

Unit 63

Infinitive of purpose - 'I went out to post a letter.'

So that - 'I hurried so that I wouldn't be late.'

a We use **to** + *infinitive* to talk about the purpose of doing something (= why someone does something):

- I went out **to post** a letter. (= because I wanted to post a letter)
- She telephoned me **to invite** me to a party.
- We shouted **to warn** everyone of the danger.

We also use **to** + *infinitive* to talk about the purpose of something, or why someone has/wants/needs something:

- This wall is **to keep** people out of the garden.
- The minister has two bodyguards **to protect** him.
- I need a bottle-opener **to open** this bottle.

You can also use **in order to** + *infinitive*:

- We shouted **in order to warn** everyone of the danger.

Do *not* use **for** in these sentences:

- I'm going to Spain **to learn** Spanish. (*not* 'for learning/for to learn')

b We also use **to** + *infinitive* to say what can be done or must be done with something:

- It's usually difficult to find **a place to park** in the city centre.
(= a place where you can park)
- Have you got a lot of **work to do** this evening? (= work that you must do)
- Would you like **something to eat**?
- There were no **chairs to sit on**, so we all had to sit on the floor.
- She is a bit lonely. She's got **nobody to talk to**.

We also say **time/money/energy to do something**:

- They gave me some **money to buy** some food. (*not* 'for buying')
- Did you have **time to answer** all the questions in the examination?

c Sometimes you have to use **so that** (*not to* + *infinitive*) to talk about the purpose of doing something. We use **so that**:

i) when the purpose is *negative* (so that ... *won't/wouldn't* ...):

- I hurried **so that I wouldn't be late**. (= because I didn't want to be late)
- Leave early **so that you won't (or don't) miss the bus**.

ii) with **can** and **could** (so that ... *can/could* ...):

- He's learning English **so that he can** study in the United States.
- We moved to London **so that we could** visit our friends more often.

iii) when one person does something so that *another* person does something else:

- I gave him my address **so that he could** contact me.
- He wore glasses and a false beard **so that nobody** would recognise him.

- Would you like **something to eat**?
- There were no chairs **to sit on**, so we all had to sit on the floor.