

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

Infinitives

Chapter 21

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Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

Definition

Infinitive = Verbal Noun

“The dog **jumped** over the table.”
 “Jumped” is a verb that describes the action of the dog.

“**To jump** is difficult for the dog.”
 The phrase “to jump” functions as the subject of the verb “is difficult.”

In English, an infinitive is formed by the word “to” plus a verb.

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Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
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Definition

Infinitive = Verbal Noun

As a **verb**, an infinitive:

1. has **aspect** (perfective, imperfective, or stative) and **voice** (act, mid, pass).

2. can **take a direct object** or be **modified by an adverb**.

3. is **negated by μή** (like all other non-indicative mood verbs).

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Definition

Infinitive = Verbal Noun

The **subject** of the infinitive is in the **accusative case** rather than the nominative case.

δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου **πολλὰ** παθεῖν

“**The Son** of Man must **suffer** many things”

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Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

Definition

Infinitive = Verbal Noun

As a **noun**, an infinitive can:

1. take an **article** (always **neuter** and **singular** = **τό, τοῦ, and τῷ**).

2. have a variety of different **case functions**.

3. occur **after a preposition** (infinitives following prepositions are always articular).

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Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
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Definition

Infinitive = Verbal Noun

The word “infinitive” comes from “infinite,” meaning that the form is not limited to a particular person or number. A “finite” verb is limited in this respect.

As a result, there is only one form instead of six.

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Present Infinitives

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
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Infinitive

Translation

Active

λύειν

to be loosing

M/P

λύεσθαι

to be loosed*

* The translation is passive only. Middle = "to be (for) loosing oneself"

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Aorist Infinitives

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

	Infinitive	Translation
Active	λύσαι	to loose
Middle	λύσασθαι	to loose oneself
Passive	λυθῆναι	to be loosed

Notice: the aorist forms have **NO** augment.

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Aorist Infinitives		
	Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος	
Present Ind	2nd Aorist Inf	
ἄγω	→	ἀγαγεῖν
γίνομαι	→	γενέσθαι
ἔρχομαι	→	έλθεῖν
λαμβάνω	→	λαβεῖν
λέγω	→	εἰπεῖν
ὁράω	→	ιδεῖν

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Perfect Infinitives

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
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Perfect Infinitives

Perfect infinitives are not common in the NT, only occurring 49 times (with about 30 different verbs).

Active

λελυμέναι

to have loosed

M/P

λελύσθαι

to have been loosed

Notice: the middle or passive form has no connecting vowel.

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Uses		
	Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος	
1) Complementary		
The infinitive "completes" the idea of another verb (such verbs as ἔρχομαι, βούλομαι, δεῖ, δοκέω, δύναμαι, θέλω, and μέλλω.		
θέλομεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ιδεῖν		
"We want to see Jesus"		

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Uses		
	Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος	
2) Purpose Clause		
Three different constructions: (1) infinitive alone, (2) infinitive with τοῦ, and (3) infinitive with εἰς τό.		
πορεύομαι ἐτοιμάσαι τόπον ὑμῖν		
"I am going to prepare a place for you"		

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Uses

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

2) Purpose Clause

ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπείρων **τοῦ σπεῖραι**

“The sower went out **in order to sow**”

ἔπεμψα **εἰς τὸ γνῶναι** τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν

“I sent [him] **to know about** your faith”

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Uses

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

3) Result Clause

Typically occurs after **ὥστε** (“so that”) and less commonly after **εἰς τό**. A purpose clause is **intended** result whereas a result clause is **actual** result.

καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς νεκρός, **ὥστε** τοὺς πολλοὺς **λέγειν** ὅτι ἀπέθανεν

“And he became as a dead person, **so that many said** that he died”

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Uses

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

4) Previous Time

Communicated by **μετὰ τό** + infinitive and signals that the action of the infinitive occurs *before* the action of the main verb (“after”).

μετὰ τὸ ἐγερεθῆναι **με** προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν

“After **I am raised**, I will go before you into Galilee.”

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Uses

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

5) Contemporaneous Time

Communicated by **ἐν τῷ** + infinitive and signals that the action of the infinitive occurs *at the same time* as the action of the main verb (“while,” “as,” or “when”).

ἐν τῷ σπεῖρειν αὐτὸν ἔμην ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν

“**as he was sowing**, some [seed] fell along the path.”

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Uses

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6) Subsequent Time

Communicated by **πρὸ τοῦ** or **πρὶν (ἢ)** + infinitive and signals that the action of the infinitive occurs *after* the action of the main verb (“before”).

πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι ... εἶδόν σε

“**before Philip called** you ... I saw you.”

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Uses

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7) Causal

Communicated by **διὰ τό** + infinitive and expresses the reason for the action of the main verb, answering the question “Why?” (“because,” “since,” or “for”).

διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ῥίζαν ἐξηράνθη

“they withered **because they had** no root”

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Uses

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8) Substantival

Functions more like a noun, either as the subject or the object of a sentence.

ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

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Verbal Aspect

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Tense versus Aspect

Like all non-indicative verbs, infinitives do not convey the time of the action (= tense). The various tense-forms convey the author’s portrayal of the verb’s action (= aspect).

It is difficult to bring out the aspectual nuance in English so there is usually no difference in translation between a present or aorist infinitive.

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Verbal Aspect

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Present	The action was a process or continued on
διδάσκειν	“to be teaching” (as a process or periodic custom)
Aorist	Simple action with no regard to it as a process
διδάξαι	“to teach” (simply, on a specific occasion, or once)

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Present Middle Indicative—δύναμαι

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	Singular	Plural
1 st Person	δύν α μαι	δυνά με θα
2 nd Person	δύν α σαι	δύν α σθε
3 rd Person	δύν α ται	δύν α νται

The connecting vowel is alpha (α) instead of omicron (ο) or epsilon (ε). For an imperfect indicative, the augment can be either an epsilon (ε-) or an eta (η-): ἐδύνατο or ἠδύνατο (cf. also βέλω: imperfect [ᾔβελον] and aorist [ᾔβηλησα]).

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Vocabulary

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

δέχομαι, I take, receive, welcome

δικαιόω, I declare righteous, justify

λογίζομαι, consider, reckon (theology, apologetics)

σταυρόω, I crucify

ἄν, (particle of indefiniteness: untranslated)

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Vocabulary

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

ἐάν, if, when

ἐάν μή, unless

ἕως, until, while

ἵνα, in order that, so that, that

ὅπου, where

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Vocabulary

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

ὅπως, in order that, that

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι, whoever, whatever, who

ὅταν, whenever, when (ὅτε + ἄν)

ὅτε, when

ποῦ, where?