



STUDY NOTES

EPISODE 20: ZOOS

INFINITIVE VERB FUNCTIONS

It is not uncommon to find such constructions as: *it would **appear to be...**, **to err is human**, **to forgive is divine**, ... **so as to reduce inflation**, **it is essential to recognise...***, in IELTS writing and spoken English or the IELTS reading and listening passages for that matter.

These are examples of infinitive forms used in a variety of different **functions**, including adding more information to a verb, acting as a subject, explaining a purpose or modifying an adjective.

Knowing and being able to use the various functions are helpful for all aspects of the IELTS test.

STUDY TIPS

Using various functions and structures with infinitives as well as gerunds allows you to demonstrate your grammatical range and accuracy.

Remember the use of the infinitive as a subject, though correct, is not commonly used and especially not in spoken English.

In IELTS and academic writing it is more appropriate to use the **it** subject instead. Remember also that infinitives of purpose using **so as** and **in order** are more formal structures.

Forms of the infinitive

The infinitive, while being the simplest form of the verb, is generally used with *to*. It can also have a perfect or continuous form.

INFINITIVE FORMS		
	Form	Example
Simple	to + simple form	I decided <i>to write</i> .
Perfect	to have + past participle	Jane was relieved <i>to have found</i> her handbag.
Continuous	to be + present participle	John is lucky to be playing in the tennis finals.
Perfect and Continuous	to have been + present participle	She would like to have been dancing in the ballet.



Functions of the infinitive

There are a variety of different functions in which infinitive clauses are used. These include:

- subjects
- adverbials – infinitives of purpose and result
- complements

FUNCTIONS OF THE INFINITIVE		
Function	Structure/Comment	Example
subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ when referring to an activity; this structure, though, is not commonly used ▪ more commonly used with <i>it</i> as the subject followed by the infinitive clause 	<p><i>To get plenty of rest before the IELTS test</i> is important.</p> <p>It is important <i>to get plenty of rest before the IELTS test</i>.</p>
adverbial – infinitives of purpose, result and reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ when describing the purpose for or outcome of an action ▪ for a more formal structure use: <i>(in order) + infinitive</i> <i>so as + infinitive</i> <p>NB: <i>in order</i> can be omitted.</p>	<p>I am writing <i>to inquire</i> about the Diploma courses at Insearch UTS.</p> <p>Janet was upset <i>to find</i> her house broken into.</p> <p>It is necessary to work consistently and hard <i>in order to score</i> well in the test.</p> <p>I always leave early in the morning <i>so as not to be late</i> for class.</p>
complement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ used as a subject complement 	<p>Bill's motive in lying was <i>to save face</i>.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>verb + infinitive</i> <p>Common verbs that are followed with infinitives are: afford, agree, aim, appear, arrange, ask, attempt, begin, care, choose, come, consent, continue, dare, decide, demand, expect, fail, forget, guarantee, happen, hate, help, hesitate, hope, intend, learn, like, love, manage, mean, need, neglect, offer, plan, prefer, prepare, pretend, promise, propose, prove, refuse, regret, remember, seem, start, swear, tend, threaten, trouble, try, undertake, wait, want, wish, yearn</p> <p>There <i>appears to be</i> a new student in class. I <i>expect to get</i> my results tomorrow. Margaret <i>preferred to study</i> accounting at UTS.</p>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>verb + object + infinitive</i> <p>Common verbs that are followed with an object + infinitive are: advise, allow, ask, beg, cause, caution, challenge, command, compel, convince, direct, enable, encourage, expect, forbid, force, get, hate, help, hire, instruct, invite, leave, like, love, motivate, need, oblige, order, permit, persuade, prefer, recommend, remind, request, require, teach, tell, tempt, trouble, urge, want, warn</p> <p><i>We invited the education counsellor to attend the graduation.</i> <i>I recommend all IELTS candidates to develop a habit of reading some English every day.</i> The teacher <i>urged me to study</i> in Australia.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ used after adjectives describing peoples feelings or reactions <p>Some adjectives that fall in this category are: afraid, amazed angry, anxious, careful, delighted, determined, disappointed, disturbed, eager, glad, happy, hesitant, lucky, pleased, proud, relieved, reluctant, sad, sorry, shocked, stunned, surprised, upset</p> <p><i>We were relieved to hear</i> that she passed the test. I was <i>pleased to see</i> that she enrolled in the MBA program.</p>

Infinitives versus gerunds (-ing forms)

Sometimes it will be necessary to make a choice whether to use an infinitive or a gerund because certain verbs can only be followed by one of the forms.

Some common verbs, which take an infinitive, include:

afford	agree	aim	appear	attempt	care	claim	come
consent	decide	demand	fail	fight	happen	have	hope
learn	look	neglect	offer	prepare	pretend	promise	refuse
seek	seem	tend	undertake	want	wish		

For example: It *seemed to be* a good idea at the time.

John *refused to pay* his parking ticket.

Some common verbs, which take a gerund, include:

admit	avoid	consider	defer	deny	finish	give up	keep	leave
off	postpone	practise	put off	recommend	save	suggest		



For example: I *suggested studying* IT at the University of Technology, Sydney.
Margaret *was considering visiting* the Antarctic next summer.

With the following verbs either a gerund or infinitive can be used. However, there is a difference in meaning.

verb	+ infinitive	+ gerund
forget/ remember	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to a future action <p><i>Don't forget to take out</i> the rubbish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to an event in the past <p>I'll never <i>forget holidaying</i> in Europe with my friend in 1994.</p>
go on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> change in another direction <p>After completing an undergraduate degree, he <i>went on to study</i> medicine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing an activity <p>Paul <i>went on protesting</i> despite being advised to stop.</p>
regret	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reporting bad news <p>I <i>regret to inform</i> you that you were unsuccessful in getting the job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeling sorry about doing something in the past <p>I <i>regret telling</i> that story about John. It was not in good taste.</p>
stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completion of one action which is followed by another <p>Jane <i>stopped to buy</i> the paper.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completion of an action <p>John <i>stopped buying</i> the magazine years ago.</p>
try	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempting to do something which is difficult <p>I <i>tried to get</i> some help but everyone was too busy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> doing something differently <p><i>Try sending</i> a text message to inform him. That's usually worked for me.</p>