

The Infinitive

5i. An infinitive is a verb form that can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Most infinitives begin with *to*.

- NOUN** I have always wanted **to visit** the Egyptian pyramids. [direct object of the verb *have wanted*]
- ADJECTIVE** I may soon have the opportunity **to visit** the Egyptian pyramids. [modifying the noun *opportunity*]
- ADVERB** I may travel to Egypt next summer **to visit** the pyramids. [modifying the verb phrase *may travel*]

Do not confuse an infinitive with a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*. A prepositional phrase always has an object that is a noun or a pronoun. An infinitive is a verb form.

- INFINITIVE** to travel
- PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** to Japan

EXERCISE Underline the infinitive in each of the following sentences. If the sentence does not have an infinitive, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. To visit the pyramids in Egypt would be exciting.

- Laurie said that the best place to go on Friday is the roller rink.
- Elaine wants to be a writer after she graduates.
- The idea to remember is that an infinitive is a verb form.
- The clerk gave the sack of groceries to him.
- The neatly chopped tomatoes were ready to go into the salad.
- Emile read the article to find information about Korea.
- To learn facts, some people use mnemonics, or memory devices.
- Eddie came to school late on Wednesday.
- She wanted her guest to be comfortable.
- A person needs coordination to dance well.

The Infinitive Phrase

5j. An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive and any modifiers or complements the infinitive has. The entire phrase may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

- NOUN** **To climb Mount Everest** is one of Ann's goals. [subject of the verb *is*]
- ADJECTIVE** Any time is a great time **to be in New Orleans**. [modifying the noun *time*]
- ADVERB** We displayed posters **to remind everyone of the Earth Day festivities**. [modifying the verb *displayed*]

EXERCISE Underline the infinitive phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, above the infinitive phrase, write *N* for *noun*, *ADJ* for *adjective*, or *ADV* for *adverb*. If a sentence does not have a infinitive phrase, write *none* after the sentence.

Example 1. Sarah took the time ^{*ADJ*} to decorate her notebooks.

1. To fix a flat bicycle tire you may need a tire patch and some glue.
2. Alex was ready to begin his new class on Monday.
3. The campers went to a campsite near the mountains.
4. The ability to play a musical instrument comes from talent and practice.
5. Henry's little brother always wants to play hide-and-seek.
6. The team went to the stadium to practice the new plays.
7. The purpose of a persuasive speech is to convince others.
8. The salesperson measured Roy's arm to determine his sleeve size.
9. Please hand your science project to the person behind you.
10. Yori wants to eat Italian food for lunch.
11. To study a foreign language is a worthwhile pursuit.
12. We were told to put the food away.
13. Please tell them to be quiet.
14. Saturday is a good day to mow the lawn.
15. Are you prepared to answer the question?
16. Martina sent the results to her father.
17. The president asked her advisers to propose a solution.
18. My chief goal in college is to earn my degree.
19. To remember a conversation from three years ago is quite a trick.
20. Don't forget to return the basketball to the equipment room.