

Unit 100

To + infinitive after adjectives

a Compare these two sentences:

Jim doesn't speak very clearly. || A It is difficult to understand him.
B He is difficult to understand.

Sentences A and B have the same meaning. But note that we say 'He is difficult to understand.' (not 'He is difficult to understand *him*.')

You can use the structure in sentence B after **difficult/easy/impossible/hard** and after a few other adjectives:

- Your writing is almost **impossible to read**. (not '... to read it')
(= It is almost impossible to read your writing.)
- Do you think this water is **safe to drink**? (not '... to drink it')
- Jill is very **interesting to talk to**. (not '... to talk to her')

You can also use this structure with an *adjective + noun*:

- This is a very **difficult question to answer**. (not '... to answer it')
- Jill is an **interesting person to talk to**.
- I enjoyed the football match. It was an **exciting game to watch**.

b We use **to + infinitive** after **the first / the second / the third** etc. and also after **the next** and **the last**:

- Who was **the first man to reach** the South Pole?
- If I have any more news, you'll be **the first to know**.
- **The next train to arrive** at platform 4 will be the 6.58 to Cardiff.
- Who was **the last person to leave** the building last night?

c You can use **to + infinitive** after a number of adjectives to say how someone feels about something. For example:

- I was **sorry to hear** that your father is ill.
- Was Tom **surprised to see** you when you visited him?
- I was **delighted to get** your letter last week.

Other adjectives you can use in this way include:

happy	pleased	disappointed	amazed
glad	sad	relieved	astonished

d Note the structure **(it is) nice of someone to do something**. This structure is possible after a number of adjectives including:

nice	mean	silly	polite	generous
kind	stupid	clever	careless	

- It was **nice of you to take** me to the station. Thank you very much.
- It was **careless of Jack to leave** the door unlocked when he went out.
- It's **stupid of him to give** up his job when he needs the money.
- It was very **generous of Ann to lend** us the money.

- Who was **the first man to reach** the South Pole?
- If I have any more news, you'll be **the first to know**.

