

BBC Learning English

Grammar Challenge

Verb, object, 'to' + infinitive



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Catherine's Grammar Explanation: Verb, object, 'to' + infinitive

Hello, Ehsan! I think that's pretty good too! Elena told Marco to be nice to everybody, she warned him not to eat too much cake, she reminded him to thank the hostess and she's encouraging him to share his toys.

English reporting verbs like *tell*, *warn*, *remind* and *encourage*, are often followed by an object and then an infinitive with 'to', like this:

Elena: *Well, I told him to be nice to everybody*

I told him to be. Subject and verb – *I told*, object – *him*, infinitive with 'to' – *to be*. Here's another one:

Elena: *I also reminded him to say thank you to the hostess...*

Subject and verb - *I reminded*, object - *him*, infinitive with 'to' - *to say*.

Now the negative infinitive is made with *not*, like this:

Elena: *...and I've warned him not to eat too much cake.*

*I've warned him **not** to eat.* Negative infinitive.

Here are some of the verbs which take this pattern: *advise*, *ask*, *beg*, *encourage*, *force*, *invite*, *order*, *permit*, *persuade*, *remind*, *tell*, *want* and *warn*.

It might help to remember that all the verbs on this list are **action** verbs, and they all need **2 people** to make sense. For example, I don't invite **myself** to do something – I invite someone else.

So to recap. Some reporting verbs are followed by an object and then by an infinitive with 'to' – *I told you to do it*. The negative infinitive is formed with **not** – *I told you **not** to do it*.

Ok, that's all from me. Good luck with your grammar challenge!

Grammar tables: Verb, object, 'to' + infinitive

subject	verb	object	(not) to + infinitive	
<i>I</i>	<i>reminded</i>	<i>Marco</i>	<i>to say</i>	<i>thank you.</i>
<i>Marco's mother</i>	<i>ordered</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>to get into</i>	<i>the car.</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>'ve warned</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>not to eat</i>	<i>too much cake.</i>
<i>Elena</i>	<i>told</i>	<i>the children</i>	<i>not to touch</i>	<i>the glasses.</i>

Verbs which take this pattern include:

advise, allow, ask, beg, command, encourage, forbid, force, instruct, invite, oblige, order, permit, persuade, remind, tell, want, warn