

**INFINITIVES AND INFINITIVE PHRASES****THE INFINITIVE**

**14i** An *infinitive* is a verb form, usually preceded by *to*, that can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

**EXAMPLES** I want **to try**. [*To try* is an infinitive used as a noun. It is the direct object of the verb *want*.]  
 Anna is the one **to ask**. [*To ask* is an infinitive used as an adjective. It modifies the pronoun *one*.]  
 Are you well enough **to run**? [*To run* is an infinitive used as an adverb. It modifies the adverb *enough*.]



*To* plus a noun or a pronoun (*to Jaime, to me*) is a prepositional phrase, not an infinitive.

**EXERCISE 13 Identifying Infinitives**

Underline the infinitive in the sentences below.

- EX. 1. Is this game easy to play?
1. Would you like to travel on a boat, far away across the sea?
  2. Having large brains, dolphins are quick to learn.
  3. To leave so early during the performance would be rude.
  4. Those are the poems to memorize for speech class.
  5. To prepare for the test, Hala studied for two hours.
  6. How expensive is this bicycle tire to repair?
  7. To escape the snarling lion was Nora's only thought.
  8. Wong needs to practice his part for the play.
  9. To succeed, you must study every day.
  10. It was exciting to read the novel by Margaret Craven.

### INFINITIVE PHRASES

**14j** An *infinitive phrase* consists of an infinitive together with its modifiers and complements. The entire phrase may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

**EXAMPLE** **To design a computer program** takes skill. [The infinitive phrase is used as a noun. The infinitive *to design* has a complement, *a computer program*.]  
 Which is the best stroller **to buy for a baby**? [The infinitive phrase is used as an adjective to modify the noun *stroller*. The infinitive *to buy* is modified by the prepositional phrase *for a baby*.]  
 It was exciting **to win at chess yesterday**. [The infinitive phrase is used as an adverb to modify the adjective *exciting*. The infinitive *to win* is modified by the prepositional phrase *at chess* and by the adverb *yesterday*.]

### EXERCISE 14 Identifying Infinitive Phrases

Underline the infinitive phrase in each of the sentences below.

EX. [1] Lizards are interesting to study in school.

[1] Lizards are able to protect themselves in many ways. [2] Some lizards seem to match their surroundings. [3] The chameleon, for instance, likes to change its color for protection. [4] Other lizards like to play tricks on their enemies. [5] For example, some lizards will break off their tails to escape their enemies. [6] To replace their old tails, these lizards grow new ones. [7] A third way lizards defend themselves is to fly short distances. [8] The so-called flying dragon seems to sail from tree limb to tree limb. [9] Several lizards will fight to defend themselves. [10] One of these fighters, the monitor, thrashes its tail to whip its enemy.