

9.2.3 Infinitives express intent

In English grammar, *infinitives* are: *to + the basic form of the verb*. Examples of infinitives are *to go*, *to run*, *to sing* etc. The use of infinitives in English is associated with expressing *intent*. For example:

Peter studied hard, to score well on GMAT.

- In the above sentence, the infinitive *to score correctly* establishes the *intent* behind Peter studying hard: *to score well on GMAT*. Hence the usage of infinitive *to score* is correct in the above sentence.

A sentence based on official question (#83, OG-16: *When Congress reconvenes, some newly...*):

In the upcoming World Economic Forum in Davos, anti-globalization protesters will attempt and disrupt the proceedings of the forum.

Analysis: The sentence uses *and*; structured this way, the sentence seems to convey that the anti-globalization protesters will do *two* independent things:

- i) attempt and
- ii) disrupt the proceedings of the forum

However, this is *not* the intended meaning. Clearly, the *intent* of the anti-globalization protesters is *to disrupt* the proceedings of the forum. Hence we need to use an *infinitive (to disrupt)* in the sentence. So, the correct sentence is:

In the upcoming World Economic Forum in Davos, anti-globalization protesters will attempt to disrupt the proceedings of the forum.

However, there might be cases when the *intent* is not justified; in such cases, the usage of infinitives would be incorrect.

A sentence based on official question (# 126, OG-13: *The use of lie detectors...*):

It has now been established that obesity causes the body to release chemicals to destabilize the body's cardiovascular and metabolic systems.

Analysis: The infinitive phrase in the above sentence is *to destabilize the body's cardiovascular and metabolic systems*. This seems to absurdly suggest that the *intent* of obesity is to destabilize the body's cardiovascular and metabolic systems (and with this intent, obesity causes the body to release chemicals). The logical intent is that being obese causes the body to release chemicals, and these released chemicals destabilize the body's cardiovascular and metabolic systems. Hence, the correct sentence is:

It has now been established that obesity causes the body to release chemicals that can destabilize the body's cardiovascular and metabolic systems.