

Lesson 9 / Handout 9b

VERBS and PHRASES followed by the PLAIN INFINITIVE:

- **modals:** *can/could, may/might, will/would, shall/should, must*
- **modal idioms:** *would rather, would sooner, had better*
- **marginal modal auxiliaries:** *dare, need*
- *why (not)...?* used in suggestions and invitations: *Why waste money on a train ticket?*
Why not come / Why don't you come by car with us?
- *do* (auxiliary), *help, know, let, make*

EXCEPTIONS:

!!! *dare* !!!

- **as an auxiliary** = with a plain infinitive:

- 1) in rhetorical questions beginning with *How...* : *How dare she say that about me!*
- 2) in nonassertive territory = in questions and negative statements: *Dare he ask? No, he daren't ask. Dared he do it? No, he dared not do it.* – also *dare* as a main verb can be used here: *Does/Will he dare to ask? No, he doesn't/won't dare to ask. Did he dare to do it? No, he didn't dare to do it.*

- **as a main verb** = with a full infinitive:

in affirmative constructions: *One day he may dare to ask her.*

after the *-ing* form of *dare*: *He stared at her, not daring to say a word.*

also in nonassertive territory

!!! *need* !!!

- **as an auxiliary** = with a plain infinitive:

in nonassertive territory: *Need she leave straightaway? She needn't worry about being late.* – even here *need* as a main verb can be used: *Does she need to leave straightaway? She doesn't need to worry.*

- **as a main verb** = with a full infinitive:

in affirmative (but also in nonassertive territory)

!!! **help** !!!

may be used either with a plain infinitive or with a full infinitive, either alone or after an object:

I helped (them) (to) carry the injured outside the building.

X

can't help doing sth. = *can't stop*

!!! **know** !!!

- may be used with the plain infinitive (after an object) only in the present perfect tense, meaning 'have had the experience of':

I have known Willie (to) stay up all night working.

- in its usual meaning of 'have the knowledge of' **know** is used with a *that* clause or a full infinitive:

I know (that) Willie sometimes stays up working all night.

I know Willie to be a chronic work addict. = I know (that) Willie is a chronic work addict.

!!! **let & make** !!!

- most often used with the plain infinitive after an object:

I'll let you know as soon as possible.

She made him realise how foolish he'd been.

- however they are both used with the plain infinitive alone in one or two special phrases:

let go = to stop holding something: *Let go (of) the rope! Hold on tight and don't let go! Let go of my hand, you're hurting me!*

make do = manage: *We'll have to make do with the money we've got.*

- in the passive, however, **make**, like all verbs except *let*, takes a full infinitive.

He was made to realise how foolish he'd been.

- **let**, in one of its rare uses in the passive, takes a plain infinitive:

A remark was let slip at the meeting that made everyone sit up.

References:

Gethin, H. (1992) *Grammar in Context*. Harlow: Longman. Study list 17B, pp. 188-189.