

# 5 • Quand utiliser l'infinitif

## (When to use the infinitive)

Some groups of **verbs** can be **followed directly by an infinitive**, with no preposition linking the two verbs. These include:

- some **modal verbs**, or verbs expressing possibility, necessity, ability (*pouvoir, devoir, falloir, savoir, oser ...*) e.g. *Ma petite sœur sait nager.*
- some **verbs expressing liking, inclination or intention** (*aimer, adorer, détester, préférer, vouloir, penser, espérer, compter, ...*) e.g. *Il veut participer à des tournois de tennis.*

For further groups in this category see section 44 on p. 100.

The following **verbs** are followed by an **infinitive with à or de** linking the two verbs. Note that in some cases the English equivalent is followed by the '-ing' form, not an infinitive (e.g. to suggest learning). Learn the list by heart.

| Verbs with <i>à</i>                 | Verbs with <i>de</i>               |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| aider à (to help to)                | accepter de (to agree to)          | empêcher de (to prevent from)   |
| s'amuser à (to have fun)            | accuser de (to accuse of)          | essayer de (to try to)          |
| apprendre à (to learn to)           | s'agir de (to be a question of)    | finir de (to finish)            |
| arriver à (to manage to)            | (s')arrêter de (to stop)           | interdire de (to forbid to)     |
| s'attendre à (to expect to)         | avoir besoin de (to need to)       | manquer de (to very nearly)     |
| avoir du mal à (to find it hard to) | avoir envie de (to want to)        | menacer de (to threaten to)     |
| avoir tendance à (to tend to)       | avoir l'intention de (to mean to)  | mériter de (to deserve to)      |
| chercher à (to attempt to)          | en avoir marre de (to be sick of)  | oublier de (to forget to)       |
| commencer à (to start to)           | avoir peur de (to be afraid of)    | permettre de (to allow to)      |
| continuer à (to continue to)        | avoir raison (to be right to)      | promettre de (to promise to)    |
| se décider à (to decide on)         | avoir tort de (to be wrong to)     | proposer de (to suggest)        |
| encourager à (to encourage to)      | choisir de (to choose to)          | refuser de (to refuse to)       |
| forcer à (to force to)              | conseiller de (to advise to)       | regretter de (to regret)        |
| s'habituer à (to get used to)       | décider de (to decide to)          | rêver de (to dream of)          |
| hésiter à (to hesitate to)          | défendre de (to forbid to)         | se souvenir de (to remember to) |
| inviter à (to invite to)            | demander de (to ask to)            | suggérer de (to suggest)        |
| se mettre à (to begin to)           | se dépêcher de (to hurry to)       | terminer de (to stop)           |
| obliger à (to require to)           | s'efforcer de (to do your best to) |                                 |
| penser à (to think of)              |                                    |                                 |
| renoncer à (to give up)             |                                    |                                 |
| réussir à (to succeed in)           |                                    |                                 |
| servir à (to be useful for)         |                                    |                                 |
| tenir à (to be anxious to)          |                                    |                                 |

The construction **venir de + infinitive** is used to express events that have happened very recently, e.g. *Elle vient de faire du trampoline.* (She has just done some trampolining/She has just been trampolining.) Check the present tense of *venir* in the verb tables (p. 120).

The construction **être en train de + infinitive** is used to express an action in process, e.g. *Je suis en train de faire du yoga.* (I'm doing yoga./I'm in the middle of doing yoga.)

Some other **prepositions** can be followed by the infinitive: *pour, afin de, avant de, au lieu de, sans, par (commencer par/finir par)*. **Exception:** the preposition *en* is followed by a present participle (see section 24 on p. 56).