ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Infinitives Test Exercises – Multiple Choice Questions With Answers – Advanced Level 31

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Explanations

1. We are about _____ at the place where we can set up our tents.
✓ **A) to arrive**
Be about to + bare infinitive describes something that will happen very soon: **We are about to arrive.** **About** here is part of a fixed expression, not a preposition taking **-ing**, so **arriving** and **to arriving** are wrong.

2. It will be wise for him _____ himself what the background is to the event.
✓ **B) to ask**
The pattern **It + be + adjective + for someone + to-infinitive** gives the subject of the action: **It will be wise for him to ask himself...** The simple infinitive **to ask** fits. The continuous **to be asking** would stress an ongoing process, which is not intended here.

3. "To be, or not _____, that is the question." (William Shakespeare, Hamlet)
✓ **C) to be**
The structure is parallel: **To be** or not **to be**. The second infinitive must match the first, with **not** placed before **to**. Negative infinitives always take this order: **not to be**.

4. He was unfortunate _____ off on a journey on board a ship which later sank to the bottom of the ocean.
✓ **D) to have set**
After adjectives such as **unfortunate**, **lucky** or **fortunate**, a **perfect infinitive** (**to have + past participle**) refers to an earlier event that we are judging: **He was unfortunate to have set off on a ship which later sank.** Not **to be set**: that is passive, and **set off** here is an action he did himself.

5. After thinking about it, I decided _____ some more money with me before _____ abroad.
✓ **A) to take / going**
Decide is followed by a to-infinitive: **decided to take**. After a preposition such as **before**, we use the **-ing** form: **before going**. Not **before to go**, because a preposition cannot be followed by an infinitive.

6. Is it possible _____ you a personal question?
✓ **D) to ask**
It is possible + to-infinitive: **Is it possible to ask you a personal question?** The adjective **possible** takes the to-infinitive, not the **-ing** form.

7. My mother wanted me _____ the car but I had promised _____ to the cinema with my friends so I told her I'd do it later.
✓ **A) to wash / to go**
Want + object + to-infinitive: **wanted me to wash the car**. **Promise** also takes a to-infinitive: **had promised to go**. Not **promised going**, because **promise** is never followed by **-ing**.

8. But for her help I wouldn't have finished _____ the homework. She helped me _____ it.
✓ **E) translating / finish**
Finish is followed by the **-ing** form: **finished translating**. **Help + object** can take a bare infinitive or a to-infinitive (**helped me finish / to finish**). Of the forms offered, only **finish** works with **translating**.

9. Don't forget _____ off the iron before _____ the house.
✓ **A) to turn / leaving**
Forget + to-infinitive means not remembering to do something in the future: **Don't forget to turn off the iron.** After the preposition **before**, use **-ing**: **before leaving**. Not **forget turning**, which refers to not remembering a past action.

10. Please show me how _____ this machine. I cannot figure out anything from the instructions.
✓ **D) to use**
A question word such as **how**, **what** or **where** can be followed by a to-infinitive: **show me how to use this machine**. Not **how using** or **how use**. This structure always needs **to** + base form.

11. I haven't decided yet which book _____ first.
✓ **C) to read**
Which/what + noun + to-infinitive expresses a choice still to be made: **I haven't decided which book to read first.** The simple infinitive is used because the reading lies in the future.

12. His parents want him _____ a doctor but his ambition is _____ an English teacher.
✓ **A) to be / to be**
Want + object + to-infinitive: **want him to be a doctor**. After nouns such as **ambition**, **aim** or **plan** + **is**, a to-infinitive expresses the goal: **his ambition is to be an English teacher**.

13. He had expected _____ many questions after his lecture but nobody asked a question.
✓ **D) to be asked**
Expect takes a to-infinitive. Here he is the receiver of the questions, so the **passive infinitive** is needed: **to be asked**. Not **to ask**: that would mean he expected to ask questions himself, which does not fit **nobody asked a question**.

14. As a result of _____ the whole book, I could answer all the questions in the exam.
✓ **D) reading**
As a result of ends with the preposition **of**, so it is followed by the **-ing** form: **as a result of reading the whole book**. Infinitives cannot follow prepositions.

15. I realized that I had forgotten _____ the ticket with me.
✓ **B) to take**
Forget + to-infinitive means not remembering to do something you needed to do: **I had forgotten to take the ticket**, so the speaker didn't take it. Not **forgotten taking**: **forget + -ing** means forgetting a memory of something you really did, e.g. **I'll never forget seeing the sea for the first time**.

16. There is no point in _____ on the subject, because no one can make me _____ that he is an honest man.
✓ **D) insisting / believe**
There is no point in + **-ing**: **no point in insisting**. **Make + object** takes a bare infinitive in the active voice: **make me believe**. Not **make me to believe**. **To** is used only in the passive: **I was made to believe**.

17. I am not interested in _____ about such subjects. I'd rather _____ historical books.
✓ **D) talking / read**
Interested in is followed by **-ing**: **interested in talking**. **Would rather ('d rather)** is followed by a bare infinitive: **I'd rather read historical books.** Not **I'd rather to read**.

18. I say he shouldn't be allowed _____ before he _____ his homework.
✓ **B) to go out / finishes**
Be allowed + to-infinitive: **shouldn't be allowed to go out**. In a time clause after **before**, the present simple refers to the future: **before he finishes his homework**. With a subject (**he**), a finite verb is needed, not **finishing**.

19. I wanted him _____ the window for a while but he insisted on _____ it.
✓ **D) to close / opening**
Want + object + to-infinitive: **I wanted him to close the window. Insist on** ends with a preposition, so it is followed by **-ing**: **he insisted on opening it**. Not **insisted on to open**.

20. I recommend that you make the students _____ in the lesson.
✓ **C) participate**
Make + object is followed by a bare infinitive in the active voice: **make the students participate**. Not **make the students to participate**. **To** appears only in the passive: **The students were made to participate.**

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