

Infinitives in Topic Sentences

An infinitive is a verb form that begins with the word “to.” Here are examples:

- To accomplish
- To succeed
- To try
- To finish
- To support
- To win
- To pass
- To teach
- To write

Use an infinitive to start a topic sentence. This makes the sentence clear and direct.

This technique is very useful for writing assignments that require you to explain directions, describe a process, or give instructions.

The infinitive verb phrase acts as the *occasion*—the reason for writing. The independent clause serves as the *position*—what will be explained.

Examples

Occasion	Position Statements Using Infinitives
• To conduct sound scientific research,	one must take no shortcuts in following the scientific method.
• To increase productivity,	more manufacturers rely on computers and robotics.
• To prepare the solution,	add baking soda to the distilled water.
• To rally public support for the League of Nations,	President Wilson traveled the country and delivered dozens of speeches.
• To stop the spread of infection, hospital workers must wash their hands thoroughly.	
• To complete the first transcontinental railroad, companies employed thousands of Chinese immigrants.	
• To win the election, the candidate relied on the work of young, energetic grassroots supporters.	
• To calculate the percentage, divide the fraction’s numerator by the denominator and multiply by 100.	