

Finite and non-finite verbs

There are mainly two types of verbs in English – finite and non-finite. Finite verbs change their forms when there is a change in the number or person of the subject. Finite verbs also have different forms in different tenses.

Non-finite verbs do not change their form when the number or person of the subject changes. There are mainly three types of non-finite verbs: infinitives, gerunds and participles.

Can you identify finite and non-finite verbs? Test your understanding with this grammar exercise.

In the following sentences, state whether the verb given in the inverted commas is finite or non-finite.

1. My little brother 'wants' to be an actor.

finite

non-finite

2. She worked hard 'to pass' the test.

finite

non-finite

3. I 'couldn't solve' the problem.

finite

non-finite

Finite and non-finite verbs

4. 'To err' is human.

finite

non-finite

5. Your duty is 'to cross' the river without getting noticed.

finite

non-finite

6. The doctor 'is attending' to the injured people.

finite

non-finite

7. She 'opened' the door.

finite

non-finite

8. The students were asked 'to submit' their assignments by Friday.

Finite and non-finite verbs

finite

non-finite

9. The teacher 'encouraged' the students to work hard.

finite

non-finite

10. The dog 'wagged' its tail to show its happiness.

finite

non-finite

Answers

1. My little brother wants to be an actor. (wants - finite; to be - non-finite)

2. She worked hard to pass the test. (worked - finite; to pass - non-finite)

3. I couldn't solve the problem. (couldn't solve - finite)

4. To err is human. (to err - non-finite; is - finite)

5. Your duty is to cross the river without getting noticed. (is - finite; to cross - non-finite;

Finite and non-finite verbs

getting - non-finite)

6. The doctor is attending to the injured people. (is attending - finite)

7. She opened the door. (opened - finite)

8. The students were asked to submit their assignments by Friday. (were asked - finite; to submit - non-finite)

9. The teacher encouraged the students to work hard. (encouraged - finite; to work - non-finite)

10. The dog wagged its tail to show its happiness. (wagged - finite; to show - non-finite)