Worksheet 1: Infinitive Clauses as Subject and Complement

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: The Infinitive Clause in Every Slot

An infinitive clause can fill nearly every position a noun phrase can. At C1, the key skill is recognising the function and managing the choice between a fronted infinitive and the more usual *it*-extraposition.

Function	Example	Note
Subject (fronted)	**To resign now** would be premature.	formal, emphatic; rarer in speech
Subject (extraposed)	**It** would be premature **to resign** now.	the unmarked, natural choice
Subject complement	Her goal is **to qualify** by June.	after *be*
Object	They decided **to postpone** the vote.	verb + infinitive
Adjective complement	He is reluctant **to commit**.	adjective + infinitive
Noun complement	a decision **to withdraw**; the ability **to adapt**	abstract noun + infinitive

The *for* + subject infinitive: when the infinitive has its own subject, use *for*: *It is important **for everyone to attend**.* / ***For the plan to succeed**, timing is everything.* This is the infinitival counterpart of a full clause.

Part A – Identify the Function

Underline the infinitive clause. State its function: subject (S), extraposed subject (ES), subject complement (SC), object (O), adjective complement (AC), or noun complement (NC).

#	Sentence	Function
1	To master a language takes years of exposure.	
2	It is unwise to sign without reading the terms.	
3	The committee's aim is to reach consensus.	
4	She is determined to see the project through.	
5	Their failure to respond was telling.	

6	We cannot afford to lose this contract.	

Part B – Extrapose or Front

> **Rewrite each sentence in the alternative form (front ⇄ extrapose). Comment on the effect of the shift.**

1. It would be a mistake to underestimate them.

2. To abandon the scheme at this stage would waste years of work.

3. It is essential for all parties to sign by Friday.

Part C – Insert the Subject with "for"

> **Rewrite each sentence so the infinitive has its own subject, using *for*.**

1. It is unusual to be offered a second interview. *(subject: candidates)*

2. The instructions were too complex to follow. *(subject: new users)*

3. It took a long time to reach an agreement. *(subject: the two sides)*

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Raising vs Control

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Two Structures That Look Alike

Compare *She seems to know* and *She wants to know*. They look identical, but the grammar differs. This is the distinction between **raising** and **control**.

Type	Example & behaviour	Diagnostic
Raising *seem, appear, happen, tend, be likely, be certain*	*She **seems** to know.* The subject is not an argument of *seem* — it is "raised" from the infinitive. *Seem* has no opinion about who "she" is.	Allows a "dummy" or idiom subject: *There seems to be a problem. It tends to rain here.*
Control *want, try, decide, hope, refuse, manage, promise*	*She **wants** to know.* "She" is a real argument of *want* — she is the wanter *and* the potential knower.	Blocks dummy subjects: **There wants to be a problem* is impossible.

Why it matters: raising verbs are transparent to meaning — *She is likely to win ≈ It is likely that she will win*. Control verbs are not — *She is eager to win ≠ It is eager that she wins* (nonsensical). The paraphrase test is the cleanest diagnostic.

Part A – Raising or Control?

Classify each bold verb as R (raising) or C (control). Apply the dummy-subject or paraphrase test.

#	Sentence	R / C + test
1	The negotiations **appear** to have stalled.	
2	The union **refuses** to accept the offer.	
3	There **happens** to be a vacancy.	
4	She **managed** to finish on time.	
5	Prices **tend** to rise in December.	
6	He **promised** to return the money.	

Part B – Apply the Diagnostics

> **For each verb, test whether it allows a dummy/expletive subject (*there* / *it*) or an idiom subject. Write the test sentence and state your conclusion.**

1. *be certain* — test:

   conclusion:

2. *hope* — test:

   conclusion:

3. *be likely* — test:

   conclusion:

Part C – The Subtle Cases: "be sure" and "be bound"

> **Some predicates are ambiguous between raising and control. Analyse the two readings of each sentence.**

1. "She is sure to win." vs "She is sure she will win." — What is the difference in who is "sure"?

2. "The measure is bound to fail." — Is *the measure* an argument of *bound*? Justify with the dummy-subject test.

Score: ____ / 25

Worksheet 3: The Split Infinitive & Register

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: To Boldly Go — The Split Infinitive

A **split infinitive** places a word (usually an adverb) between *to* and the verb: *to **boldly** go, to **fully** understand*. Prescribed against for two centuries — on the false analogy that Latin infinitives (single words) cannot be split — it is now accepted by every major style guide, though awareness of readership matters.

Version	Effect
to fully understand the risks (split)	natural; adverb clearly modifies the verb
fully to understand the risks (pre-*to*)	formal, slightly archaic; can sound stilted
to understand fully the risks (post-verb)	can create ambiguity or awkwardness
to understand the risks fully (end)	often the smoothest un-split option

When the split is the best choice: when avoiding it changes the meaning or creates ambiguity. "*They failed to completely understand*" (split) vs "*They failed completely to understand*" — in the second, *completely* could modify *failed*. Sometimes the split is the only way to attach the adverb unambiguously to the verb.

Part A – Reposition the Adverb

> **For each split infinitive, write the un-split alternatives and identify which (if any) is genuinely better, or whether the split should stay.**

1. The aim is to gradually reduce emissions.

2. She asked us to carefully consider the proposal.

3. He seems to genuinely believe it.

Part B – Ambiguity Diagnosis

> **Each un-split version is ambiguous. Explain the ambiguity and show how the split infinitive resolves it.**

1. "We need to more than double our output." vs "We need more than to double our output."

2. "The plan is to slowly withdraw troops." — Rewrite without splitting and show where the meaning wobbles.

Part C – Register Judgement

> **For each context, decide whether to keep or avoid the split infinitive, and justify with reference to audience and tone.**

#	Context	Keep / avoid + reason
1	A cover letter to a traditional law firm	
2	A technical manual prioritising clarity	
3	A persuasive opinion piece with rhetorical momentum	

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Critical Analysis and Extended Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Critical Reading

To insist that an infinitive must never be split is to elevate a superstition to a rule. The prohibition, said to have originated with nineteenth-century grammarians eager to model English on Latin, was always destined to fail, for the simple reason that English is not Latin. To ban a construction that careful writers have used for six hundred years is not to defend the language but to impoverish it. And yet the myth persists. Editors continue to reflexively rearrange sentences, only to produce prose that is stiffer than what they started with. The lesson is not that anything goes; it is that a rule unable to justify itself deserves to be questioned. For a convention to command respect, it must earn it — and this one, for all its longevity, never has.

Questions

1. The passage opens with a fronted infinitive subject and closes with a *for*-subject infinitive. Identify both and explain how each contributes to the argument's framing.

2. Find the split infinitive the writer deliberately uses. Why is its placement rhetorically pointed given the topic?

3. "said to have originated" and "destined to fail" — classify each infinitive construction and identify which is raising and which involves a reporting passive.

4. "only to produce prose that is stiffer" — analyse this *only to* construction. What argumentative work does the infinitive of result do here?

5. "a rule unable to justify itself deserves to be questioned" — identify all infinitive elements and classify the final one (raising or control? active or passive?).

Part B – Extended Writing

Write a formal argumentative paragraph (**180–220 words**) on: "*Prescriptive grammar rules that cannot justify themselves should be abandoned.*"

Include and underline: (1) a fronted infinitive as subject; (2) a *for*-subject infinitive; (3) a raising construction (*seem/appear/be likely to*); (4) an *only to* infinitive of result; (5) one deliberately placed split infinitive, defensible on grounds of clarity or emphasis.

Word count: _____ Features: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C1 Level, Infinitives

Worksheet 1 – Part A

1 S (fronted subject) · 2 ES (extraposed) · 3 SC · 4 AC (after "determined") · 5 NC (after "failure") · 6 O

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model answers)

1 To underestimate them would be a mistake. — Fronting adds weight and formality; the extraposed original is more neutral and reader-friendly.
2 It would waste years of work to abandon the scheme at this stage. — Extraposition lightens a heavy subject; the fronted original front-loads the stakes for emphasis.
3 For all parties to sign by Friday is essential. — Fronting the *for*-infinitive is possible but heavy; extraposition (the original) is far more natural here.

> *The general principle worth drawing out: English strongly prefers to extrapose heavy infinitival subjects with it. Fronting is a marked, emphatic choice reserved for rhetorical weight — students should treat it as a deliberate tool, not a default.*

Worksheet 1 – Part C

1 It is unusual for candidates to be offered a second interview. **2** The instructions were too complex for new users to follow. **3** It took a long time for the two sides to reach an agreement.

Worksheet 2 – Part A

#	Classification
1	**R — appear ≈ "It appears that the negotiations have stalled"; allows dummy subject.**
2	**C — the union is the refuser; *"There refuses to be..." is impossible.**
3	**R — "There happens to be a vacancy" works; classic raising with expletive there.**
4	**C — she is the manager of the finishing; no dummy subject possible.**
5	**R — "It tends to rain" (idiom/dummy subject) works; tend is raising.**
6	**C — he is the promiser; *"There promised to be..." fails.**

Worksheet 2 – Part B

1 be certain — "There is certain to be a delay" ✓ → RAISING. **2** hope — *"There hopes to be a solution" ✗ → CONTROL. **3** be likely — "There is likely to be resistance" ✓ → RAISING.

Worksheet 2 – Part C

1 "She is sure to win" (raising) = the speaker judges her victory certain — *she* need not be sure of anything. "She is sure she will win" (control-like, finite) = *she* is the one who is confident. The raising reading relocates the certainty to the speaker.
2 *bound* here is raising: "There is bound to be trouble" ✓. So *the measure* is not a semantic

argument of *bound* — it is raised from the infinitive; *bound* expresses the speaker's assessment of inevitability.

> *Raising vs control is rarely taught explicitly, yet it illuminates why some paraphrases preserve meaning and others don't. Even without the terminology, the dummy-subject test gives advanced students a reliable, satisfying diagnostic.*

Worksheet 3 – Part A (model answers)

1 "to reduce emissions gradually" (end position — smoothest) / "gradually to reduce" (stiff). The split is perfectly acceptable; the end-position version is marginally smoother. Either is defensible.
2 "to consider the proposal carefully" (clean) works well; the split is also fine. No strong reason to prefer one.
3 "to genuinely believe" — here the split is best: "genuinely to believe" is stilted and "to believe it genuinely" shifts emphasis oddly. Keep the split.

Worksheet 3 – Part B

1 "more than double" is a quantity modifier bound to the verb; un-splitting ("more than to double") breaks the phrase and changes the meaning to "something beyond doubling". The split is obligatory for the intended sense.
2 "The plan is to withdraw troops slowly" is fine, but "The plan is slowly to withdraw" could momentarily attach *slowly* to the plan's unfolding rather than the withdrawal. The split ("to slowly withdraw") removes all doubt.

Worksheet 3 – Part C

1 Avoid (or minimise): a traditional law firm may include readers who still regard the split as an error; the safe choice protects the writer. **2** Keep where it aids clarity: manuals prize unambiguous verb-adverb attachment over prescriptive nicety. **3** Keep: rhetorical prose benefits from the natural rhythm and emphasis the split provides ("to truly understand…").

Worksheet 4 – Part A

Q1: Opening: "To insist that an infinitive must never be split" — fronted infinitive subject, staging the whole proposition for judgement. Closing: "For a convention to command respect" — *for*-subject infinitive, generalising the argument into a principle. The frame moves from the specific superstition to the general standard.
Q2: "continue to reflexively rearrange" — the writer splits an infinitive while condemning the ban on splitting; the construction performs the argument.
Q3: "said to have originated" = reporting passive + perfect infinitive; "destined to fail" = raising-type predicate (be destined) + simple infinitive. The first attributes a claim; the second expresses inevitability.
Q4: *only to produce* = infinitive of result marking an unwelcome, self-defeating outcome — editors' effort backfires, producing worse prose. It turns their diligence into irony.
Q5: "unable to justify itself" (adjective complement, active); "deserves to be questioned" — *deserve* is control; the infinitive *to be questioned* is passive. So: control verb + passive infinitive.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Fronted infinitive subject	Correctly fronted; rhetorical weight justified	0–5

for-subject infinitive	Own subject introduced with *for*; well-integrated	0–5
Raising construction	seem/appear/be likely used with transparent meaning	0–5
only to result	Infinitive of result; genuine reversal or irony	0–5
Defensible split	Split infinitive placed for clarity/emphasis, not by accident	0–5
Argument & register	180–220 words; coherent case; formal-academic	0–5