

# Grammar: Uses of the infinitive

## *Overview*

There are six infinitives in Latin:

	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
Present	portare	portari
Perfect	portavisse	portatus esse
Future	portaturus esse	portatum iri

with the basic meanings:

	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
Present	to carry	to be carried
Perfect	to have carried	to have been carried
Future	to be about to carry	to be about to be carried

## *Usage*

Infinitives can be used in a range of contexts.

### **Infinitive as complement**

There are a number of verbs that need an infinitive to make sense.

These are verbs to do with

possum	soleo	videor
I am able	I am accustomed	I seem

e.g. I am able to dance

**possum saltare**

### **Infinitive as subject or object of a verb**

The infinitive can take the role of a neuter singular noun.

e.g. Seeing is believing

To see is to believe

in Latin

**videre est credere**

## Negative commands

The negative imperative is formed using the imperative of *nolo* and an infinitive. See the separate page on commands for further information.

## Indirect statements

In an indirect statement the infinitive takes the place of the main indicative verb. See the separate page on indirect statements.

## *Examples drawn from the exercises*

The number after each question indicates the exercise from which it has been drawn, so that you can look at the example in context.

1. quid iuvat haec nullo ponere verba loco? *Exercise 6*
2. nam neque de caelo cecidisse animalia possunt nec terrestria de salsis exisse lacunis. *Exercise 9*
3. nos autem fortes viri satis facere rei publicae videmur, ... *Exercise 7*

## *Examples drawn from Cicero*

1. Soleo saepe ante oculos ponere, ... omnis clarissimorum regum res gestas ... *Pro Marcello II.5*
2. Nam bellicas laudes solent quidam extenuare verbis, easque detrahere ducibus, communicare cum multis, ne propriae sint imperatorum. *Pro Marcello II.5*
3. Nulla est enim tanta vis, quae non ferro et viribus debilitari frangique possit. *Pro Marcello III.8*
4. ipsam victoriam vicisse videris. *Pro Marcello IV.12*

5. doleoque, cum res publica immortalis esse debeat, eam in unius mortalis anima consistere. *Pro Marcello VII.22*
6. interfectum esse M. Aurium renuntiant. *Pro Cluentio VIII.24*
7. quod facere nisi ludis aut festis diebus antea non solebat. *Pro Cluentio IX.27*
8. Ita quod ceteri propter liberos pecuniae cupidores esse solent, ille propter pecuniam liberos amittere iucundum esse duxit. *Pro Cluentio IX.28*
9. fratris autem liberos prius vita privavit quam illi hanc a naustra lucem accipere potuerunt, *Pro Cluentio XI.31*
10. Oppianicus continuo sperare coepit hoc se Avillio tanquam aliqua machina admota capere Asuvi adulescentiam et fortunas eius patrias expugnare posse. *Pro Cluentio XIII.36*