

Definition of an infinitive clause

An infinitive clause or phrase is one which contains an **infinitive** as the main verb.

There are two types of infinitive clause:

1. The **to-infinitive** clause. The verb follows 'to'.

I need **to go shopping** this afternoon.
My boss allows me **to leave early** on Fridays.

2. A **bare infinitive** phrase. The verb does not follow 'to'.

I must **go shopping** this afternoon.
My boss lets me **leave early** on Fridays.

An infinitive clause can act as a noun, an adjective or an adverb.

1. A noun clause - the **subject** or **object** of a sentence answering the question 'who?' or 'what?'

She helped **to write the report**.
Her job as a coach is **to teach language skills**.

2. An adjective clause modifies the noun, giving more information about it. These clauses give an opinion or a purpose for the noun.

I don't have time **to go to the meeting**. [modifies 'time']
John wants a book **to read**. [modifies 'book']

3. An adverbial clause adds information to the main clause, answering questions such as 'when?', 'where?', 'why?', 'with what goal?' and 'under what conditions?'

John was invited **to speak** at the conference. [tells us why he was invited]
Jeremy is keen **to improve his grammar**.

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