

1 A word with any of the endings **I, AS, IS, OS, US** or **U** is a verb. A verb shows the performing of an action or the existence of a state.

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- A **finite verb** is a conjugated verb with one of the endings **AS, IS, OS, US** or **U**. That type of verb acts as a predicate of the sentence.
  - An **infinitive** is a verb with an **I-ending**. This type of verb can not act as a predicate, but has various other roles in the sentence.

# Finite verbs

3 There are three moods of finite verbs: **indicative**, **volitive (imperative)** and **conditional**.

## Indicative

4 The indicative is a mood which represents actions and states as a reality or objective fact. In the indicative we have to distinguish among three tenses: **present**, **past** and **future**.

### Present tense: AS-ending

5 A present tense verb, a verb with the AS-ending shows that the action or state is real, factual and that it has started but is not finished. This means that the action or state is happening right now, or that it usually happens, or that the action or state is always true.

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**laboras** = The action "to work" has started, but hasn't finished yet.

**estas** = The state "to be" has started, but hasn't finished yet.

7

**Mi sidas sur seĝo.** - I sit in a chair/ I'm sitting in a chair.

The sitting is real and now.

**Mi estas advokato.** - I am a lawyer.

The profession is actual and now.

**Kvar kaj dek ok faras dudek du.** - Four plus eighteen makes twenty-two.

That is always valid.

**Nun mi legas.** - Now I'm reading.

The reading actually happening now.

**Hodiaŭ mi studas Esperanton.** - Today I'm studying Esperanto.

Perhaps I'm not studying at the moment of speaking, but I started today's studies and haven't finished it yet.

**En la vintro oni hejtas la fornojn.** - In winter one heats up the ovens.

This happens every winter; it happened previously and will happen in future.

Mi **loĝas** ĉi tie tri jarojn. - I have been living here for three years.

I lived here for three years and I'm still living here.

8 Sometimes in stories the AS-tense is used to indicate the time in which the story occurred. This special style can enliven the story. In English literature this is called the historical present, but in English it is also very commonly used by young people in casual conversation.

9 **Ne suspektante ion li iradis tra la arbaro. Subite eksonas pafo.** - Not suspecting anything he wandered through the woods. Suddenly a shot sounds.

First the narrator uses the preterite to indicate past time, but later changes to the present tense so that the listener or reader should feel as if he himself is present and can hear the shot.

## Preterite: IS-ending

10 A preterite verb, a verb with the IS-ending shows an action or state that is real but which already occurred at the moment of speaking. Normally the action or state has already been concluded:

11 **laboris** = The action "to work" occurred before now.

**estis** = The state "to be" occurred earlier than now.

12 **Mi sidis tiam sur seĝo.** - I was then sitting on a chair.

The act of sitting happened in past time.

**Mi estis knabo.** - I was a boy.

Boyhood was real in the time past in question.

**Hieraŭ mi renkontis vian filon, kaj li ĝentile salutis min.** - Yesterday I met your son and he kindly greeted me.

**Mi loĝis ĉi tie tri jarojn.** - I lived here for three years.

My living here lasted for three years, but this is no longer the case.

13 If you want to show nuances of past time you can add various words, but you can also use a **compound tense**. But in almost all cases the simple preterite will suffice.

14 If you see an IS-form to show something that **will be completed in future**, it is a mistake. The OS-ending should be used, or if you want to be very precise, then use **estos ...inta**. So don't say: **Mi venos al vi, kiam mi finis mian taskon.** Say: **Mi venos al vi, (post) kiam mi finos mian taskon.** Or: **Mi venos al vi, kiam mi estos fininta mian taskon.**

## Future: OS-ending

15 A future verb, a verb with an OS-ending, shows that the action or state has not yet begun at the moment of speaking. Of course the future is always uncertain, but the future shows that the speaker thinks that the matter will really occur:

16 **laboros** = The action "labori" (to work) has not yet started but it will start.

**estos** = The state "to be" has not yet started, but it will in a while.

17 **Mi sidos poste sur seĝo.** - I will later sit on a chair.

The sitting will in fact occur later.

**Mi estos riĉulo.** - I will be a rich person.

The state of being rich is a fact belonging to the future.

**Mi rakontos al vi historion.** - I will tell you a story.

The telling of the story has not yet started.

**Morgaŭ estos dimanĉo.** - Tomorrow is Sunday. (lit. Tomorrow will be Sunday.)

**Mi loĝos ĉi tie tri jarojn.** - I will reside here for three years.

My residency has not yet started, but once it will start it will last for three years.

## Volitive (imperative): U-ending

18 The volitive verb, a verb with a U-ending, shows that the action or state is not real, but desired, wanted, ordered or aimed for. The volitive does not indicate the time of the action, but the action is normally understood to be in the future:

19 **laboru** = The action "to work" is desired, requested, ordered or aimed for.

**estu** = The state "to be" is desired, requested, ordered or aimed for.

20 **Sidu sur seĝo!** - Sit on a chair!

Order or request.

**Estu viro!** - Be a man!

Order or request.

**Ludvika, donu al mi panon.** - Ludvika, give me bread.

Ludoviko, **donu** al mi panon. - Ludovik, give me bread.

Ni **legu** la unuan ĉapitron. - Let us read the first chapter.

Expression of a wish or desire

Ĉu ni **iru** al la dancejo? - Should we go to the dance?

This a question about wants. The real meaning of this type of sentence usually boils down to a polite proposal. Compare with polite requests following.

21 With the volitive the subject is often omitted if it is the pronoun **vi**: **Venu tuj!** = **Vi venu tuj!** But this omission is only possible in the main clause, not in a relative clause.

## Volitive in a **ke**-clause

22 The volitive is used in a **ke clause**, when the main clause shows volition, desire, goal, opinion etc.:

23 **Mi volas, ke vi laboru.** - I want that you should work. (I want you to work.)

The work is wanted.

**Li petas, ke mi estu atenta.** - He asks that I be attentive.

**Estas necese, ke ni nun unu fojon por ĉiam faru finon al tiu ĉi stato.** - It's necessary, that we once and for all put an end to this state.

## Polite request

24 To express your will politely use the word **bonvolu** plus an infinitive. You can also add another polite expression like **mi petas**, or something similar:

25 **Bonvolu sidi ĉi tie!** = **Sidu ĉi tie, mi petas!** - Kindly sit here! = Sit here, please!

**Bonvolu fermi tiun ĉi fenestron!** = **Fermu la fenestron, mi petas!** - Kindly close this window! = Close the window please!

26 Never use a double U-form. Don't say: **Bonvolu-sidu...**

27 Note: Some speakers say instead **bonvole ...U**, e.g.: **Bonvole sidu ĉi tie!** This alternative is quite logical, but it is neither customary nor within the tradition.

## Conditional: US-ending

28 A conditional verb, a verb with a US-ending is used for actions or states that are unreal, imagined or fictitious. The US-form does not indicate the time of the action:

29 **laborus** = The action "to work" is imagined.

**estus** = The state "to be" is imagined.

30 **Se mi estus riĉa, mi ne laborus.** - If I were rich, I wouldn't work.

It's about a fictional or imagined state and action.

**Se mi estus sana, mi estus feliĉa.** - If I were healthy, I'd be happy.

**Se mi nur loĝus en palaco!** - If only I lived in a palace!

Living in the palace is desired, but I know that it's not possible and that it's only fantasy.

**Mi ne farus la eraron, se li antaŭe dirus al mi la veron.** - I wouldn't have made the mistake if he had told me the truth.

Here, both **farus** and **dirus** are telling about imagined actions from the past. If you want, you can show the past tense with **estus dirinta**.

31 One can also use the conditional to formulate a mild request or desire:

32 **Mi dezirus aĉeti kelkajn aferojn.** - I would like to buy some things.

A real desire, but politely presented.

**Ĉu mi povus havi la skribilon?** - Could I have the pen?

Very polite, gentle request.

**Ĉu vi bonvolus paroli iom pli silente?** - Would you mind speaking a little more quietly?

Very polite, gentle request.

33 The conditional is often used with the particle **se**, which indicates a condition, but **se** does not automatically require a conditional. Everything depends on the meaning. If it's a clear case of something imagined, then use **US**, but if the action or state is real then use the indicative:

34 **Se li estus ĉi tie, li certe mirus pri la malordo.** - If he were here, he would certainly wonder about the disorder.

We know that he isn't here, but if he were, then he would also wonder.

**Se li estas ĉi tie, li certe miras pri la malordo.** - If he is here he is certainly wondering about the disorder.

We don't know if he is here, but he may be. If that is the case, then he will in fact also wonder.

35 In some languages the conditional is also used for something foreseen. In Esperanto this is expressed using a compound verb: **estis ...onta** or **estis ...ota**.

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# Infinitive

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36 Verbs with the ending *I* only name an action or state. They do not show whether it is fact, volition, or imagination. They also don't show time [tense]. The infinitive is traditionally regarded as the basic form of any verb. Therefore verbs appear in the dictionary in their infinitive form.

37 An infinitive is often similar to an action noun: **labori**= the idea of doing work; **esti**= the idea of being. [But there is a difference.](#)

38 In a sentence the infinitive takes on the role usually played by a noun: subject, object, **pri**-adjunct etc.: **Morti pro la patrujo estas agrable. Malbonaj infanoj amas turmenti bestojn. Kiu kuraĝas rajdi sur leono?**

39 Sometimes an infinitive can even have a preposition in front of it: **Unu fajrero estas sufiĉa, por eksplodigi pulvon.** But an infinitive can never have an N-ending or a J-ending.

40 An infinitive can have an object, adjuncts etc., just like a predicate verb. The infinitive, therefore, is still a verb:

41 **manĝi rapide** - to eat quickly

The infinitive has an adverbial adjunct of manner.

**poste manĝi** - to eat later

The infinitive has an adverbial adjunct of time.

**manĝi pomon** - to eat an apple

The infinitive has an object.

42 However an infinitive can not have its own (grammatical) subject. So one cannot say: **mi manĝi, la knabino esti** or anything similar. Very often, however, the subject is understood: **the implied subject.**

43 Many (but not all) infinitives acts as shortened **ke**-clauses:

44 **Mi ĝojas vin vidi!** = **Mi ĝojas, ke mi vin vidas!** - I'm happy to see you! = I'm happy that I'm seeing you!

**Mi vidis la knabon kuri.** = **Mi vidis, ke la knabo kuras.** - I saw the boy run. = I saw that the boy was running.

## Infinitive as a subject

45 An infinitive can act as the subject of a sentence when you want to describe the action of the infinitive. Usually the predicate is a form of **esti**:

46 **Resti kun leono estas danĝere.** - To stay with a lion is dangerous.

What is dangerous is the action **resti kun leono**. **Danĝere** is the predicative of **resti**. It should have the E-ending because it modifies [describes] the verb.

**Kritiki estas facile, fari** [estas] **malfacile.** - To criticize is easy, to do is difficult.

That which is easy is the action **kritiki** (to criticize). That which is hard is the action **fari** (to do).

# Infinitive together with a predicate verb

47 An infinitive is often used with a predicate verb on which it depends:

48 Mi **povas kuri**. - I can run.

Li **volis veni**. - I wanted to come.

Ili **devis cedi**. - They had to yield.

En varmega tago mi **amas promeni en arbaro**. ≈ ...amas promenon... - On a hot day I love to stroll in the woods.≈ ...love taking a walk...

Ŝi **komencis senti doloron kaj rigidiĝon**. ≈ Ŝi komencis sentadon de doloro... - She started to feel pain and stiffness.≈ She started feeling pain...

Li **ŝajnis subite kompreni**. = Li ŝajnis subite komprenanta... - He seems suddenly to understand.

The infinitive is the predicative of the subject li.

Nun ili ĉiuj **iris dormi**. = ...iris por dormi. - Now they all went to sleep. = ...they went in order to sleep.

When the infinitive is used as a circumstantial complement introduced by **por**, then the preposition **por** is usually left out.

Ŝi tuj **kuris bati ŝin**. = ...kuris por bati ŝin. - She immediately ran to beat her. = ...ran in order to beat her.

Kaj vi ne **hontas fanfaroni per ĉi tio?** ≈ ...hontas pri fanfaronado... - And you are not ashamed to brag about that? ≈ ...ashamed of bragging...

When an infinitive acts as **pri**-adjunct, the preposition **pri** is always left out.

Feliĉe mi **sukcesis ekbruligi** la fajron. ≈ ...sukcesis pri ekbruligado de la fajro. - Happily I managed to light the fajron. ≈ ...succeeded in lighting the fire.

49 In the preceding examples, the understood subject of the infinitive is the same as the subject of the predicate verb. But in certain cases an infinitive can have a different subject than the predicate.

50 Some predicates show an action, whose goal is to influence the action of another person (or thing). These verbs are, for example: **(mal)permesi** (permit, forbid), **ordoni** (order), **doni** (give), **destini** (to be destined), **peti** (request, ask), **instrui** (teach), **instrukcii** (instruct), **devigi** (require), **lasi** (let, leave, allow), **inviti** (invite), **voki** (call), **sendi** (send), **(mal)konsili** (advise, dissuade), **komandi** (command), **konvinki** (convince), **persvadi** (persuade), **memorigi** (remind), kaj **(mal)rekomendi** (recommend, advise against). The influenced person (or thing) appears with these verbs as **al**-adjunct or an adjunct ending with -N. When an infinitive is appears with such a verb, the understood subject of the infinitive is the influenced person (or thing.)

51 Mi **malpermesis al li fari tion**. - I forbade him to do that.

Subject of **fari** (to do, to make) is li (he).

Ili **ordonis al mi veni antaŭ la vesperiĝo**. - They ordered me to come before sunset.

Subject of **veni** (to come) is mi (I).

La reĝo Aĥaŝveroŝ **ordonis venigi al li la reĝinon Vaŝti**. - The king Ahasuerus (Xerxes) ordered to bring to him the queen Vashti.

Subject of **venigi** (to bring, to get, to send for) is he to whom the king ordered. They are understood, but could appear as **al** (to) adjective: ...ordonis **al iuj venigi**...

**Mi petas vin trinki.** = **Mi petas vin, ke vi trinku.** - Mi petas vin trinki. = I ask of you, that you should drink. Please drink.

52 The verb **promesi** (to promise) does not belong to this group: **Mi promesis al li veni al la festo.** = **Mi promesis al li, ke mi venos al la festo.** The implied subject of **veni** (to come) is the subject of the predicate verb (promesi).

53 When the predicate verb is a form of **vidi** (to see), **aŭdi** (to hear), **senti** (to sense, to feel), **imagi** (to imagine) or something similar, an infinitive may appear which is **predikativo** (a predicative) of the object of the predicated verb. Then that object is the understood subject of the infinitive.

54 **Mi vidis la knabon kuri.** - I saw the boy run.

**Kuri** (run) is the predicative of **la knabon** (the boy), the object of **vidis** (saw). The subject of **kuri** (run) is **la knabo** (the boy). = **Mi vidis la knabon kuranta** (I saw the boy running). **Mi vidis, ke la knabo kuras.** (I saw, that the boy was running).

**Mi hodiaŭ matene vidis danci miajn knabinojn.** - This morning, I saw my girls dancing.

The girls danced.

## Infinitive as complement

55 An infinitive can follow a noun or adjective as its complement (usually an action verb):

56 **Forte min doloras la nepovado helpi vin sur via malfacila vojo.** = **Forte min doloras, ke mi ne povas helpi vin...** - The inability to help you on your difficult path greatly pains me.= It greatly pains me that I can't help you....

**Mi ricevas grandan deziron edziĝi.** = **Mi ekdeziregas edziĝi.** - I have a great desire to get married. = I really want to get married.

**Lia propono elekti novan prezidanton ne estis akceptita.** - His proposal to elect a new president was not accepted.

**Vi havis nenian rajton paroli al mi en tia maniero.** - You have no right to speak to me in that way.

**Ŝi ricevis la taskon trovi trinkaĵon.** = ...la taskon, ke ŝi trovu trinkaĵon. - She got the task of finding drinks. = ...the task that she find drinks

**Mi estas kapabla instrui nur la francan lingvon.** ...kapablas instrui... - I am capable of teaching only the French language. ...can teach...

**Mi estas preta iri por vi piede al la fino de la mondo.** - I'm ready to walk to the end of the earth for you.

## Infinitive with prepositions

57 Normally the sentence function of the infinitive is not indicated, but left to be shown by the context. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to show the sentence function by a preposition. Of all the prepositions traditionally only **por**, **anstataŭ** and **krom** are acceptable before an infinitive. **Sen**, however, is becoming more frequent before an

Ni ĉiuj kunvenis, **por preparoli tre gravan aferon**. - We all came together to discuss a very important matter.

We use **por** + infinitive mainly when the infinitive has the same subject as the predicate. If the two subjects are different we usually use the infinitive without a preposition: **Ŝi invitis min trinki kafon**. = ...**por ke mi trinku kafon**. After verbs of movement like **iri** and **kuri** we prefer the infinitive without **por**, even if the two subjects are identical: **Mi iros ripozi**. = **Mi iros por ripozi**.

**Ĉi tie ne ekzistas akvo por trinki**. ≈ **Ĉi tie ne ekzistas trinkebla/trinkota akvo**. - Here water to drink does not exist. ≈ Here drinkable water does not exist.

If an infinitive is a complement of a noun, then we use **por** regardless of the implied subject.

**En la domo estas jam nenio por manĝi**. - There is no longer anything to eat in the house.

**La aliaj anasoj preferis naĝadi en la kanaloj, anstataŭ viziti ŝin**. - The other ducks preferred to swim in the canals instead of visiting her.

**Vi nenion povas fari krom kunbati viajn dentojn**. - There is nothing you can do except rattle your teeth.

**Ne ekzistas alia bono por la homo, krom manĝi kaj trinki**. - There is no other benefit for mankind except eating and drinking.

**Tion mi ne povus fari sen detruo mian reputacion**. = ...**sen detruo de mia reputacio / ... ne detruante mian reputacion**. - That I could not do without destroying my reputation.

**Sen manĝi kaj trinki oni ne povas vivi**. = **Sen manĝado kaj trinkado...** - Without eating and drinking one cannot live.

Between **antaŭ** and the infinitive, the comparative particle **ol** is used:

**Oni devas iri longan distancon, antaŭ ol veni al la rivero**. = ...**antaŭ ol oni venas al la rivero**. - One has to go a long way before coming to the river. = ...before one comes to the river.

**Antaŭ ol foriri li ŝlosis la pordon**. = **Antaŭ ol li foriris...** - Before going away he locked the door.

Using other prepositions before an infinitive is not illogical but could create misunderstanding because it is not customarily done.

## Infinitive as predicate

Sometimes you see sentences or clauses, where the only verb is an infinitive. In those cases, the infinitive has the meaning of a **volitive** or an expression with **povi** (to be able):

**Grandega hundo metis sur min sian antaŭan piedegon, kaj mi de teruro ne sciis, kion fari**. = ...**kion mi faru**. - A huge dog put its big front paws on me, and out of terror I didn't know what to do. = ...didn't know what I should do.

**Mi efektive jam ne scias, kiel ĝin klarigi**. = ...**kiel mi ĝin klarigu**. - I actually already don't know how to clarify it. = ... how I should clarify it.

Ili ne havas, kion **mangi**, ili ne havas, per kio **hejti** la fornon. = Ili ne havas (ion), kion ili/oni povus manĝi, ili ne havas (ion), per kio ili povus hejti la fornon. - They don't have anything to eat, they don't have anything to heat the stove with. = They don't have (something), which they could eat, the don't have (something), which they could heat the stove with.

Mi havis tiam apud mia domo foston, kiu, se **preni** la plej malmulte, havis almenaŭ ok futojn da larĝeco. = ...se oni prenu la plej malmulte... - At the time there was a ditch by my house, which, to take the least, was at least eight feet wide.

**Ĉu esti** aŭ **ne esti**, — tiel staras nun la demando. = **Ĉu mi estu aŭ ne estu**... - To be or not to be, - so stands now the question. (originally: that is the question.) = Should I be or not be...

Kion **fari**? = Kion oni/mi/vi faru? - What to do? = What should one/I/you do?

64 Sometimes you will see an infinitive being used instead of the volitive. This type of command is more neutral, neither polite nor impolite but simply a statement of fact. The implied subject of the infinitive is the general **one**. This usage is rare: **Nur prunti, sed ne restigi al si!** = **Oni povas nur prunti**... Instead of a command with the U-form, the speaker expresses his wish like a plain statement of fact which is indisputable. **Por landoj ne menciitaj en la listo sin turni al LF-KOOP, Svislando.** A simple statement of fact, what to do if one wants to order something from LF-KOOP.

## Infinitives and action nouns

65 Infinitives and action nouns are similar, but there is still a difference. An infinitive always has an understood subject, which most often is identical to the subject of the predicate. An action noun, however, is independent from the subject. An action noun names an action without consideration of who eventually will perform it. The meaning of a phrase can therefore change, if one changes the infinitive into an action noun.

66 **Malbonaj infanoj amas turmenti bestojn.** = Ili amas, kiam ili mem turmentas bestojn. - Bad children love to torment animals = They love, when they themselves torment animals.

**Malbonaj infanoj amas turmentadon de bestoj.** = Ili amas turmentadon de bestoj, ĉu ili mem turmentas, ĉu iu alia turmentas. - Bad children love the torment of animals. = They love the torment of animals, whether or not they do the tormenting or someone else does the tormenting.

**Mi promesis amuziĝi.** = Mi promesis, ke ĝuste mi amuziĝos. - I promised to be amused. = I promised, that specifically I would be amused.

**Mi promesis amuziĝon.** = Mi promesis, ke okazos amuziĝo. - I promised amusement. = I promised, that amusement would occur.

It doesn't matter, who will be amused.