

Split Infinitives

When a word, phrase, or clause comes between the infinitive *to* and the verb that follows, it is called a split infinitive. This generally results in an awkward sentence, and even when it still sounds okay, it is generally considered bad writing. It is best to move the word or words that split the infinitive to a different part of the sentence.

Example: A reliable car does not need to necessarily be expensive. (split)

A reliable car does not necessarily need to be expensive. (better)

Underline the infinitive(s) in each sentence. Then rewrite the sentence so that there is not a split infinitive. Most sentences will only require moving a word or phrase; others may require some slight additional rewording after moving the offending words out of the infinitive for the sentence to read correctly and maintain its meaning.

1. The new movie was designed to directly appeal to preteen girls.

2. The child rushed to immediately tattle on her siblings when the opportunity arose.

3. When I write, I have to totally concentrate to avoid splitting infinitives.

4. Beth decided to really quickly reread the article.

5. The company told its employees that they had to more than quadruple sales in the next quarter.

6. He began to secretly envy the opportunity his best friend now had available.

7. Everyone was told to immediately vacate the premises.

8. In the beginning of Star Trek, it says: "Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: To explore strange new worlds. To seek out new life and new civilizations. To boldly go where no man has gone before."

9. Journalist Norman Lewis wrote that "It is perfectly correct to consciously split an infinitive whenever such an act increases the strength or clarity of your sentence."
