Infinitives and Infinitive Phrases

An **infinitive** is the present-tense form of a verb preceded by the word *to*. An infinitive may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

*Examples:*
- *To exercise* is a healthful habit. (noun)
- *Here is laundry to wash.* (adjective)
- *The choir was ready to sing.* (adverb)

An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive and the related words that follow it.

*Examples:*
- Sandra went *to buy groceries.*
- Gilbert wanted *to read the book.*

**Directions**

Write the infinitive or infinitive phrase from each sentence. Then write **noun**, **adjective**, or **adverb** to identify its function in the sentence.

1. People have always sought to protect their rights.

   **nouns**

2. Early Bostonians staged the Boston Tea Party to protest taxation without representation.

   **adjective**

3. To protect their comfortable position, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette ignored the demands of the French people.

   **adverb**

4. The people of France, weary of going hungry while royalty flourished, were determined to succeed in their revolt.

   **adverb**

5. The creation of a system of public schools established the right of all Americans to become educated.

   **adjective**

6. In the early 1900s, suffragists launched a campaign convincing the country that women should also be allowed to vote.

   **adjectival phrase**

7. All the math teachers have papers to grade today.

   **infinitive phrase**

8. The angry customer demanded to see the manager.

   **infinitive phrase**

9. The rugby team was ready to start.

   **infinitive phrase**

**Directions**

Combine the sentences in each pair by forming an infinitive phrase.

10. Civil libertarians took to the streets and the courts. They wanted to achieve their goal.

    **infinitive phrase**

11. They fought for the rights of all Americans. Now all Americans have voting rights.

    **infinitive phrase**

12. Now each American has a responsibility. Every American must exercise that right to vote.

    **infinitive phrase**
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Answer Key

1. to protect their rights—noun
2. to protest taxation without representation—adverb
3. To protect their comfortable position—adverb
4. to succeed in their revolt—adverb
5. to become educated—adjective
6. to vote—noun
7. to grade today—adverb
8. to see the manager—noun
9. to start—adverb
10. Civil libertarians took to the streets and the courts to achieve their goal.
11. They fought for the rights of all Americans to vote.
12. Now each American has a responsibility to exercise that right to vote.