

Adjective + to-infinitive, -ing, that-clause, wh-clause

A

When an adjective comes after a linking verb (e.g. **appear, be, become, seem**; see Unit 21) we can use a number of patterns after the adjective including a **to-infinitive, -ing, that-clause, and wh-clause**. (For **It + linking verb + adjective**, see B.)

	adjective +	example adjectives used in this pattern
i	to-infinitive <input type="checkbox"/> You're free <i>to leave</i> at any time you want.	(un)able, careful, crazy, curious, difficult, easy, foolish, free, good, hard, impossible, inclined, mad, nice, prepared, ready, stupid, welcome, willing
ii	-ing <input type="checkbox"/> He was busy <i>doing</i> his homework.	busy, crazy, foolish, mad, stupid; (after the verb feel) awful, awkward, bad, good, guilty, terrible
iii	that-clause <input type="checkbox"/> He became worried (<i>that</i>) she might fall down.	afraid, alarmed, amazed, angry, annoyed, ashamed, astonished, aware, concerned, disappointed, glad, (un)happy, pleased, shocked, sorry, upset, worried; certain, confident, positive, sure
iv	wh-clause <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not certain (of / about) <i>why</i> he wants to borrow the money	afraid, not aware / unaware, not certain / uncertain, doubtful, not sure / unsure, worried
v	to-infinitive or that-clause <input type="checkbox"/> She was afraid <i>to say</i> anything. <input type="checkbox"/> I was afraid <i>that</i> I would be late.	the adjectives in (iii) above, except aware, confident and positive
vi	to-infinitive or -ing <input type="checkbox"/> He'd be stupid <i>to leave</i> now. <input type="checkbox"/> He'd be stupid <i>giving up</i> the job.	crazy, foolish, mad, stupid
vii	-ing or that-clause <input type="checkbox"/> She felt awful <i>leaving</i> him with all the clearing up. <input type="checkbox"/> She felt awful <i>that</i> she was late.	(after the verb feel) awful, awkward, bad, good, guilty, terrible

B

It + linking verb + adjective

We can sometimes use **it + linking verb + adjective + to-infinitive** as an alternative to **subject + linking verb + adjective + to-infinitive** (see also Units 96 and 97):

- The fireworks were **amazing** *to watch*. *or*
- It was amazing** *to watch* the fireworks.

Also: annoying, awkward, easy, good, interesting, lovely, simple, terrific, wonderful

In informal speech we can use an **-ing** form instead of a **to-infinitive**:

- It is easy** *understanding* her.
- It was amazing** *watching* the fireworks.

We can use a similar pattern with **adjective + wh-** or **that-clause** (see Unit 96A):

- It is not **clear** *why* he did it.
- It was **odd** *that* she left so suddenly.

After certain adjectives we often include **of + subject** between the adjective and a **to-infinitive**:

- It was rude (**of them**) *to criticise* her. *or*
- They were rude *to criticise* her.

Also: brave, generous, kind, mean, thoughtful, unprofessional, unreasonable

When we talk about how somebody reacts to a situation we can use **it + make** with an adjective and **to-infinitive, -ing or that-clause**:

- It made me angry** (*to discover*) *that* so much money was wasted. (*or It made me angry* *discovering* *that* ... *or I was angry to discover that* ...)

Also: ashamed, furious, glad, happy, miserable, nervous, sad, tired, uncomfortable

Exercises

70.1 Complete the sentences with a **to-infinitive** or an **-ing** form of the verbs in the box. Give alternatives where possible. **A**

cheat know leave open panic reduce
resign talk turn underestimate

- I'm afraid I can't afford that much. Would you be prepared the price if I pay cash?
- Kenzo was stupid in the exam. He was bound to get caught.
- He felt good that he had helped solve the problem.
- Don't feel that you need to stay to the very end. You're free at any time.
- Anyone trying to climb the mountain would be foolish the challenge facing them.
- People said I was crazy a shop in the village, but it's been a success so far.
- She was too busy on the phone to notice that Roya had come into the room.
- It's so difficult to get a job at the moment you'd be mad
- Some people would be inclined if they smelt smoke in the house.
- I felt awful people away from the concert, but there just wasn't any more room.

70.2 Correct any mistakes in the italicised parts of this email about a holiday in Thailand. **A**

... After a couple of days Mark announced that he was going walking in the hills near the hotel. I thought he was (1) *stupid that he would go* alone and that it was dangerous. But he said that he was (2) *confident not to get lost*. We ended up arguing and finally he stormed off, saying he (3) *wasn't sure when* he'd be back. I went into town, but I felt a bit (4) *guilty to shop* all day. On the bus on the way back to the hotel I got talking to a local woman and (5) *was concerned learning* that it got very cold in the hills at night. I started (6) *to get worried* that he might be in danger, but I (7) *wasn't certain what* to do. But when I got back to the hotel, there was Mark (8) *busy to drink* orange juice by the pool. He'd decided not to go walking after all! He said he (9) *was sorry upsetting me*. At first I was angry and said he was stubborn and that he just (10) *wasn't prepared admitting* that I'd been right. But really I was just (11) *pleased that* he was safe ...

70.3 Rewrite these sentences using **It + be + adjective**. If possible, use **of + a personal pronoun** after the adjective. **B**

- She was brave to spend the night in the old house alone. *It was brave of her to spend the night in the old house alone.*
- Such a magnificent performance was wonderful to hear.
- You were mean to eat all the cake and not leave any for me.
- They were unreasonable to complain about the exam results.
- The top of the jar was awkward to get off.
- The shelves were simple to put up.
- He was unprofessional to criticise the headteacher in front of the staff.
- You were kind to give birthday presents to the children.

70.4 Complete these sentences with **It made me + any appropriate adjective**. **B**

- It made me angry* to hear how she had been insulted.
- listening to his lies.
- that we wouldn't be working together again.
- to learn how badly we treated immigrants in the 1950s.
- hearing the dentist's drill as I sat in the waiting room.