

Using Infinitive Phrases

Infinitives and infinitive phrases are amazing. An infinitive phrase is probably the most versatile structure (besides sentences) in the English language. An infinitive phrase can actually be used as either a noun, an adjective or an adverb. If you learn to create an infinitive phrase, you'll have a quick and easy way to combine sentences.

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

Noun:	<i>To exit</i> is easy.
Adjective:	This winter, red is the color <i>to wear</i> .
Adverb:	<i>To exit</i> , press the F10 key.

An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive together with its modifiers and complements. Believe it or not, the entire infinitive phrase can be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

Noun:	Weren't you told <i>to report to the dugout</i> ?
Adjective:	The children will need something <i>to do this summer</i> .
Adverb:	It is not hard <i>to remember the rules for tennis</i> .

Because infinitive phrases are so versatile, they are among the most powerful ways of combining sentences. After all, infinitive phrases can be used to answer just about any question that a reader might have—*who, what, where, when, how, or why*. When you use an infinitive to combine sentences, you can answer these questions before they even arise.

DIRECTIONS *Use at least one infinitive phrase to combine each of the following sets of sentences into a single sentence.*

EXAMPLES	You can fix the printer. Just add ink.
	<i>To fix the printer, just add ink.</i>
	As a child, I had one dream. I wanted a horse.
	<i>As a child, my dream was to have a horse.</i>
	Be honest. You must know yourself.
<i>To be honest, you must know yourself.</i>	

1. You will be writing a persuasive essay. You will need a topic that emotionally involves you.

2. My assignment was as follows. I must examine a social issue. I must also take a position on the topic.

3. Employers should hire disabled people. Employers should be encouraged to do so.

4. Some of us grow up with a disability. This experience confronts us with great challenges.

5. In my paper, I described the everyday lives of the disabled and focused on our employment opportunities. I wanted to do these things in my paper.

6. It required many hours of research and interviews. I accomplished this purpose.

7. I told their stories. I dispelled certain misconceptions. I met several people who wanted me to do these things in my paper.

8. You work for yourself. You are supported by others. Would you prefer one of these things over the other?

Answer Keys: (Answers will vary. Sample answers are given.)

1. To write a persuasive essay, you will need a topic that emotionally involves you.
2. My assignment was to examine a social issue and to take a position on the topic.
3. Employers should be encouraged to hire disabled people.
4. To grow up with a disability confronts some of us with great challenges.
5. In my paper, I wanted to describe the everyday lives of the disabled and to focus on our employment opportunities.
6. To accomplish this required many hours of research and interviews.
7. I met several people who wanted me to tell their stories and to dispel certain misconceptions.
8. Would you prefer to work for yourself or to be supported by others?