

# 16 The infinitive and the '-ing' form

## 16.1 The bare infinitive and the *to*-infinitive

### 16.1A Forms of the infinitive [ > LEG 16.1-3]

**Study:**  
★★

1 We often use the base form of a verb (*go*) as an infinitive. We call this the **bare infinitive** because we use it without *to*. We must distinguish it from the ***to*-infinitive**, where we always use *to* in front of the base form of the verb (*to go*). The most common use of the bare infinitive is after modal verbs *He may/can* (etc.) *go* [ > 11.1A-B].

2 Forms of the infinitive:

	active	passive
present infinitive	(not) (to) ask	(not) (to) be asked
present progressive infinitive	(not) (to) be asking	–
perfect or past infinitive	(not) (to) have asked	(not) (to) have been asked
perfect/past progressive infinitive	(not) (to) have been asking	–

**Write:** Using the verbs in brackets, supply the appropriate forms of the infinitive:  
*be doing, be done, do, have been doing, have been done, or have done.*

- 1 We can ..... *leave* ..... soon. (leave)
- 2 I don't know what Mark's doing. He may ..... in his room. (study)
- 3 She's a slow worker! I could ..... the job twice in the time she's taken. (do)
- 4 Why were you waiting here? You should ..... round the corner. (wait)
- 5 I promise you your order will ..... today. (send)
- 6 'How was that table scratched?' – 'It must ..... when it was being moved.' (do)

### 16.1B 'Let', 'make', 'would rather/sooner' and 'had better' [ > LEG 16.4-5]

**Study:**  
★★

- 1 We use the imperative form *Let's* (= Let us) + bare infinitive for making suggestions:  
***Let's take a taxi! Let's take a taxi, shall we? Do let's take a taxi.*** [ > 11.6F]  
The negative is: ***Let's not (take a taxi).*** Or: ***Don't let's (take a taxi).***
- 2 *Let* as a full verb (= 'allow') is always followed by a noun or pronoun + bare infinitive:  
*I won't let you/him, etc. go. Don't let the children annoy you. They won't let us speak.*
- 3 *Make* (= compel) is followed by a bare infinitive in the active: *She made them work hard.*  
It is followed by a *to*-infinitive in the passive: *They were made to work hard.*
- 4 We use the bare infinitive after *would rather (not), would sooner (not), had better (not)*:  
***I'd rather be told the truth. You'd better not go near the edge.*** [ > 11.8A]

**Write:** Supply suitable infinitive forms for the verbs given in brackets.

- 1 Let's .... *go* ... to the cinema. (go)
- 2 Let's ..... out long. (not stay)
- 3 Let's ..... , shall we? (go out)
- 4 Don't let's ..... home yet. (go)
- 5 Let XYZ ..... a triangle. (be)
- 6 Let me ..... that letter for you. (post)
- 7 They didn't let her ..... jeans. (wear)
- 8 He made me ..... the mess. (clear up)
- 9 That T-shirt makes you ..... younger. (look)
- 10 I was made ..... floors. (scrub)

- 11 I'd rather ..... for a walk in the rain than ..... nothing at all. (go, do)  
 12 I'd rather ..... anything if you don't mind. (not have)  
 13 I don't really want to see that play. I'd sooner ..... at home. (stay)  
 14 You'd better ..... what you think. (not say)  
 15 It's late. I think we'd better ..... (go)

**16.1C The infinitive with or without 'to' after 'help' and 'know'** [> LEG 16.7]

**Study:**  
★★

- 1 We may use a bare infinitive or a to-infinitive after a few verbs like *help* and *know*.  
 The use of a to-infinitive is more formal:  
*Mother **helped me (to) do** my homework.*  
 We do not usually omit *to* after *not*:  
*How can I **help my children not to worry** about their exams?*
- 2 We sometimes use *help* without a noun or pronoun object:  
*Everyone in the village **helped (to) build** the new Youth Centre.*
- 3 We have a noun or pronoun object after *know*:  
*I've never **known her (to) be** late before. I've never **known her not (to) be** late.*  
 We use *to* in the passive: *He **was known to have/to have had** a quick temper as a boy.*

**Write:** Join or rewrite the sentences below using the words given.

- 1 I found this book. The librarian helped me.  
 The librarian ..... *helped (me) (to) find this book* .....
- 2 I have to fill in this job application form. Can you help me?  
 Can you ..... ?
- 3 You mustn't worry so much. I can help you.  
 I can help .....
- 4 People know him to be a very generous man.  
 He .....
- 5 He's a ruthless businessman. He is known for that.  
 He's known .....
- 6 She's never on time.  
 I've never known .....

**16.1D Context**

**Write:** Put in the correct forms of the verbs.



He had had a brilliant idea.

**ONE CUBE OR TWO?**

When we were at school as children we were (*make/wear*) <sup>1</sup> *made to wear* indoor shoes inside the school building. The teachers would never (*let us/wear*) <sup>2</sup> ..... our outdoor shoes at all and they (*make us/change*) <sup>3</sup> ..... in the changing rooms from the moment we entered the building. I'd never known teachers (*be*) <sup>4</sup> ..... more strict about any other school rule. The trouble was that my indoor shoes really (*make me/suffer*) <sup>5</sup> ..... because they were so tight. ('*Let/expand*) <sup>6</sup> ..... our shoes!' a fellow sufferer suggested. He had had a brilliant idea. We put plastic bags inside our shoes and poured water into the bags. We sealed the bags carefully and put our shoes into the freezer. Of course the ice (*make the shoes/expand*) <sup>7</sup> ..... and they were a pleasure to wear. This clever idea (*help me/get*) <sup>8</sup> ..... through my schooldays with less discomfort and I have never forgotten it!