

The Infinitive

The infinitive is a non-finite verb form which does not specify person, number, or mood — only *tense* and *voice*. Furthermore, the tense of an infinitive shows *aspect* only (except for those in indirect statement and in certain other cases); a present infinitive not in indirect statement shows progressive/repeated aspect only (e.g. “to be educating,” “to educate (habitually)”); an aorist infinitive shows simple aspect only (e.g. “to educate (once and for all)”); a perfect infinitive shows completed aspect only; etc. (See page 738 of Hansen and Quinn for more on tense in the infinitive.)

The function of the infinitive is “to name a verbal action” (p. 51). It can, where appropriate, take a direct or indirect object.

From p. 723: “An infinitive is a verbal noun. As a *verb*, it is formed from the principal parts of a verb; has tense (which shows aspect only, except in indirect statement) and voice; can have an accusative subject [except for the infinitive substituting for a second person imperative] and govern any of the constructions of a finite form of the verb; and, except for the article, is modified by adverbs. The infinitive can fill any of the functions of a *noun* in a sentence.”

It is used as a noun in its main uses. Here is a partial list of the uses of the infinitive (taken from pp. 723-26):

I. Articular infinitive (pp. 127-8)

- A. An infinitive accompanied by a neuter singular article in any case; functions as any noun would

II. Subject of impersonal verbs

III. Predicate nominative

IV. Object infinitive

- A. “Used as the direct object of verbs such as *διδάσκω, κελεύω...*”

V. Complementary infinitive

- A. Works just like English
- B. “Completes the meaning of intransitive verbs showing ability, etc.”

VI. Epexegetical infinitive

- A. “Completes the meaning of certain adjectives like *ἰκανός...*”

VII. Clause of natural result

- A. Introduced by *ὥστε*

VIII. Temporal clause

- A. "After an affirmative main verb, an infinitive is used in a temporal clause introduced by πρίν, 'before'"

IX. Future infinitive (p. 464)

X. Indirect statement

- A. "After certain verbs (e.g. φημί, νομίζω), the verb of an indirect statement is put in the infinitive (same tense as that of the original statement)."
- B. One of the three types of indirect statement in unit 16 is infinitive plus subject in the accusative (p. 467)
- C. Also direct statement? (see bottom of p. 762)

XI. After the verb μέλλω... in the sense of "be about to, be likely to (+ future infin.)," a future infinitive is used as if in indirect statement (p. 529, unit 18)

XII. Infinitive of purpose

- A. Used with certain expressions*

XIII. Absolutely

- A. "An infinitive can be used absolutely, with no syntactical relation to the rest of the sentence"*

XIV. Exclamation

XV. In place of imperative or prohibitive subjunctive in commands and prohibitions

XVI. In place of an optative in a wish

XVII. Stipulation

Note: The usages in **bold** are the main ones that we reviewed in class. The italicized usages we did not go over in class.