

# Uses of the bare infinitive

The infinitive can be used with or without the marker *to*. These two forms of the infinitive are distinguished by the terms 'to-infinitives' and 'bare infinitives'.

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The infinitive without the marker *to* (bare-infinitive) is used after the auxiliaries *shall, should, will, would, may, might, do, did, can, could, must, need and dare*.

I shall invite them.

We must go now.

He can speak English.

You need not go.

He dare not refuse.

## Notes

When *dare* and *need* are used as principal verbs, they are followed by the to-infinitive.

Did he dare to do that?

We will need two weeks to complete the work.

The infinitive is used without *to* after some principal verbs like *bid, watch, see, let, make, help and hear*.

I bade him come. (NOT I bade him to come.)

Let him go. (NOT Let him to go.)

We heard her sing. (NOT We heard her to sing.)

I watched them play. (NOT I watched them to play.)

After *rather, better* and *had better*

The infinitive is used without *to* after *rather, better* and *had better*.

You had rather visit him.

I would rather wait.

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You had better consult a doctor.

After some prepositions like except, but, save and than

She can do everything but cook.

She did nothing except cry.