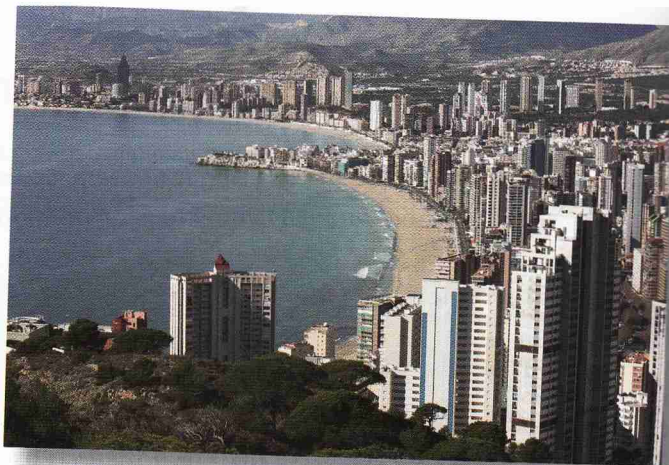


45 Infinitive patterns

In the 1960s Spain decided to promote itself as the world's first mass-market tourist destination. To cater for tourists, the government invested huge sums in new airports and roads.



1 Infinitive forms

Infinitives with *to* can be the subject, object or complement of a verb:

To give is better than to receive. Everyone loves to win.

There are also perfect (e.g. *to have given*), continuous (e.g. *to be giving*) and passive (e.g. *to have been given*) forms.

Infinitive clauses ► Unit 56 Passive infinitives ► Unit 62.3

FORMALITY CHECK *-ing* forms (► Unit 46.1/2) can often be used in similar ways, but they tend to be less formal than infinitive forms:

Giving is better than receiving. Everyone loves winning!



We make a negative with *not* + infinitive:

~~✗ I tried to not look at the accident.~~ ✓ I tried **not to look** at the accident.

An infinitive can have its own subject, introduced with *for*:

For evil to succeed it is only necessary for the good to do nothing.

FORMALITY CHECK In informal English we sometimes put an adverb between *to* and the infinitive. This is known as a 'split infinitive' and can give emphasis to the adverb:

*Not only am I going to win – I'm going **to totally destroy** the opposition!*

We usually avoid split infinitives in formal English by moving the adverb:

[*The doctor started to carefully remove the bandages.*]

✓ *The doctor started **to remove** the bandages **carefully**.*

2 Verb + infinitive without to

After some verbs we use the infinitive without *to*, for example, modal verbs, auxiliary verbs, semi-modals *need* and *dare* (► Module 7 Before you start), and *make* and *let*:

*He **daren't** leave early without my permission.*

*Let the dish **stand** for at least a minute after removing it from the microwave.*

We can use the verb *help* with or without *to*:

*The volunteers **helped** (to) **provide** support and comfort to the refugees.*

More on infinitives after *let*, *make*, *see*, *hear*, *know* and *help* ► Unit 63.3

3 Verb + infinitive with to

Certain verbs can be followed by an infinitive with *to*, but not by an *-ing* form:

*afford agree aim appear arrange¹ ask² beg² campaign¹ care choose² claim consent dare²
decide demand deserve expect² fail fight forget guarantee happen help² hesitate hope
long¹ manage need² neglect offer pause plan¹ prepare pretend promise propose prove
refuse seem swear tend threaten trouble² undertake vow wait¹ want² wish² yearn¹*

¹ With these verbs we use *for* before the object + infinitive: *We spent ages waiting for them to arrive.*

² These verbs can also have an object before the infinitive:

I begged Alison not to leave. He doesn't really expect her to pass the exam.

~~✗ She's decided applying for the job.~~ ✓ She's **decided to apply** for the job.