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Cambridge English Exam?



TO-infinitive

in non-finite relative clauses

What are non-finite clauses ?

Non-finite clauses are clauses that contain a verb which does not show tense.

Superlative + noun + to-infinitive :

We can use a to-infinitive after a superlative adjective, with a meaning similar to a relative clause with who, which or that:

- Who was **the oldest person to compete** in the London Marathon of 2008?
(Who was the oldest person who competed ...?)
- 9/11 was **the worst terrorist attack to ever take place** on American soil.
(...the worst terrorist attacked that has ever taken place on American soil.)

the first, second, third, etc. + noun + to-infinitive :

- Neil Armstrong was **the first person to walk** on the moon.
(Neil Armstrong was the person who first walked on the moon.)

the only, the next, the last, another, one + noun + to-infinitive :

- The **only thing to do** was to wait. / Mike was **the only one to help** me.
(The only thing I could do was wait) (Mike was the only one who helped me.)
- **The last person to leave** should turn off the lights.
(The last person who leaves should turn off the lights.)

The TO-infinitive to replace a relative clause

- His office was **the next room to clean**. / His was **the last composition to be marked**.
(His office was the next room that they had to clean.) (His was the last composition which was marked.)

Sometimes we can use an active or passive to-infinitives clause with little difference in meaning.

- The only thing **to do** is... / The only thing **to be done** is...

To-infinitive clauses can sometimes replace relative clauses with modal verbs.

- We have a number of techniques that can help us. (=We have a number of techniques **to help** us.)
- The team must find someone that can fill the curator position. (=The team must find someone **to fill** ...)