

Non-finite verbs: infinitives

A **finite verb** makes sense in a sentence. A **non-finite verb** does not make sense in a sentence. An **infinitive** is a type of non-finite verb. The infinitive form of the verb starts with *to*, for example *to ride*.

Examples: The girl **rides** her bicycle.

A finite verb makes sense in a sentence.

The girl **to ride** her bicycle.

An infinitive does not make sense in a sentence.

An infinitive needs a finite verb to come before it in order for the sentence to make sense.

finite verb infinitive

Example: The girl **likes** **to ride** her bicycle.

The infinitive that begins with *to* always comes after the finite verb.

Examples: Lena **decides** **to ride** her bike.

finite verb infinitive

The toddler **needs** **to sleep**.

finite verb infinitive

1. Circle the finite verbs and underline the infinitives in the following sentences. The first one has been done for you.

- Jackson (decided) to sing in the concert.
- Marie loves to play in the park.
- Amos needs to go home now.
- The soccer team plans to tour next year.
- Hannah chose to work in the holidays.

2. Choose the correct infinitive from the list below to complete the sentences. The first one has been done for you.

attend ★ **pass** ★ **tidy** ★ **leave** ★ **meet**

- Martie chose to tidy her room.
- We hope _____ our cousin.
- Luyolo plans _____ his exams.
- Josi decided _____ the party early.
- The community wants _____ the meeting.



Remember to include the word *to* when you write the infinitive.

Non-finite verbs: participles

The present participles and past participles are types of non-finite verbs.

We form the **present participle** by adding *-ing* to a verb.

Example: ride + *-ing* = riding, walk + *-ing* = walking, shout + *-ing* = shouting

For a present participle to make sense it needs to have an auxiliary verb before it. To form a finite verb with the present participle we need to add an auxiliary verb.

Example: She **is** **walking** to the shops.

↑ ↑
auxiliary verb present participle

We form the **past participle** by adding *-ed*, *-en* or *-t* to a verb.

Example: scratch + *-ed* = scratched; eat + *-en* = eaten; learn + *-t* = learnt.

For a past participle to make sense it needs to have an auxiliary verb before it. To form a finite verb with the past participle we need to use the auxiliary verb *have*.

Example: The cat **has** **scratched** the chair.

↑ ↑
auxiliary verb past participle

1. Fill in the missing present participles and past participles in the table below. The first one has been done for you.

Infinitive	Present participle	Past participle
a) to bark	The dog is <u>barking</u> .	The dog has <u>barked</u> .
b) to decide	The man is _____.	The man has _____.
c) to choose	The voter is _____.	The voter has _____.
d) to laugh	The child is _____.	The child has _____.
e) to scratch	The cat is _____.	The cat has _____.



Note

The auxiliary verb must agree with the subject and be in the right tense.
Example: The dog is barking. The dogs are barking.

2. Write out the present participles and past participles in the following news report. Next to each participle write *present participle* or *past participle*.

The school is trying everything to help the learners improve their marks. After school the teachers are helping the children with their homework. The school board has decided to help learners raise funds for extra weekend classes. When we spoke to the class teacher, she reported her class has raised R1 200.

- a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
d) _____



Hint

Irregular verbs change their form in the past tense. Their past participle forms are also irregular.
Example: teach – taught – had taught.