like to **ask to move** from my current accommodation to a flat closer to the university.
- Individuals who **claim to be able to** exist on less than four hours' sleep a night are probably lying.
- Critics **demand to know** why the government has spent so much money on weapons and so little on alleviating poverty.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

COMMUNICATION

- If a close personal friend asked me to give her an alibi because she had committed a crime and did not want to be arrested by the police, I would probably **refuse to help**. Friendship is a very important concept, but less important than justice.
- Anyone who uses social media to **threaten to attack** or hurt somebody else should be sent to prison.
- If you **offer to support** work colleagues or fellow-students, it is extremely likely that they will return the favour when you are in need. To be honest, even if they do not, the amazingly positive feeling you get from giving a helping hand is enough reward in itself.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

PLAN

- Many undergraduates **aim to achieve** the highest grades possible in the hope of attracting the attention of a top employer.
- I wonder if we could **arrange to meet** at the end of the week. I have a business proposal which I would like to discuss with you.
- As children, most of us **aspire to be** famous footballers, ballerinas, airline pilots or celebrities. Sadly, few aim to make it as an engineer, a software designer or a paediatrician.
- Those of a working age usually **expect to spend** a significant number of years enjoying a stress-free life once they retire.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

PLAN

- We need to **prepare to deal with** all the problems which environmental change will lead to.
- Cities which **hope to stage** major sporting events should consider the matter seriously. Although hosting an international competition clearly has benefits, these can be outweighed by the disadvantages.
- All companies should **vow to end** discrimination in the workplace.
- New recruits to the army have to **promise to defend** their country.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

PLAN

- All developed countries should **guarantee to give** at least two percent of their **GDP** to poorer nations.
- We should all **resolve to work** harder for the good of our community.
- Some people **intend to work** until they are eighty or even older.
- The United Nations **plans to eradicate** illiteracy by the end of the century.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

MENTAL PROCESSES

- Although some people **choose to live** in large cities, many feel that they have no other option.
- There are several reasons why people in their forties and fifties **decide to emigrate**: they are often attracted by the prospect of making a new start, living in a more prosperous economy or even going to a country with a better climate.
- It is vital that we all **learn to be** more sensitive when dealing with others.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

MENTAL PROCESSES

- It is important to **remember to take** regular physical exercise.
- Would you mind helping me? I've got a terrible feeling I **forgot to lock** the door. I was in such a hurry to catch the flight. Would you pop over and check please?
- As far as I am concerned, if you **opt to avoid** paying taxes, you deserve to go to prison.
- Recently, I read an article online about a man who **pretended to be** a surgeon and actually managed to carry out several operations. I found this deeply shocking.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

FEELINGS

- I **like/love** **to eat** absolutely loads of fresh fruit. It is so good for you.
- Some older people **dislike/hate** **to accept** help even when it is offered.
- Some teenagers **yearn/long** **to leave** the family home and gain their independence. Others reach the conclusion that it makes more sense to stay with their families.
- Many people **would like/love** **to retire** at the earliest possible opportunity.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

FEELINGS

- Anyone who **wishes to become** an outstanding musician needs to dedicate thousands of hours to practising.
- Those who **want to learn** to drive soon realise that a great many skills are involved: motorists need the ability to concentrate, good observation skills, excellent reactions and superb spatial awareness.
- Personally, I **prefer to watch** movies at home. The cinema tends to be too noisy.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

FEELINGS

- Remarkably few people **bother to recycle** plastics. They often claim ignorance: they are not sure which plastics can be recycled and which cannot.
- I **regret to inform** you that your application has not been successful.
- There are some people who simply **cannot bear/stand to be** criticised. (This is a passive form)
- Many young children eat vast amounts of sugary food. I **dread to think** about how this will affect their long-term health.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

STRUCTURES WITH TWO VERBS (part 2)

EXPLANATION

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- IELTS candidates who use **INFINITIVES** accurately generally get higher grades for Writing and Speaking.
- **INFINITIVES** can be used in **structures with two verbs**.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

Infinitive forms are often used after certain verbs::

- attempt; endeavour; try; undertake
- get; be able; manage; cannot afford
- begin; start; cease; continue
- seem; appear; tend; happen; prove
- have; need; deserve
- fail; hesitate; volunteer; wait
- turn out; set out; go on; can't afford; can't be bothered
- cost; take

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

MAKING AN EFFORT

- Many criminals have **attempted to commit** the perfect crime; most of them have eventually been captured.
- We should all **endeavour to be** kinder to our fellow-humans.
- We should all **try to work** more efficiently and more effectively. Most of us waste a huge amount of time during the working day.
- All governments should **undertake to provide** decent-quality accommodation for anyone living on the streets.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

ABILITY

- If I **got to work** for that company, I would be ecstatic.
- Linguists who **are able to multi-task** make ideal interpreters.
- People brought up in poverty who **manage to become** successful deserve great respect.
- A worryingly large proportion of workers **cannot afford to retire** at the age of sixty-five and are forced to continue working well into their seventies.
-

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

STARTING AND FINISHING

- In the 1970s, people **began to be** aware how dangerous smoking could be. However, because nicotine is so addictive, most smokers were unable to stop.
- Many of us have **started to realise** that reducing the amount of rubbish we throw away is essential.
- I believe that the government should **cease to provide** free university education. Anyone wishing to study for a Degree should have to pay for the course from their own funds or borrow the money if necessary.
- If we **continue to spend** so much time staring into our smartphone screens, the long-term consequences for our health could be extremely serious.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

- Some solutions would **seem to be** blindingly obvious. However, when the issue is examined closely, these apparently perfect approaches are seen to be of limited value.
- There **appear to be** several reasons why universities still struggle to attract female students onto their science courses.
- In the past, men **tended to go** out to work and women often stayed at home looking after the children. These roles of 'bread-winner' and 'care-giver' are no longer as common as they used to be.
- If I **happened to win** the lottery, I would probably donate everything I got to charity.
- Developing driverless cars has **proved to be** more difficult than anyone imagined.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

NECESSITY AND RIGHTS

- A surprisingly large number of employees **have to stop** working at an early age due to health issues.
- Judges **need to try** to be even-handed at all times. They must treat everyone in their court equally.
- Nurses, who selflessly devote themselves to caring for others, **deserve to be** respected and admired. (This is a passive form)

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

OTHER VERBS

- It is sometimes said that those who **fail to plan, plan to fail**. Although there is perhaps some truth in this saying, it is overused and not always appropriate.
- Many individuals **hesitate to donate** money to charity. They fear that what they give will not reach the people who need it most.
- Those who **volunteer to help** the elderly often find it a rewarding experience.
- A few councils have banned vehicles from entering their cities at certain times of the day. We will have to **wait to see** if this approach becomes more widespread.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

OTHER VERBS/STRUCTURES

We can use infinitives with some verbs with prepositions:

- The party **turned out to be** the most boring two hours of my life. I bet you're glad you didn't go.
- If you **set out to achieve** your aims, you will probably succeed.
- When I met him, I could never have guessed that he would **go on to become** such a successful business leader.

We can use infinitives with some verbs connected with **can't/cannot**:

- I'm sorry but I really **can't afford to come** this summer.
- She keeps saying that she **can't be bothered to apply**.
- I **can't bear to imagine** what might have happened if you hadn't arrived.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

TO COST / TO TAKE

We can use **to cost** in structures connected with the price we pay:

- It **would cost** a fortune **to build** a new underground railway system.
- It **cost** me an arm and a leg **to get** to that wedding!
- I prefer not to think about **how much** it **cost** me **to build** that house.

We can use **to take** in structures connected to time:

- It **takes** me ages **to get** to work.
- It **can take** years **to fully master** a musical instrument.
- It **wouldn't take** me long **to learn** how to do your job!
- Do you know **how long** it **took** me **to make** that cake?

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

PASSIVE FORMS

These structures can be used with passive forms:

- Some people always **wait to be told** what to do.
- The situation **needs to be resolved** rapidly.
- Something **has to be done** immediately.
- I **hope to be accepted** onto the course.
- I have been entirely dissatisfied with your service and **expect to be given/offered** a full refund.
- I think we all **deserve to be treated** with dignity.
- Some people **wish/want/would like to be buried** at sea after they die.

USING INFINITIVES IN TWO-VERB STRUCTURES

LEAVING OUT TO

With some verbs structures, we leave out **to**:

- You **needn't** **worry** about tidying up the flat. I'll have time to do it when I get back.
- Although we could go today, I'd **rather/sooner** **wait** till tomorrow.
- Working with tigers is dangerous. You'd **better** **be** careful that you don't get eaten.
- I did not **dare** **ask** (her) about the job interview because she looked really angry.
- She **made/let/helped** me **go**.
- I **will/would/can/could/must/might/may/should** **go**.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

STRUCTURES WITH NOUNS

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EXPLANATION

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- IELTS candidates who use **INFINITIVES** accurately generally get higher grades for Writing and Speaking.
- **INFINITIVES** can be used in **structures with nouns**.

USING INFINITIVES WITH NOUNS

Infinitive forms are often used with certain nouns:

- ability; advice; appeal; agreement
- ambition; arrangement; attempt; chance
- choice; decision; desire; dream
- eagerness; failure; goal; motivation
- need; opportunity; order; permission
- plan; proposal; recommendation; refusal
- request; reluctance; requirement; right
- suggestion; tendency; way; willingness; wish

USING INFINITIVES WITH NOUNS

- The **ability** to work independently can be developed with practice.
- Thanks for your **advice** to resign. Leaving that terrible job was the best thing I've done in ages!
- **Appeals** to cut carbon emissions often fall on deaf ears.
- Politicians need to reach an **agreement** to change the law, so that workplace bullying becomes a criminal offence.
- To be honest, my **ambition** to climb Mount Kilimanjaro is looking more and more like a pipedream.
- As you know, the company has made an **arrangement** to borrow a significant amount of money.

USING INFINITIVES WITH NOUNS

- There have been some successful **attempts to grow** genetically-modified crops in extremely dry regions.
- Many people never get the **chance to live** and study abroad.
- Young adults living in rural communities often make the **choice to leave**. They are tempted by the prospect of living in a large city, earning more money and having a brighter future.
- The government's **decision to limit** the number of migrants allowed to enter the country has been criticised.
- Those who have a **desire to travel** often take a gap-year after finishing university.

USING INFINITIVES WITH NOUNS

- If you have a **dream** to **become** a famous musician, you will probably need both dedication and talent in order to make it come true.
- Our apparent **eagerness** to **destroy** the planet is sickening.
- My **failure** to **achieve** the exam grades I needed is a bitter disappointment.
- The **goal** to **eradicate** poverty by the year 2050 needs to be taken seriously and achieved.
- My sister's **motivation** to **play** sport at the highest level was the main reason for her success.
- Many people have a **need** to **be loved** or respected. (This is a passive form)

USING INFINITIVES WITH NOUNS

- If I had the **opportunity to visit** any country in the world, I would probably choose Indonesia.
- A soldier should never follow an **order to shoot** prisoners.
- Even though the nuclear power plant was closed thirty years ago, ordinary people do not have **permission to visit** the site.
- The **plan to move** thousands of residents from their homes in order to build a new shopping centre has been met with fury and indignation.
- The **proposal to make** full-time education compulsory up to the age of eighteen should be welcomed.
- The **recommendation to ban** smoking in public is a sensible one.

USING INFINITIVES WITH NOUNS

- The **refusal** of employees **to enter** the factory is part of a long-running protest about working conditions.
- Thankfully, my **request** **to re-locate** to our London office has been accepted.
- Many people's **reluctance** **to put** personal information online is related to the fact that they do not trust the internet.
- For anyone wishing to go to university, there should be a **requirement** **to speak** at least two languages fluently.
- We all have a **right** **to live** in peace and safety.

USING INFINITIVES WITH NOUNS

- Your **suggestion to sell** the house certainly came as a surprise to me.
- Many people have a **tendency to speak** rather than to listen.
- One **way to improve** the situation would be to give children some control over what they are taught and how they are taught it.
- Our **willingness to help** family members in need is a basic human characteristic.
- Our **unwillingness to treat** strangers with respect is a basic flaw.
- Many medical experts believe that a person's **wish to change** gender should be respected.



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Infinitives

STRUCTURES WITH ADJECTIVES

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- **INFINITIVES** can be used in **structures with adjectives**.

USING INFINITIVES WITH ADJECTIVES

Infinitive forms are often used with certain adjectives:

- able/unable; amazed; astonished; astounded; afraid/unafraid
- anxious; ashamed/unashamed; allowed/permitted; bound; careful
- certain; delighted; determined; disappointed/disappointing
- eager; eligible/ineligible; fortunate/unfortunate; glad
- happy/unhappy; hesitant; keen; liable
- likely/unlikely; lucky/unlucky; pleased; prepared/unprepared
- proud; ready; reluctant; sad
- sorry; sure; surprised; willing/unwilling

USING INFINITIVES WITH ADJECTIVES

- Everyone should be **able to speak** at least one foreign language.
Currently, a large proportion of the population is **unable to say** more than a few words in Spanish, Mandarin, Russian or Arabic.
- As you can imagine, I was **amazed/astonished/astounded/flabbergasted to see** you when you turned up on my doorstep! I thought you were still in Canada.
- Many people are **afraid to travel** to remote parts of the globe on their own.
- Students who have taken exams are obviously quite **anxious/keen to get** their results.
- I am **ashamed to admit** that I often leave the light on when I leave a room.

USING INFINITIVES WITH ADJECTIVES

- If motorists are **allowed/permitted** to drive at whatever speed they want, accidents are **bound** to happen.
- Parents need to be **careful** not to allow their children to eat too much junk food.
- Unless we tackle climate change immediately, conditions on our planet are **certain/sure** to worsen.
- I would be **delighted** to see you again. Let me know when you are next in our neck of the woods.
- Some politicians claim to be **determined** to end poverty. However, actions speak louder than words.

USING INFINITIVES WITH ADJECTIVES

- I am **disappointed** **to have to** say that greed is a more dominant human characteristic than kindness.
 - It is **disappointing** **to have to** re-take the exam.
 - As a society, we are so **eager** **to acquire** more and more possessions that we become self-centred and egotistical.
 - Although I have been informed that I am not **ineligible** **to apply** for funding, having read the terms and conditions I feel that I meet all of the criteria.
 - Those who are **fortunate** enough **to be** healthy and prosperous have a moral duty to help others.
 - Most city-dwellers would be **glad/happy** **to move** to the countryside if work was available there.
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USING INFINITIVES WITH ADJECTIVES

- I am **hesitant** **to accept** the job, largely because I would have such a long daily commute.
- The value of an investment is **liable** **to fall**, so you should think carefully before risking your savings.
- Economists forecast that prices are **likely/unlikely** **to rise** over the next twelve months.
- Many of us do not realise how **lucky** they are **to live** in the twenty-first century. For the majority of people, both the standard of living and the quality of life are higher than they have ever been.
- I am **pleased** **to say** that our experience at your restaurant was entirely positive.

USING INFINITIVES WITH ADJECTIVES

- We should all be **prepared to donate** ten percent of what we earn to charity.
- Although I am **proud to be** Australian, this does not mean that I think my country is better than other nations.
- Some suggest that military service should be compulsory. They argue that we should all be **ready to lay down** our lives for our country if necessary.
- I would be **reluctant/hesitant to join** the army.

USING INFINITIVES WITH ADJECTIVES

- It is **sad/terrible/awful** **to think** that so many of our fellow-humans grow up in desperate poverty. Many live on the streets and have no access to healthcare, education, adequate shelter and nutritious food.
- I am **sorry** **to have to** inform you that I wish to resign from my current job.
- I would be **surprised/shocked** **to discover** that other life-forms existed.
- Personally, although I would be **willing** **to work** long hours, I would be **unwilling** **to do** shift-work.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

THE CONTINUOUS FORM AND THE PERFECT FORM

EXPLANATION

- **INFINITIVES** (such as **to go; to think; to be able to**) are extremely common in English, and IELTS candidates make many errors with **INFINITIVES** in their Speaking and Writing Tests.
- **INFINITIVES** have a **CONTINUOUS FORM** and a **PERFECT FORM**.
- Candidates who use these forms accurately generally get higher grades for Writing and Speaking in the IELTS Test.

INFINITIVES

CONTINUOUS FORM

We can use the continuous form of infinitive verbs to describe an action which is continuous, which is temporary, or which takes place at one moment:

- I **happened** to be looking out of the window when Paul walked past.
- I **pretended** to be working because my boss was in the office.
- It **seems** to be getting more difficult to find a job.
- He **appeared** to be having a bad dream, so I woke him up.
- I **plan/intend/expect/hope/want/would like** to be living in my own home by the time I'm twenty-five.
- He **claimed** to be waiting for a friend, but he was obviously some kind of spy.

INFINITIVES

PERFECT FORM

We can use the perfect form of infinitive verbs to refer to things which happened or finished at an earlier time:

- I'm really annoyed because I wanted to apply for that job but I **seem/appear to have missed** the deadline.
- I **planned/intended/hoped/aimed to have finished** my assignment by/before the beginning of last week, but I have only done half of it.
- I **pretended to have forgotten** his name but, to tell you the truth, I knew exactly who he was.

This perfect form is often seen with modal verbs:

- She **must/might/may/could/can't have finished** already.
- I **could/should/ought to have worked** harder.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

**VERB + OBJECT +
INFINITIVE**

EXPLANATION

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- IELTS candidates who use **INFINITIVES** accurately generally get higher grades for Writing and Speaking.
- **INFINITIVES** can be used after **verb + object**.

INFINITIVES

VERB STRUCTURES

The structure verb + object + infinitive is very common:

- Doctors **advise/encourage/urge/warn** those playing dangerous sports **to wear** protective clothing.
- Teachers **should allow/enable/permit** students **to work** on their own some of the time.
- Nobody **told/asked** me **to come**, so I stayed at home.
- Various people **invited/wanted** me **to help** them but, regrettably, I didn't have enough time.

INFINITIVES

VERB STRUCTURES

- Advertisers **try to tempt consumers to buy** things which they do not need.
- She is very strong-willed: nobody **could persuade/compel her to do** something which she didn't want to do.
- Please **remind him to pick** me up after work!
- Parents are often unwilling to **teach/train their children to obey** other adults.

INFINITIVES

VERB STRUCTURES

This structure can be used with negatives:

- Medical experts **advise/urge/warn** drivers **not to consume** alcohol before getting behind the wheel.
- We **should persuade/encourage** consumers **not to purchase** products which they cannot really afford.

This structure can be used with passive forms:

- **Youngsters** **are** often **told** by their parents **not to talk** to strangers.
- **Students applying to university** **ought to be encouraged** **to consider** taking a gap-year before starting their undergraduate courses.
- **All citizens** **should be entitled/permitted** **to vote** in elections, even when they are currently in prison.

INFINITIVES

VERB STRUCTURES: LEAVING OUT TO

With some verbs which usually follow the **verb + object + infinitive** structure, we leave out **to**:

- I **heard** **him** **come/coming** in but I didn't bother getting up.
- Another customer said that he **saw** **the shoplifter** **put/putting** the watch in her pocket and **walk/walking** casually out of the jewellers.
- It is fascinating to **watch** **a craftsperson** **make/making** something. If schoolchildren had the opportunity to do this, they might be inspired to work with their hands.
- We should **make** **petty criminals** **do** work in the community.
- I will **let** **you** **know** as soon as I can.
- Can you **help** **me** **(to)** **prepare** for my presentation?



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

OTHER WAYS TO USE INFINITIVES

EXPLANATION

INFINITIVES have many more uses:

- As the **subject** of a sentence
- With **PASSIVE** forms to say what most people **think or believe**
- With **PASSIVE** forms in structures with **the first, the second, the next, the last** etc.
- In clauses with **question words**
- To **comment** on a whole sentence
- To express **purpose**
- With adverbs in **split infinitives**

USING INFINITIVES AS THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE

Sometimes we put the infinitive subject at the beginning of a sentence when we refer to one particular action:

- **To attend** the ceremony would be a great honour. (= It would be a great honour to attend the ceremony)
- **To work** for the group would be a privilege. (= It would be a privilege to work for the group)
- **To get up** early and **listen** to birdsong was the highlight of my holiday. (= It was the highlight of my holiday to get up early...)
- I'm afraid that **to postpone** the meeting would be almost impossible. (= I'm afraid that it would be almost impossible to postpone...)

USING INFINITIVES AS THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE

We can use the perfect infinitive to refer to the past:

- **To have missed** you would have been a terrible shame. (= It would have been a terrible shame to have missed you / if I had missed you)
- **To have climbed** that mountain is perhaps the greatest achievement of my life. (= It is perhaps the greatest achievement of my life to have climbed that mountain)
- **To have turned down** that job would have been a mistake. (= It would have been a mistake to have turned down that job)
- **To have stayed** in the same job all my life would have been awful. (= It would have been awful to have stayed in the same job all my life)

USING INFINITIVES

WHAT PEOPLE BELIEVE

We can use a passive form with an infinitive to indicate that something is generally true or believed to be true by experts:

- The monument **is thought/understood to be** the oldest in the world.
- Allowing language learners to interact with native-speakers **is considered/believed to be** an extremely effective strategy.
- Allowing students to choose whether to study or not **has been seen to be** quite ineffective.
- Giving schoolchildren information about nutrition and diet **is said/known to be** a very effective strategy to tackle obesity and problems with weight.
- Prices **are expected/anticipated/predicted to be** higher next year.

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INFINITIVES

WITH FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, NEXT, LAST, ONLY, BEST ETC.

We can use infinitives to replace a relative clause which follows words like **first; second; third; next; last; only; best**:

- I wish I had been the **first** person **to walk** on the moon (= ...the first person who walked on the moon)
- Being the **second** person **to walk** on the moon wouldn't be quite so amazing. (= ...the second person who walked on the moon)
- I believe the **best** thing **to do** is to strengthen the law (= ...the best thing which we can do)

We can use this structure passively:

- That is the **only** thing **to be done** (= ...the only thing which needs to be done; ...the only thing which should be done)

INFINITIVES AFTER QUESTION WORDS

We can sometimes use infinitives after question words:

- I still haven't decided **what** to study or **where** to live. I'm not even completely sure **which** university to attend.
- I don't even know **when** to start looking for courses.
- I can't find out **who** to ask about the application procedure.
- We need to show/teach/tell children **how** to behave in public.
- I need to work out **how much** to include in my dissertation and **how long** to make it.
- We haven't decided **how many** guests to invite to the wedding.

INFINITIVES WHICH COMMENT ON A SENTENCE

We can use some infinitive phrases to comment on a sentence:

- **To be perfectly honest**, I am glad I'm leaving this job.
- **To be entirely frank**, I found the lecture tedious.
- **To tell the truth**, I've never really liked it here.
- **To be fair**, my colleagues have tried to be helpful, but I just don't agree with the way they do things.
- **To cut a long story short**, I met my boss and we agreed that it made sense for me to leave immediately.

INFINITIVES TO EXPRESS PURPOSE

We can use infinitives to express the idea of purpose (when we want to explain the reason for doing something):

- I went to college **to study** dentistry.
- Measures must be put in place immediately **to tackle** this worrying issue.
- Most of us go on holiday **to relax** and **(to) unwind**.
- Many undergraduates spend a year abroad **to improve** their Russian, Arabic or Mandarin.
- The government should introduce an awareness-raising campaign **to educate** motorists about the dangers of speeding.

SPLIT INFINITIVES

Sometimes we can split the infinitive, often with adverbs:

- I don't want **to unduly worry** you.
- In order **to fully/really understand** sailing, you have to get in a boat and sail.
- I am writing **to entirely/completely disagree** with an article which appeared on your website recently.
- This is a mission **to boldly go** where no man has gone before.
- It is sometimes said that **to unnecessarily split** an infinitive is a crime against the English language.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Infinitives

STRUCTURES WITH
ENOUGH, TOO AND SO

EXPLANATION

- **INFINITIVES** (such as **to go; to think; to be able to**) are extremely common in English, and IELTS candidates make many errors with **INFINITIVES** in their Speaking and Writing Tests.
- IELTS candidates who use **INFINITIVES** accurately generally get higher grades for Writing and Speaking.
- **INFINITIVES** can be used with **enough, too** and **so**.

INFINITIVES WITH ENOUGH, TOO, SO

We can use infinitives after **so + adjective + as**:

- I am not **so foolish as to send** my bank details to a complete stranger. (= I am not foolish enough to send my bank details...)
- Most people are not **so stupid as to believe** everything which politicians tell them. (= People are not stupid enough to believe everything...)

This structure is often used in requests:

- Would you be **so kind as to help** me with my presentation? (= Would you be kind enough to help me with my presentation?)
- Would you be **so good as to pop** round and make sure I locked the door? (= Would you be good enough to pop round...?)

INFINITIVES WITH ENOUGH, TOO, SO

We can use infinitives after **too + adjective/adverb**:

- Teenagers are **too young** to comprehend the consequences of their actions. (= They are so young that they cannot comprehend...)
- That theory is **too difficult** to understand. (= The theory is so difficult that it is impossible to understand)
- The problem is **too complicated** to deal with. (= The problem is so complicated that it is impossible to deal with)
- The environmental crisis is **too tricky** to solve. (= The environmental crisis is so tricky that we cannot solve it)

INFINITIVES WITH ENOUGH, TOO, SO

- That approach would be **too risky** to consider. (= It would be so risky that it could not be considered)
- Some criminals are **too dangerous** to put in a normal prison. (= They are so dangerous that they cannot be put in a normal prison)
- It is **too soon** to say whether driverless cars will become popular. (= It is so early/soon that we cannot say whether driverless cars will become popular)
- Employees who work **too slowly** to make money should be retrained or made redundant. (= Employees who work so slowly that they cannot make money should be retrained...)
- I'm worried that she might speak **too quickly** for me to follow. (= She might speak so quickly that I cannot follow)

INFINITIVES WITH ENOUGH, TOO, SO

We can use infinitives after **adjective/adverb + enough**:

- If you are **good enough** **to play** sport for your country, you are old enough. (= If you are so good at sport that you can play international games, your age is not important)
- We were standing behind lots of other people and I wasn't **tall enough** **to see** what actually happened. (= I was so short that I couldn't see what actually happened)
- I think I work **hard enough** **to get** a pay rise. (= I work so hard that I should get a pay rise)
- I do not believe that children under the age of twelve are **old enough** **to be left** alone at home. (This sentence includes a passive form)

INFINITIVES WITH ENOUGH, TOO, SO

We can use infinitives after **enough + noun**:

- Those working in the service sector need to have **enough patience** to deal with difficult customers.
- Sadly we didn't have **enough time** to look around the entire museum.
- Many younger workers do not earn **enough (money)** to live on. (We can use **enough** as a pronoun in these sentences)
- If people do not know **enough (information)** to avoid problems online, they are likely to get into trouble. (We can use **enough** as a pronoun in these sentences)



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PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the sentences below. Each sentence is from the beginning of an IELTS General Task 1 Writing (formal letter). Try to replace the missing verb:

1. I am writing to i_____ you of my decision to resign from my current post with immediate effect.
2. I am writing to c_____ about your company's unacceptably poor customer service.
3. I am writing to a_____ for the position of Senior Negotiator, which has been advertised on a number of recruitment websites over the past few days.
4. I am writing to asc_____ whether it would be possible for my daughter to be allowed not to attend school on 25th April
5. I am writing to e_____ my concerns about the proposed changes to public transport in the city.
6. I am writing to o_____ my sincere apologies for the inconvenience caused to you.

ANSWERS

1. I am writing to **inform** you of my decision to resign from my current post with immediate effect.
2. I am writing to **complain** about your company's unacceptably poor customer service.
3. I am writing to **apply** for the position of senior negotiator, which has been advertised on a number of recruitment websites over the past few days.
4. I am writing to **ascertain** whether it would be possible for my daughter to be allowed not to attend school on 25th April.
5. I am writing to **express** my concerns about the proposed changes to public transport in the city.
6. I am writing to **offer** my sincere apologies for the inconvenience caused to you.

EXTRA

- To resign = to leave your job
- With immediate effect = now; straightaway; without delay
- Unacceptably = extremely
- Concerns = worries
- Proposed = suggested; planned
- Sincere = genuine; real
- Gratitude = thanks

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the following sentences. Decide whether the verb should be in the -ing form or the infinitive form:

1. Anyone who spends time **watching/to watch** sports like football or baseball can appreciate how much preparation top sports-stars have to do.
2. It is quite difficult **understanding/to understand** why anyone would have racist or sexist attitudes.
3. If we want to know why some schoolchildren fail, it is essential **finding out/to find out** what they actually think about **studying/to study**.
4. The authorities sometimes force asylum-seekers **returning/to return** to their home country.
5. During the terrible storms which hit the country last year, the government warned residents **evacuating/to evacuate** the area.
6. It is essential **knowing/to know** what motivates children. It is vital **using/to use** teaching strategies which youngsters in the classroom find interesting and stimulating.

ANSWERS

1. Anyone who spends time **watching** sports like football or baseball can appreciate how much preparation top sports-stars have to do.
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PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the following sentences. Decide whether the verb should be in the -ing form or the infinitive form:

1. The approach of **making/to make** smokers **quitting/quit** their habit without **giving/to give** them any alternative source of nicotine is known **being/to be** quite ineffective.
2. **Asking/To ask** children **doing/to do** examinations without **giving/to give** them the chance to practise is thought **being/to be** quite an inefficient and ineffective teaching strategy.
3. Over the past few years, problems connected with drug-use have been **becoming/to become** increasingly serious.
4. Medical experts **dealing/to deal** with youngsters **using/to use** drugs point out that giving up **taking/to take** incredibly addictive substances such as cocaine requires a lot of commitment and a great deal of support.
5. Despite **teaching/to teach** pupils for many years, some educators do not appear **improving/to improve**.
6. The majority of people enjoy **dancing/to dance**. They love **moving/to move** to the rhythm of the music.

ANSWERS

1. The approach of **making** smokers **quit** their habit without **giving** them any alternative source of nicotine is known **to be** quite ineffective.
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