Uses of the Greek Infinitive
Adverbial Uses

Usage	Description	Structural Formation	Translation	Other Important Elements	Examples
Complementary Infinitive *(pp. 598-599)	The infinitive is used to complete the verbal idea of certain finite verbs. (Certain verbs require a complementary infinitive to complete their verbal idea.)	Certain verbs rarely occur without a complementary infinitive; such as δύναμαι (most common), θέλω, μέλλω, ὀφείλω, ζητέω, βούλομαι, ἄρχομαι, etc.	Simple infinitive, translated by 'to'.	- This is a very common use of the infinitive. - (It is possible to treat complementary infinitives as direct object infinitives (see below), but it is best to view them as a part of the complete verbal idea.)	Mark 10:26 'who *is able* to be saved?' 1 John 4:11 'we also *ought* to love one another'
Infinitive of Purpose (pp. 590-592)	The infinitive is used to indicate the 'purpose' or 'goal' of its controlling verb. Emphasis is on 'intended result', (which may or may not actually occur).	1) Simple infinitive (usually following an intransitive verb of motion) 2) τοῦ + infinitive 3) εἰς τό + infinitive 4) πρὸς τό + infinitive (Rarely w/ ὥστε or ὡς + inf)	'in order that' (A simple "to" translation usually works here.)	- This use is very common. - Be aware that it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between 'purpose' and 'result' clauses. - Notice that structural formation may overlap with Infinitive of Result. - Purpose is expressed 3 times more often than Result, so try this category first.	Matt. 2:2 'we have come in order to worship him' Matt. 27:31 'they led him away in order to crucify him'
Infinitive of Result (pp. 592-594)	The infinitive is used to indicate the outcome produced by the controlling verb. Emphasis of 'result' is on 'effect', which may or may not have been intended.	1) ὥστε + infinitive (most common structure) 2) Simple infinitive (usually following an intransitive verb of motion) 3) τοῦ + infinitive 4) εἰς τό + infinitive	'so that', 'so as to', 'with the result that' (A simple "to" translation would be mis-leading here.)	- This use is relatively common. - Be aware that it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between 'purpose' and 'result' clauses. - Notice that certain structural formations may overlap with Infinitive of Purpose. - Rarely 'result' can be formed by using ὡς + infinitive.	Luke 5:7 'they filled both the boats so that they began to sink'
Causal Infinitive (pp. 596-597)	The infinitive is used to indicate reason for action of controlling verb. Looks back at the reason for an action, whereas Purpose Inf. looks forward to intended result.	διὰ τό + infinitive (rarely with τοῦ + infinitive)	'because'	- Answers the question 'why?' - Commonly used in Luke and Acts, relatively rare elsewhere.	Luke 8:6 'it withered away, because it had no moisture.' James 4:2 'you do not have because you do not ask'
Infinitive of Time (pp. 594-596)	The infinitive is used to indicate a temporal relationship between its action and the action of the controlling verb.	1) Antecedent time: μετὰ τό + infinitive 2) Contemporaneous time: ἐν τῷ + infinitive 3) Subsequent time: πρίν, πρὶν ἤ, or πρό τοῦ, + infinitive	1) 'after' 2) 'while', 'when', 'as' 3) 'before'	- Answers the question 'when?' 1) Antecedent: action of the infinitive occurs before action of controlling verb. 2) Contemporaneous: action of the infinitive occurs simultaneously with action of controlling verb. 3) Subsequent time: action of the infinitive occurs after action of controlling verb.	1) Matt. 26:32 'after I have been raised, I will go before you' 2) Matt. 13:4 'while he was sowing, some (seeds) fell on the road' 3) Matt. 6:8 'Father knows...before you ask'

* Page numbering refers to the major section where this topic is discussed in "Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics" by Daniel B. Wallace.

** This chart does not include Infinitive of Means (formed by ἐν τῷ + infinitive) since its use is rare; answers the question 'how'; should be translated 'by _-ing'. E.g. Acts 3:26.

*** Please note that although the infinitive is not a finite verb, and therefore cannot have an actual subject, it can have a 'logical' subject. When the infinitive has a specifically designated logical subject, that substantive will normally be in the accusative case. (Usually corresponds to the case of direct object of the finite form of the verb.)

Uses of the Greek Infinitive (continued)

Substantival Uses *

Usage	Description	Structural Formation	Translation	Other Important Elements	Examples
Subject (pp. 600-601)	The infinitive or infinitive phrase functioning as subject of finite verb.	Infinitive may or may not have an article, but will not occur in prepositional phrase.	As simple infinitive or gerund	Often used when infinitive occurs with impersonal verbs, such as δεῖ, ἔξεστιν, δοκεῖ, etc..	Phil 1:21 'to live is Christ' Mark 9:5 '[for us to be here] is good'
Indirect Discourse (pp. 603-605)	After a verb of perception or communication, which indicates the indirect discourse; the infinitive acts as the main verb, and expresses the content of the communication.	Verbs of perception or communication that can introduce indirect discourse or numerous, including verbs of knowing, thinking, speaking, believing, asking, urging, and commanding.	Often translated as finite verb or as simple infinitive.	- The infinitive of the indirect discourse represents a finite verb in the direct discourse. - Retains the tense of the direct discourse and usually represents indicative or imperative.	Rom 12:1 'I urge you to present your bodies' Mark 12:18 'Sadducees … who say there is no resurrection'
Appositional (pp. 606-607)	May stand in apposition to (and thus define) a noun, pronoun, or substantival infinitive.	Typically refers to a specific example that falls within a broad category named by head noun.	Add the word 'namely' before the infinitive.		1 Thess 4:3 'sanctification, namely, that you abstain from fornication'
Epexegetical (pp. 607)	Clarifies, explains, or qualifies a noun or adjective.	The noun or adjective is normally a word indicating ability, authority, desire, freedom, hope, need, obligation, or readiness.	As simple infinitive	- The infinitive cannot stand in relation to a pronoun. - Infinitives that qualify verbs should be treated as Complementary.	Luke 10:19 'given you authority to tread on serpents' Jam 1:19 'quick to hear, slow to speak'
Direct Object ** (pp. 601-603)	The infinitive or infinitive phrase functioning as direct object of finite verb.	Infinitive may or may not have an article, but will not occur in prepositional phrase.	As gerund or simple infinitive	- Apart from Indirect Discourse being a subcategory of this one, its use is rare. - It is possible to treat Complementary Inf. as Direct Object Inf., but it is best to view Compl. Inf. as part of the complete verbal idea.	John 5:26 'given the Son to have life in himself' Phil 2:13 'producing in you both the willing and the working'

Independent Uses

Usage	Description	Structural Formation	Translation	Other Important Elements	Examples
Imperatival (pp. 608)	Very rarely can function as an imperative.	Not related to any other verb in the sentence.	As imperative	Possibly ONLY used this way in Rom 12:15 and Phil 3:16.	Rom 12:15 'Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep ….' Phil 3:16 'let us walk by the same standard'
Absolute (pp. 608-609)	Bears no syntactical relation to anything else in sentence.	χαίρειν especially used this way. 'Greetings!'		Very rare.	Jam 1:1 'Greetings'

* When the infinitive is treated as a substantive, it will always be seen as neuter singular.

** Names in bold are more commonly used than names not emboldened.