

for CHAPTER 5: THE PHRASE pages 154–156

# Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases A

**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** Would you like **to dance**? [direct object of the verb *would like*]

**ADJECTIVE** A relatively simple dance **to perform** is the waltz. [modifying the noun *dance*]

**ADVERB** Are all of the dancers ready **to rehearse**? [modifying the adjective *ready*]

**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 become a singer** requires talent and desire. [subject of the verb *requires*]

**ADJECTIVE** Do you have the desire **to become a singer**? [modifying the noun *desire*]

**ADVERB** You seem eager **to become a singer**. [modifying the adjective *eager*]

**EXERCISE A** Underline the infinitive phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, identify the use of the phrase by writing above it *N* for *noun*, *ADJ* for *adjective*, or *ADV* for *adverb*.

**Example 1.** Do you like <sup>*N*</sup> to make things out of paper?

1. An easy thing to form out of paper is an envelope.
2. To make a paper airplane takes little time.
3. Some children were eager to fold paper into shapes of animal figures.
4. One child's goal was to create a paper jacket.
5. Others were content to design paper baskets.

**EXERCISE B** Use each of the following infinitives in a sentence. The part of speech is indicated in parentheses.

**Example 1.** to build (noun) *Katy said she wanted to build a treehouse in the back yard.*

6. to feel (noun) \_\_\_\_\_

7. to become (adverb) \_\_\_\_\_

8. to believe (adverb) \_\_\_\_\_

9. to fill (adjective) \_\_\_\_\_

10. to decide (noun) \_\_\_\_\_

## Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases B

**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** At an early age the child learned **to sign**. [direct object of the verb *learned*]

**ADJECTIVE** Raisins and other dried fruit would be good snacks **to serve**. [modifying the noun *snacks*]

**ADVERB** This jigsaw puzzle will be difficult **to work**. [modifying the adjective *difficult*]

**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** Two of my classmates are trying **to build a computer**. [direct object of the verb *are trying*]

**ADJECTIVE** Who was the first woman **to command a space shuttle**? [modifying the noun *woman*]

**ADVERB** We gathered outside **to observe the meteor shower**. [modifying the verb *gathered*]

**EXERCISE** Underline the infinitive or infinitive phrase in each of the following sentences. Then, write above the infinitive or infinitive phrase *N* for *noun*, *ADJ* for *adjective*, or *ADV* for *adverb*.

**Example 1.** Jacob was the first student <sup>ADJ</sup> to volunteer for the cleanup crew.

1. Francis wrapped the sandwich in cellophane to keep the sandwich fresh.
2. The assignment was not difficult to complete.
3. At four o'clock, Charles began to paint the garage a dazzling shade of pink.
4. Lee and his buddies got together to design a video game.
5. Fruits and vegetables are good, nutritious foods to eat.
6. The teacher asked the class not to talk.
7. Terry used the World Wide Web to find information about lemurs.
8. We tried to capture the runaway dog, but it was too fast and wily for us.
9. To climb that colossal rock will take skill and concentration.
10. They used nails and ropes to fasten the boards to the tree.

## Verbals and Verbal Phrases

A **verbal** is a word that is formed from a verb but is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. There are three kinds of verbals: the *participle*, the *gerund*, and the *infinitive*. A verbal that has modifiers or complements is called a **verbal phrase**. Below are some examples of verbal phrases.

- PARTICIPIAL PHRASE** The language **spoken by the greatest number of people** is Mandarin. [The past participle *spoken* begins a phrase that modifies the noun *language*.]
- GERUND PHRASE** For some people, **learning a foreign language** can be a challenge. [The gerund *learning* begins a phrase used as the subject of the verb *can be*.]
- INFINITIVE PHRASE** I am learning **to speak Japanese**. [The infinitive *to speak* begins a phrase used as the direct object of the verb *am learning*.]

**EXERCISE A** Underline the verbal or verbal phrase in each of the following sentences. Above each verbal or verbal phrase, write *gerund*, *gerund phrase*, *participle*, *participial phrase*, *infinitive*, or *infinitive phrase*.

**Example 1.** Kevin researched different methods of measuring time. *gerund phrase*

- The plan accepted by the mayor involved a tax cut.
- Paula expected the paper airplane to fly.
- Feeling dizzy, Helena stopped and took a break.
- The weight of the sack made it difficult to carry.
- My uncle from Michigan enjoys canoeing.
- The squeaking wheel alerted the mechanic to a potential problem.
- Getting up early in the morning is sometimes a challenge.
- We bought a new wrench to fix the leaky faucet.
- The forgotten treasure lay at the bottom of the sea for three hundred years.
- Fascinated, Pepe stood and admired the mural for several hours.

**EXERCISE B** Decide how the underlined word groups are used in each of the following sentences. Options for each sentence are given in parentheses. Circle the correct option.

**Example 1.** Coughing and sneezing, Doug stayed home from band practice. (adjective or noun)

- The easiest part of the project is cutting out the pattern. (*direct object* or *predicate nominative*)
- The tools used by some ancient cultures are impressive. (*adverb* or *adjective*)
- Running five miles per week is Joanna's goal. (*subject* or *direct object*)
- They went to the park to have a picnic. (*adverb* or *adjective*)
- The coach's philosophy is to practice every day. (*predicate nominative* or *direct object*)