

Non-finite Verbs: The infinitive, the gerund, and the participial are the three types of [non-finite](#) verbs. No sentence is complete without verbs; hence, we communicate our views with the help of verbs. Students are taught verbs as the basic unit of understanding [English Grammar](#), and the use of the verb is the beginning of learning the language. Then, what is a non-finite verb? Is it the same as the main verb, or does it have a different meaning and function? What do mean by the finite, the Gerund, and the Participle? You will get the answer to all the above questions in the article "Non-finite Verbs: The Infinitive, the Gerund, and the Participle".

Non-finite Verbs: The Infinitive, the Gerund, and the Participle

Non-finite Verbs are not the normal verbs that we use in sentences. They can be used in different ways, like the infinitive, the gerund, and the participle.

Definition of Non-finite Verb

A non-finite verb is “an infinitive or a participle and has no tense”, according to the Collins Dictionary. The Oxford Learners' Dictionary defines a non-finite verb as “a verb form or clause does not show a particular tense, person or number”.

The Advanced Oxford Learners' Dictionary defines a non-finite verb as “a verb form or clause that does not show a particular tense, person or number”.

The Infinitive

Read the following sentences:

- You want **to go**.
- They always try **to find** fault with others.

Here, **to go** and **to find** are infinite.

Let us understand the infinite with the help of the following examples:

- **To err** is human. (the infinitive is the Subject of the verb 'is'.)
- Birds love **to fly**. (the infinitive is the Object)
- **To respect our elders** is our sole duty. (Subject of the verb)
- Mahesh refused **to obey** the officer's orders. (Object of the verb refused)
- Some people desire **to make** money by unethical means. (Object of the verb desire)

Generally, the word "to" is used, but it's not an essential part of the infinitive. The following are some verbs where "to" is not used:

Non-finite Verbs without "To"

Note: Bid, let, bade, make, need, dare, see, and hear are some verbs where 'to' can't be used before them to form the infinitive.

Examples:

- I made her go.
- Let them sit there.
- She will not let him leave the house.
- make them stand.
- We made them swim.
- He need not come today.
- She need not do it.
- She dared not do it.
- Sita saw him do it.
- The Principal heard him cry.

Note: "To" is also not used before will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, and should.

- You will pay the money.
- She should work hard.
- He can speak three languages.
- You must attend school tomorrow.

Note: "To" is also not used before had better, had rather, would rather, sooner than, rather than.

- He had better better ask permission.
- I would rather die than bag.
- She would rather die than suffer.

Usage of "The Infinitive"

The infinitive, with or without 'to' can be used like a Noun:

1. As Subject of a Verb;

- Finding fault is easy.
- To err is human.
- To reign is worth ambition.

2. As Object of the transitive verb:

- She doesn't mean to write.
- They like to play hockey.

- She likes to swim.

3. As Complement of Verb:

- His greatest pleasure is dancing.
- Their custom is to pray in the temple before marriage.
- My hobby is bathing in cold water.

4. As Object of Preposition:

- They had no choice but to obey the order.
- The prime minister had no choice but to resign.
- The dancer is about to dance.
- The singer is about to sing.

5. As an Object Complement:

- I saw him swim.
- I found him dead.
- They saw him bleeding.

6. To Qualify a verb(Purpose):

- They called to see the officer.
- We eat to live.
- We earn money to survive.
- I came to buy Chips.

7. To Qualify the Adjective:

- Fruits are good to eat.
- The medicine is sweet to take.
- The girls are anxious to swim.
- He is too old to walk.
- They are too poor to buy food.

8. To Qualify the Noun:

- This is not the time to play as the exams are near.
- He had reason to resign from the job.
- The house is ready to let.
- That white house is to let.

The infinitive in Active and Passive

Present: to hate, to love, to swim; Passive: to be hated, to be loved.

Perfect: to have loved, to have hated; Passive: to have been loved, to have been hated.

Present Continuous: to be loving

Examples of "The Infinitive"

1. It is an offense to break traffic signals.
2. It is soothing to hear the sound of the birds.
3. Are you able to count the stars?
4. She is quick to respond.
5. Everyone wants to live a happy life.
6. She is slow to react.
7. I heard her weeping.
8. Let us play.
9. My wish is to see you again.
10. I am sorry to say that.

Non-finite Verbs: The Gerund

Read these sentences:

- **Swimming** is his favorite hobby. (Swim: Swimming)
- **Writing** is an art. (Write: Writing)
- **Reading** is a basic skill to know. (Read: Reading)
- **Playing** cards is the waste of time. (Play: Playing)

The words, **Swimming, Writing, Reading, and Playing** are used as the subject of the sentence.

These words act as a noun and hence, it is a verb-noun and is called **gerunds**.

What is a non-finite verb simple definition?

- I like swimming.
- She is fond of singing.
- He doesn't like wasting his time.

Uses of Gerund

1. As a subject:

- **Swimming** is good exercise.
- **Reading** is my favorite hobby.
- **Playing** cards is a waste of time

2. As an Object:

- She enjoys swimming.
- They don't like dancing.
- She is fond of dancing.

3. As a Subject complement:

- Her hobby is dancing.
- Teach him to dance.
- What they like most is fighting.

4. As an object of a preposition:

- He is fond of dancing.
- He was fined for coming late.

5. As a compound word:

- A writing pen, a writing table, and a dancing doll.

6. Gerund is used after the verbs:

Advocate, advise, allow, anticipate, appreciate, dislike, postpone, risk, miss, mind, etc.

- I feel like loving.
- You won't mind opening the door.
- Dr. suggested operating on him.

Non-finite Verbs: The Participle

Read the sentence:

Hearing the noise, the child woke up.

The participle is both a verb and an adjective.

Types of Participles

There are three types of participles.

1. Present Participle
2. Past Participle
3. Perfect Participle

1. The Present Participle

Read the following sentences:

- I met a boy carrying an Apple laptop.
- Shouting at the threshold, she demanded admission.
- The old man, thinking all was safe, attempted to cross the road.
- He rushed into the ground, and foremost fighting fell.
- He went away weeping.
- They rushed out shouting.
- She entered the classroom laughing.
- Seeing the police, the thief ran away.
- Taking his book, he went out.

In the above sentences, **Present Participle** is used and the action is going on, incomplete, or imperfect and the words end with **-ing**.

2. Past Participle

The third form of the verb is used and explains the completed works.

Perfect Tense formation, Examples:

- They have **done** their work. (Present Perfect)
- She **had left** the house. (Past Perfect)
- They **will have reached** home before the rain started. (Future Perfect).
- Time misused is time lost.
- She saw a few trees fallen with fruit.
- Driven by thirst, he stole a bottle of water.

In the above sentences, the Past Participle ended with -ed, -d, -t, -en, or -n.

3. Perfect Participle

Represents an action completed at some past time.

- Having rested, Rahul continued his journey.

Used to qualify adjectives in front of a noun:

- A rolling stone gathers no moss.
- He had a drink of sparkling soda.
- The creaking door awakened the patient.
- A lying witness needs to be punished.
- They fought a losing war.
- A burnt child dreads the fire.
- Education is the most pressing need of India.

Use of The Participle

1. Continuous Tenses [Active Voice] are formed from the Present participle:

- I am playing; I was playing; I shall be playing.

2. Perfect Tenses(Active Voices) are formed from Past Participle:

- I am loved; I was playing; I shall have played.

3. Participles qualify nouns or pronouns and are used attributively, predicatively, and absolutely:

Attributively:

- A rolling stone gathers no moss.
- Her tattered shirt needs mending.
- A lost opportunity never returns.

Predicatively:

- The woman seems worried.
- The principal kept me waiting.

Difference between Finite Verbs and Non- Finite Verbs

FINITE VERBS:

1. Finite verbs HAVE TENSE.
2. Finite verbs: V1, V2, V3

NON-FINITE VERBS

1. Non-finite verbs DO NOT HAVE TENSE
2. Non-finite verbs THE infinitive, present participle, or past participle form.

HBSE Class 10 English Exercises Non-finite Verbs: Check Your Understanding

Students should practice the following exercises to understand the Non- Finite verbs:

1. She was fined for being late..... (come)
2. He did nothing but.....(laugh).
3. He was too drunk.....(to drive) home.
4. Could you.....me please? (help)

5. He was happy.....(see) me.
6. It's no use.....(cry) over spilt milk.
7. Let hom.....(go) now.
8. His aim was(get) a gold medal.
9. You had better.....(stay) home.
10. She is fond of.....(make) stories.
11. I do not know how(swim).
12. He is rich enough.....(buy) a car.
13. It is no use.....(wait) for her.
14. He is too weak(walk).
15. It is easy.....(find) fault with others.
16. My grandmother dislikes.....(use) face powder.
17. I am sorry(disturb) you.
18. I let him.....(read) the book.
19. I heard....(sing) a song.
20. Please stop.....(talk).

Frequently Asked Questions on Non-finite Verbs

What do mean by a non-finite verb?

What is the difference between a finite verb and a non-finite verb?

What is Gerund?

What is the participle?

What is infinite?