Infinitive



Ideas for

Intervention

Here you will find resource materials for intervention. These are not programs or recommended methods but are meant to aid you by providing myriad resources and techniques for intervention. We’ve taken the time to research available resources and to offer them for you to consider.

Do you feel intimidated by the mere mention of the word “infinitive”? Have no fear, it’s really not as obscure as you may think!

Infinitives may look like a verb; however, they act like a noun. In a sentence, an infinitive may be a subject, object, adjective, or an adverb (Purdue Writing Lab, n.d.).

Let’s begin by making the distinction between two different types of infinitives: the marked and unmarked infinitives.

* The marked infinitive contains the preposition “to” along with a present tense verb. This is when the infinitive maintains the characteristics of a verb and may have a direct object, indirect object, as well as adverbs and adverbial phrases serving as modifiers (Rowley, 2018).
	+ - * For example, let’s look at the sentence, “I have to work late.” The infinitive would be, “to work” as it serves as the direct object of the verb, “have.”
* Unmarked infinitives on the other hand, do not contain the preposition, “to.” If “to” can be implied between two verb forms, the first verb is typically the main verb and the second verb is an unmarked infinitive (Rowley, 2018).
	+ - * For example, in the sentence, “help me swim,” the word, “to” is implied. Therefore, “(to) swim” will be the unmarked infinitive.
				+ It is important to note that the verb, “let” always takes the form of an unmarked infinitive (Rowley, 2018).

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But what about the different types of marked infinitives? Let’s clear this up. We can differentiate between the noun-verb-to-verb infinitives and the noun-verb-noun-to-verb infinitives.

* Noun-verb-to-verb infinitives only contain one noun and one verb before the infinitive phrase (i.e., “Jason wants to go”) (Owens, 2014).
	+ - This form of an infinitive phrase develops first and is easier to acquire (Owens, 2014).
* Noun-verb-noun-to-verb infinitives contain two nouns and a verb before the infinitive phrase (i.e., “Jason wants Tom to go”) (Owens, 2014).
* According to Dr. Robert Owens, “early developing infinitives accompany verbs such as *ask, forgot, go (gonna), have (hafta) (gotta), like, need, say, suppose, tell, try, use, want”* (O*wens, 2014).*
* Typically, around 39-42 months of age, a child will begin to use infinitive phrases at the end of a sentence (Owens, 2014).
* At the age of 42-56 months, children will begin to use infinitive phrases with the same subject as the main verb (Owens, 2014).



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* Note: infinitives will never be conjugated with -ed or -ing as they are not used as verbs in a sentence (“Infinitives and split infinitives,”n.d.).

Considerations

* As far as assessment, it is important to consider that, “free [language] samples may have limitations, such as low frequency or nonappearance of certain linguistic features or behaviors” says Owens, making a preset plan for elicitation a crucial step when collecting a language sample (2014).
	+ - Infinitives require specific evocative techniques
			* Eliciting a variety of functions and forms may seem uncomfortable or forced, however, having a plan or role-playing the sampling situation through conversational openers and replies will foster a more natural use of techniques within the language sample process (Owens, 2014).



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* According to Dr. Robert Owens, infinitive phrases may be taught during play (Owens, 2014).

Play situations that may be optimal when teaching infinitive phrases include, “dolls, puppets, or action figures or within storybook reading” (Owens, 2014).

Beginning with early-developing and frequently used verbs (i.e., *want, like,* and *try*) in a noun-verb-to-verb form allows for the child to become comfortable using infinitives before advancing to more challenging verbs (Owens, 2014).

* Teaching through play provides a naturalistic environment for the child to learn and generalize the targeted principles. Structured communicative play has been applied to many grammatical goals, including infinitives (Eisenberg, 2004).

Providing direct models and natural reinforcers are easily obtainable through structured communicative play therapy, which allows for the child to be a more active participant in therapy (Eisenberg, 2004).



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Infinitives are oftentimes confused with gerunds, especially in older students with English as a second language.

* Research has reported that differentiating among infinitives and gerunds through the Bolinger principle has shown significant improvements in older student’s grammar skills (Vawser, 1988).

The Bolinger principal places value on explaining the underlying semantic principle, rather than providing verb lists for rote memorization (Vawser, 1988).

* Yamazani (2018) also conducted research based on the Bolinger principle. He found that form-mapping, an explanation of the semantic principle and rules, bolstered students’ understanding of the difference between infinitives and gerunds through metalinguistic awareness.
* The semantic principle that Vawser (1988) and Yamazani (2018) utilized in their research is as follows:

Infinitives, “often express something ‘hypothetical, future, unfulfilled,’ whereas gerunds typically express something, ‘real, vivid, fulfilled’” (Vawser, 1988).



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Resources



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Books and Articles

[*The Day the Crayons Quit*](https://www.amazon.com/Day-Crayons-Quit-Drew-Daywalt/dp/0399255370/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=1NRUASB0U2RWW&keywords=the+day+the+crayons+quit&qid=1645726630&sprefix=the+day+the+crayons+quit%2Caps%2C149&sr=8-1), written by Drew Daywalt. This book is recommended for children in preschool- second grade.

[*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*](https://www.amazon.com/You-Give-Mouse-Cookie-Book/dp/0060245867/ref%3Dsr_1_1?keywords=if+you+give+a+mouse+a+cookie+book&qid=1645738792&sprefix=if+you+give+a+mouse+%2Caps%2C195&sr=8-1), written by Laura Numeroff. This book is recommended for children in preschool- third grade.

[*Beatrice Doesn’t Want To*](https://www.amazon.com/Beatrice-Doesnt-Want-Laura-Numeroff/dp/0763638439/ref%3Dsr_1_1?keywords=beatrice+doesnt+want+to&qid=1645738927&sprefix=beatrice+doesnt+want%2Caps%2C84&sr=8-1), written by Laura Numeroff. This book is recommended for children in preschool- second grade.

Games and Activities

Play scenarios:

* Utilize dolls or puppets to allow the child to complete sentences in a natural environment
	+ Noun-verb-to-verb infinitives:
		- * + For example, the SLP may state, “the doll says, ‘Can I play?’ The doll wants… hmm, you finish the story. The doll…?” (Owens, 2014).
	+ Noun-verb-noun-to-verb infinitives:
		- * + For example, the SLP may state, “the dog says to the cat, ‘Play with me.’ The dog asks… hmm, you finish the story. The dog…?” (Owens, 2014).

Find someone who…:

* Children can use infinitives to ask and answer questions. Provide the children with a list of various things (i.e., find someone who loves to watch scary movies, find someone who hates to eat broccoli, find someone who wants to go scuba diving”). The children will ask and answer these questions to practice using infinitive phrases. Make it fun! Create questions that correlate with a lesson plan, holiday, or event.

Hobby discussion:

* Begin a conversation with the child and ask what they enjoy doing in their free time. After they share (i.e., “I like watching cartoons”), explain to the child that the same sentence can be made using an infinitive. The child will then understand the use of an infinitive form of the same sentence (i.e., “I like to watch cartoons”). If there is more than one child in the lesson, the children may then talk with each other about their hobbies using infinitive forms.
	+ - * + If the child is at a younger age, providing an expansion or a direct model of the infinitive version of their hobby will provide exposure to the various sentence forms.
				+ To supplement this activity, [this YouTube video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7s9wWNkOpc&t=41s) allows the children to guess the hobby shown using an infinitive form in a complete sentence.

Would You Rather:

* This game can be used to teach infinitives as the questions can be formulated using infinitive phrases. For example, you may ask the child, “would you rather have to wear every shirt inside out or have to wear every pair of pants backwards?” The child will then answer the question using an infinitive.
	+ - * + Some additional would you rather questions that contain infinitives include; would you rather never be able to laugh or be able to smile? Would you rather have to drink sour milk or have to brush your teeth with soap? Would you rather use a fork to eat soup or to eat potato chips?



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Games and Activities

Printables:

* [Verbals Grammar Practice: Color by Code (includes participles, gerunds, and infinitives)](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Verbals-Grammar-Practice-Participles-Gerunds-Infinitives-Color-By-Code-2298223?st=94a2d45cbbd6c723ee50d2537445953a)
* [Gerunds vs Infinitives Worksheet](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Gerunds-vs-Infinitives-use-Grammar-Guide-EFL-ESL-English-Handout-5348424?st=94a2d45cbbd6c723ee50d2537445953a)

Websites

* [YouTube Lecture](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnnejNArWH8)

Please visit [our Pinterest page](https://www.pinterest.com/sugarlanguage/_saved/) for additional resources and activities:

Pinterest Q&A:

What is Pinterest? Pinterest is a social media platform that serves as an electronic bulletin board. Many SLPs use it as a way to electronically “bookmark” (i.e., save) activities for future sessions.

How much does it cost? It’s free! However, you must create an account in order to access the SUGAR Language boards or use the website in general.

How do I use it? Please check-out the following link for an in-depth explanation of all things [Pinterest.](https://www.lifewire.com/how-to-use-pinterest-3486578)

**References**

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