

# Verb review: infinitives

The infinitive is the basic form of the verb. It is usually used with the particle *to*. Examples are: *(to) break, (to) walk, (to) stand, (to) write*.

The infinitive can also be used without the particle 'to'. For example, it is used without 'to' after modal auxiliary verbs (e.g. shall, will, should, could etc.).

I can knit. (NOT I can to knit.)

She should go. (NOT She should to go.)

You could ask him. (NOT You could to ask him.)

When the infinitive is used with 'to', it is called 'the to-infinitive'. When it is used without 'to', it is called 'the bare infinitive'.

The infinitive serves several purposes. It can be the subject or object of the verb.

To make his parents proud is his ambition. (Here the infinitive phrase 'to make his parents proud' is the subject of the verb 'is'.)

To find fault is easy.

The infinitive can be the object of the verb.

I don't want to go. (Here the infinitive 'to go' acts as the object of the verb 'want'.)

He likes to play cricket. (Here the infinitive 'to play' acts as the object of the verb 'likes'.)

The infinitive can be the complement of a verb.

Her greatest pleasure is to play with her kids. (Here the infinitive phrase 'to play with her kids' completes the predicate and acts as the complement of the verb.)

The infinitive can be the object of a preposition.

The plane is about to take off. (Here the infinitive 'to take off' acts as the object of the preposition 'about'.)