

1 Here's the Idea

- ▶ **An infinitive is a verb form that usually begins with the word *to* and functions as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.**

INFINITIVE

Eileen Collins had a goal **to pursue.**

- ▶ **An infinitive phrase consists of an infinitive plus its modifiers and complements.** Like other verbals, an infinitive phrase may have an object.

In 1995, Eileen Collins became the first female space pilot to launch into space.

INFINITIVE PHRASE

An infinitive or an infinitive phrase can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

Functions of Infinitive Phrases

Acting as a **noun**
(predicate nominative)

Her lifelong dream was **to fly in space.**

Acting as an **adjective**
(modifies noun, *woman*)

The first American woman **to fly in space** was Dr. Sally Ride.

Acting as an **adverb**
(modifies verb, *endured*)

She endured rigorous training **to fly in space.**

Split Infinitives

A modifier placed between the word *to* and the verb of an infinitive is said to “split” the infinitive. Usually, a split infinitive sounds awkward and should be avoided.

AWKWARD

Astronauts need to rigorously train for space missions.

BETTER

Astronauts need to train rigorously for space missions.

Formerly, the use of split infinitives was always avoided. Now they may be used when needed, for maintaining clarity or smooth reading.

My goal is to really understand this chapter.