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In English grammar, an infinitive is the base form of a verb that can function as a noun, adjective, or adverb. "Infinitive" comes from the Latin word infinitus meaning endless. The infinitive is a type of verbal, or word derived from a verb that does not function as a verb, that is almost always preceded by the particle "to". Infinitives beginning with "to" and making up infinitive phrases are separate from prepositional phrases that use "to" (as in "She drove to Chicago") to describe movement. An infinitive phrase is made up of the particle "to", an infinitive, and any accompanying objects, modifiers, or complements. Examples of infinitive phrases: She plans to write a novel.They are going to run around the block.The dog was not hungry enough to eat. A negative infinitive phrase can be formed by placing the negative particle "not" in front of "to". Examples of negative infinitive phrases: She told me not to drink the milk.I was going to really try not to be late.They were warned not to go near the poison ivy. Mark Twain: "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt." Will Rogers: "Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save." Susan Sontag: "Until the advent of television emptied the movie theaters, it was from a weekly visit to the cinema that you learned (or tried to learn) how to walk, to smoke, to kiss, to fight, to grieve." Fred Allen: "A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized." Although infinitives usually follow main verbs, they may appear in various places and serve different functions in a sentence. Here are a few examples of infinitives that do not follow main verbs and/or are being used as sentence parts other than subjects or objects: To raise a child is the highest form of education.—"to raise" is the subject of the verb "is" We want to raise our children in a safe environment.—"to raise" is the object of the verb "want" Her only goal is to graduate.—"to graduate" is the subject complement after the linking verb "is" Each child has a list of chores to complete.—"to complete" is the adjective modifying the noun phrase "a list of chores" A perfect infinitive is defined as "to" + "have" + a past participle. James Thurber spoke about perfect infinitives in his article for The New Yorker titled "Our Own Modern English Usage: The Perfect Infinitive." Below is an excerpt from this article that describes the perilous situation of too many "haves". "It is easy enough to say that a person should live in such a way as to avoid the perfect infinitive after the past conditional, but it is another matter to do it. The observance of the commonest amenities of life constantly leads us into that usage. Let us take a typical case. A gentleman and his wife, calling on friends, find them not at home. The gentleman decides to leave a note of regret couched in a few well-chosen words, and the first thing he knows he is involved in this: 'We would have liked to have found you in.' Reading it over, the gentleman is assailed by the suspicion that he has too many 'haves,' and that the whole business has somehow been put too far into the past. His first reaction is to remedy this by dating the note: '9 p.m. Wednesday, June 12, 1929.' This at once seems too formal, and, with a sigh, he starts in again on the sentence itself. That is where he makes a fatal mistake. The simplest way out, as always, is to seek some other method of expressing the thought...What he does, however, is to lapse into a profound study of this particular grammatical situation, than which there is no more hazardous mental occupation... "First the victim will change the sentence to: 'We would have liked to find you in.' ...this is correct (barring the use of 'would' instead of 'should'), but, alas, the gentleman does not realize it. Few people ever do realize it. This is because the present infinitive, 'to find,' seems to imply success. They, therefore, fall back on the perfect infinitive, 'to have found,' because it implies that the thing hoped for did not come to pass. They have fallen back on it so often that, after the ordinary past tenses, its use has come to be counted as idiomatic, even though it is incorrect... "There is a simple rule about past conditionals...After 'would have liked,' 'would have hoped,' 'would have feared,' etc., use the present infinitive. The implication of non-fulfilment is inherent in the governing verb itself, that is, in the 'would have liked,' etc. You don't have to shade the infinitive to get a nice note of frustration...Avoid the perfect infinitive after the past conditional as you would a cobra." Sontag, Susan. "The Decay of Cinema." The New York Times, 25 Feb. 1996. Thurber, James. "Our Own Modern English Usage: The Perfect Infinitive." The New Yorker, 22 June 1929. I've been using a new mental model where I formulate a sentence that describes what a company does and then home in on the verb that defines the category they hope to own. By changing one word at a time in the sentence, it's easy to think of the different directions that a company can expand in, whether through building new products or making acquisitions. This rubric helped me see what I initially thought were surprising forays by companies as choices that are strategic and cogent Here's an example with Uber: Humans driving cars move other humans on demand. Changing any of the italicized words one at a time allows us to think of adjacent markets that fit within Uber's brand and can benefit from the expertise and economies of scale that they are building. Humans driving cars move food on demand. a.k.a Uber Eats Self-driving cars move humans on demand. a.k.a Uber's Self-driving program Humans driving trucks move stuff on demand. a.k.a Uber Freight Self-Driving cars/trucks/boats/planes move stuff on demand. Self-Driving Food Trucks/Vendors that move to where you are on demand. From these examples we can surmise that Uber's business is to own any category with the verb move. If you think of Uber as an on-demand cab company then you would miss the size of the opportunity around owning the verb to move. It's much more rewarding to think about it as a company that moves people, objects, food, etc. It makes it much clearer what their potential can be as their ambition grows. Let's take another example to illustrate the versatility of the concept using Google: Google organizes all the world's information so that humans can find digital information. It's crucial to notice that Google, though it's synonymous with search is actually anchoring it's mission around the verb organize. Search is a method of accessing the organized information rather than the primary goal. Of course they started out by organizing links on the web and that naturally evolved to all the world's information even if it's not digital e.g. maps, books. They also made the information available to machines through APIs instead of just humans. I find that framing a company's mission using this method allows me to understand the possibilities around their business both for anticipating interesting ideas that can be built and for brainstorming pleasure :) Thanks to Katie Gemmill and Nicolae Rusan for reading this and providing input. The past simple takes the following forms: Past Simple Positive: Subject + past simple form of verb + objects Jason went to camp in Florida last week.We had dinner at that new restaurant two days ago. Past Simple Negative Form: Subject + did not + verb + objects Mary didn't attend the meeting last week.They didn't pass the exam yesterday. Past Simple Question Form: (Question Word) + did + subject + verb? What did you do yesterday?When did they meet?Tim? The verb 'to be' does not take the auxiliary verb 'did' in the question or negative form.The regular past simple form of verbs ends in '-ed', irregular past simple form of verbs vary and must be studied. Examples I was on time to the meeting yesterday.Alexander wasn't born in April. He was born in May.Were you at the party last night? 'Ago' is used at the end of a sentence preceded by a specific amount of time such as: three days ago, two weeks ago, one month ago, etc.'Last' is used with 'week', 'month', and 'year'. 'In' is used with specific months and years in the past. Conjugate the verb in parentheses using the form indicated. In the case of questions, use the indicated subject as well. Tom \_\_\_\_\_ (visit) his mother last weekend.We \_\_\_\_\_ (not buy) that TV yesterday because it was too expensive. \_\_\_\_\_ (you / be) at the meeting on Tuesday?Where \_\_\_\_\_ (Sheila / stay) in New Orleans?Alan \_\_\_\_\_ (understand) the situation two days ago.They \_\_\_\_\_ (not finish) the project on time last month.When \_\_\_\_\_ (Mary / fly) to New York?Henry \_\_\_\_\_ (read) Harry Smith's latest book last month.I \_\_\_\_\_ (not write) that letter to him last week.What \_\_\_\_\_ (you do) yesterday afternoon?You \_\_\_\_\_ (think) he couldn't win, didn't you?She \_\_\_\_\_ (not win) the prize two weeks ago.Where \_\_\_\_\_ (Andy / go) last week?Thomas \_\_\_\_\_ (come) to visit us in May.Susan \_\_\_\_\_ (not telephone) in time to get a ticket.How \_\_\_\_\_ (you meet) him?David \_\_\_\_\_ (get up) early on Saturday to play golf.Betty \_\_\_\_\_ (not draw) that picture. \_\_\_\_\_ (Peter forget) his books yesterday?She \_\_\_\_\_ (give) him a present for his birthday yesterday. Choose the correct time expression used with the past simple tense. Cathy left on holiday (last / ago) week.I played football (when / last) I was in high school.Were you able to go to the meeting (ago / in) May?She didn't think about those problems two days (last / ago).There weren't any children at the party (last / when) Saturday.Jennifer wanted us to come and help three weeks (ago / when).Peter went to a meeting in Chicago (last / ago) Tuesday.Alexander made a number of mistakes (yesterday / tomorrow).Tom was born (at / in) 1987.Our teacher helped us understand the problem (this morning / tomorrow morning).I bought a new chair for my office (last / next) week.Did you finish the meeting on time (yesterday / last) evening?Susan visited her aunt in Seattle (last / ago) Sunday.My father took me to the zoo (when / last) I was a child.They opened a new store (in / on) Tuesday.She drove to New Mexico (in / on) February.We enjoyed a lunch with our friends (yesterday / tomorrow).Annabelle played the piano for two hours (on / in) Tuesday.Fred didn't attend the meeting (last / ago) week.Anne opened a bottle of wine two hours (ago / last). Tom visited his mother last weekend.We didn't buy that TV yesterday because it was too expensive.Were you at the meeting on Tuesday?Where did Sheila stay in New Orleans?Alan understood the situation two days ago.They didn't finish the project on time last month.When did Mary fly to New York?Henry read Harry Smith's latest book last month.I didn't write that letter to him last week.What did you do yesterday afternoon?You thought he couldn't win, didn't you?She didn't win the prize two weeks ago.Where did Andy go last week?Thomas came to visit us in May.Susan didn't telephone in time to get a ticket.How did you meet him?David got up early on Saturday to play golf.Betty didn't draw that picture.Did Peter forget his books yesterday?She gave him a present for his birthday yesterday. Cathy left on holiday last week.I played football when I was in high school.Were you able to go to the meeting in May?She didn't think about those problems two days ago.There weren't any children at the party last Saturday.Jennifer wanted us to come and help three weeks ago.Peter went to a meeting in Chicago last Tuesday.Alexander made a number of mistakes yesterday.Tom was born in 1987.Our teacher helped us understand the problem this morning.I bought a new chair for my office last week.Did you finish the meeting on time yesterday evening?Susan visited her aunt in Seattle last Sunday.My father took me to the zoo when I was a child.They opened a new store on Tuesday.She drove to New Mexico in February.We enjoyed a lunch with our friends yesterday.Annabelle played the piano for two hours on Tuesday.Fred didn't attend the meeting last week.Anne opened a bottle of wine two hours ago.







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