

To . . . , for . . . , and so that . . . (Purpose)

A

We use **to . . .** to say why somebody does something (= the purpose of an action):

- "Why did you go out?" "To mail a letter."
- A friend of mine called to invite me to a party.
- We shouted to warn everybody of the danger.

We use **to . . .** to say why something exists or why somebody has/wants/needs something:

- This fence is to keep people out of the yard.
- The president has a team of bodyguards to protect him.
- I need a bottle opener to open this bottle.

B

We use **to . . .** to say what can be done or must be done with something:

- It's hard to find a place to park downtown. (= a place where you can park)
- Would you like something to eat?
- Do you have much work to do? (= work that you must do)
- I get lonely if there's nobody to talk to.

We also use **money/time/chance/opportunity/energy/courage, etc., to do (something)**:

- They gave us some money to buy some food.
- Do you have much opportunity to practice your English?
- I need a few days to think about your proposal.

C

For . . . and to . . .

We use **for + noun**:

- I'm going to Spain for a vacation.
- What would you like for dinner?
- Let's go to the cafe for coffee.

We use **to + verb**:

- I'm going to Spain to learn Spanish.
(*not* for learn, *not* for learning)
- What would you like to eat? (*not* for eat)
- Let's go to the cafe to have coffee.

Note that you can say "for somebody to do something":

- There weren't any chairs for us to sit on, so we had to sit on the floor.

You can use **for -ing** to say what the general purpose of a thing is. **To . . .** is also possible:

- This knife is only for cutting bread. (*or* to cut bread)

You can use **What . . . for?** to ask about purpose:

- What is this switch for?
- What did you do that for?

D

So that

Sometimes you have to use **so that** for purpose. We use **so that (not to . . .)**:

- 1) when the purpose is negative (**so that . . . won't/wouldn't**):
 - I hurried so that I wouldn't be late. (= because I didn't want to be late)
 - Leave early so that you won't (*or* don't) miss the bus.
- 2) with **can** and **could** (**so that . . . can/could**):
 - She's learning English so that she can study in Canada.
 - We moved to the city so that we could visit our friends more often.
- 3) when one person does something so that another person does something else:
 - I gave her my address so that she could contact me.
 - He wore glasses and a fake beard so that nobody would recognize him.

Exercises

61.1 Use a sentence from Box A and a sentence from Box B to make a new sentence.

A

1. I shouted.
2. I had to go to the bank.
3. I'm saving money.
4. I went into the hospital.
5. I'm wearing two sweaters.
6. I called the police.

B

1. I want to keep warm.
2. I wanted to report that my car had been stolen.
3. I want to go to Canada.
4. I had to have an operation.
5. I needed to get some money.
6. I wanted to warn people of the danger.

1. *I shouted to warn people of the danger.*
2. I had to go to the bank _____.
3. I _____.
4. _____.
5. _____.
6. _____.

61.2 Complete these sentences using an appropriate verb.

1. The president has a team of bodyguards *to protect* _____ him.
2. I didn't have enough time _____ the newspaper today.
3. I came home by taxi. I didn't have the energy _____.
4. "Would you like something _____?" "Yes, please. A cup of coffee."
5. We need a bag _____ these things in.
6. There will be a meeting next week _____ the problem.
7. I wish we had enough money _____ a new car.
8. I saw Kelly at the party, but we didn't have a chance _____ to each other.
9. I need some new clothes. I don't have anything nice _____.
10. I can't do all this work alone. I need somebody _____ me.

61.3 Put in *to* or *for*.

1. I'm going to Mexico *for* _____ a vacation.
2. You need a lot of experience _____ this job.
3. You need a lot of experience _____ do this job.
4. We'll need more time _____ make a decision.
5. I went to the dentist _____ a checkup.
6. I had to put on my glasses _____ read the letter.
7. Do you wear glasses _____ reading?
8. I wish we had a yard _____ the children _____ play in.

61.4 Write sentences with *so that*.

1. I hurried. I didn't want to be late. *I hurried so that I wouldn't be late.*
2. We wore warm clothes. We didn't want to get cold.
We wore _____.
3. The man spoke very slowly. He wanted me to understand what he said.
The man _____.
4. Please arrive early. We want to be able to start the meeting on time.
Please _____.
5. She locked the door. She didn't want to be disturbed.
_____.
6. I slowed down. I wanted the car behind me to be able to pass.
_____.