

## English Grammar: Reduced Infinitives

Consider all the possible responses to the question below. Which ones do you think are the most common responses? Which ones seem like Portuguese? Which ones are never used?

Do you want to have pizza tonight?

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Yes.                               | No.                                     |
| 2. Yes, I do.                         | No, I don't.                            |
| 3. Yes, I want.                       | No, I don't want.                       |
| 4. Yes, I want to.                    | No, I don't want to.                    |
| 5. Yes, I want to have.               | No, I don't want to have.               |
| 6. Yes, I want to have pizza tonight. | No, I don't want to have pizza tonight. |

The most common responses are #2 (known as “a short answer”). Responses #3 and #5 are never used, and #6 very rarely. Response #1 is considered a little rude. Response #4 uses what we call “a reduced infinitive”. It can be used to avoid repetition but add a little emotion to a response. A short answer (#2) is emotionally neutral, but a “reduced infinitive” response provides more emotion. A “reduced infinitive” is simply the word ‘to’ without the verb! Stress is given on the verb to add the emotion. Take a look at the three types of infinitive:

<b>Full Infinitive:</b>	to drink, to see, to do, to make, to eat, etc.
<b>Bare infinitive:</b>	drink, see, do, make, eat, etc.
<b>Reduced infinitive:</b>	to (Note: <i>this is <u>not</u> a preposition!</i> )

Here are some examples:

Full responses (rarely used):

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| A: Do you want to have pizza tonight? | B: No, I don't want to have pizza tonight. |
| A: Do you want to go out tonight?     | B: Yes, I'd love to go out tonight.        |
| A: Did you intend to do that?         | B: No, I didn't intend to do that.         |
| A: Did Arsenal win the game?          | B: Yes, I expected them to win the game.   |

One-word responses (considered to be rude):

- |                                       |         |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| A: Do you want to have pizza tonight? | B: No.  |
| A: Do you want to go out tonight?     | B: Yes. |
| A: Did you intend to do that?         | B: No.  |
| A: Did Arsenal win the game?          | B: Yes. |

Short responses (very common, but emotionally neutral):

- |                                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A: Do you want to have pizza tonight? | B: No, I don't.   |
| A: Do you want to go out tonight?     | B: Yes, I do.     |
| A: Did you intend to do that?         | B: No, I didn't.  |
| A: Did Arsenal win the game?          | B: Yes, they did. |

Responses with reduced infinitives (avoid repetition, stress on the verb to add emotion):

- |                                       |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A: Do you want to have pizza tonight? | B: No, I don't <u>want</u> to.     |
| A: Do you want to go out tonight?     | B: Yes, I'd <u>love</u> to!        |
| A: Did you intend to do that?         | B: No, I didn't <u>intend</u> to.  |
| A: Did Arsenal win the game?          | B: Yes, I <u>expected</u> them to. |

Grammatically speaking, a reduced infinitive replaces a verb clause. For example:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| I don't want <b>to have pizza tonight</b> . | (Verb clause: “ <b>to have pizza tonight</b> ”) |
| I don't want <b>to</b> .                    | (Reduced infinitive: “ <b>to</b> ”)             |

**Exercise.** Provide responses using a reduced infinitive and the given verbs.

1. Are you going to study tonight for tomorrow's test? \_\_\_\_\_ (*Yes / need*)
2. Are you going to pay the electricity bill today? \_\_\_\_\_ (*Yes / have*)
3. Do you want to go camping with me next weekend? \_\_\_\_\_ (*No / not want*)
4. Did he really intend to say that? \_\_\_\_\_ (*Yes / intend*)
5. Will you be able to work tomorrow? \_\_\_\_\_ (*No / not be able*)
6. Did John go the dentist yesterday? \_\_\_\_\_ (*Yes / have*)
7. Is Simon taking a shower? \_\_\_\_\_ (*No / not want*)
8. Do you like to dance? \_\_\_\_\_ (*Yes / love*)

Suggested video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSY\\_FXeLuPg&t=333s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSY_FXeLuPg&t=333s) (05:33 – 07:00)