

CHAPTER - IV

Non-Finite Verb Forms

A. Read these lines from your textbook of class IX.

1. (a) I felt ashamed to face Mrs. Bethy.
1. (b) I wrote a letter announcing my departure.

The *underlined* expressions are non-finite verbs.

Every simple sentence must have a finite verb and it must agree with the subject. We also know that *the first auxiliary* in a verb group takes *tense* and hence it is a **finite verb**. All other verbs following it in that verb group are **non-finite verbs**. **Non-finite verbs** have no agreement with the subject. Let us discuss the following sentences.

2. Non-Finite Verbs.
 - (a) She *could* have been laughing at us.
 - (b) He *may* have been writing the book.
 - (c) The book *may* have been written.

Each of these sentences has four verbs : three auxiliary verbs and one full or main verb. The first modal auxiliary (could, may) is finite. All other verbs including the full verbs (laughing, writing, written) are non-finite verbs.

Non-finite verbs are used quite often. Look at the following sentences. Some of them are not acceptable. Why ?

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 3. Seema writes letters. | 7. * Seema write letters. |
| 4. Seema has written the letter. | 8. * Seema written the letter. |
| 5. Seema is writing the letter. | 9. * Seema writing the letter. |
| 6. Seema will write the letter. | 10. * Seema to write the letter. |
| 11. They made Seema <i>write</i> the letter. | |
| 12. They want Seema <i>to write</i> the letter. | |
| 13. We found on Seema's table all the letters <i>written</i> and <i>typed</i> . | |

14. We saw Seema *writing* the letter.

Sentences 7–10 above are ungrammatical sentences because they have no finite verbs. We cannot form a sentence with non-finite verbs only. We must use a finite verb in a sentence. However, the non-finite verbs can work as subordinate parts of other sentences as in sentences. 11–14.

15. (a) Seema wants to write the letter.

(b) Seema wanted to write the letter.

The finite verb changes from *wants* to *wanted* as the tense changes. But the non-finite verb *to write* does not change because it does not carry any tense.

Non-finite verbs can be one of the four types as given below :

(i) to + verb without any other addition as *to write* in 12.

(ii) only the verb without any addition as *write* in 11.

(iii) –en form (third form) of the verb as *written* in 13.

(iv) –ing form of the verb as *writing* in 14.

Activity - 1

Underline the non-finite verbs in the following sentences :

(a) He has been answering questions.

(b) They must have finished doing their homework.

(c) She may have been helped by her brother.

(d) You should have been studying English Grammar more thoroughly.

(e) The film must have been screened by now.

B. Now read the following sentences :

16. (a) I want to win this match.

17. (a) I want Bhutia to win this match.

18. (a) It is easy to win this match.

19. (a) Bhutia's goal helped us win this match.

In these sentences *to win* or *win* is the non-finite verb. None of them is a part of the verb group. But we can say that non-finite verbs are parts of the clauses reduced to non-finite forms.

Form example :

16. (b) I will win this match + I want it.
17. (b) Bhutia will win this match + I want it.
18. (b) Anyone can win this match + It is easy.
19. (b) We won this match + Bhutia's goal helped us.

C. *To + verb* can work in several ways in a sentence and can come in different positions. Let us see some examples :

20. *To err* is human, to forgive divine.
21. I hope *to see* you again.
22. The doctor advised Seema *to take* some tests.
23. There is a house *to let* at the end of the road.
24. He let out a part of his house *to make* some extra money.

In 20, what is human ? The answer is *to err*. So, *to + verb* is the subject of the sentence. In 21, I hope what ? So, *to + verb* is the object of hope. In 22, *the doctor advised whom ? – Seema*. The doctor advised what ? – *to take some rest*. Hence, both these expressions are objects of the verb advised. In 23, there is something at the end of the road. What is it - a house to let. Obviously, this noun phrase is the logical subject of this sentence beginning with there. *House* is the head noun. *To let* works as a describing word or functions like an adjective. But in 24 *to make some extra money* is the purpose for which he let out a part of his house. Hence, the *to + verb* construction is an adjunct here.

D. Sometimes *to + verb* may reduce to $\phi + verb$ only. Most of the modal *auxiliary* verbs are followed by $\phi + verb$. For example :

25. I can swim
26. He might come.

Verb like **let, make, help, have, see, hear, watch, notice** are followed by ϕ + **verb** (not to + verb). For example :

27. Please let us *go* home.
28. The teacher made us *write* the word correctly.
29. I helped my mother *clean* the kitchen.
30. I will have the gardener *plant* these trees.
31. I saw him *cross* the road.
32. I heard her *sing* a patriotic song.
33. He watched the kite *rise* in the sky.
34. I did not notice you *raise* your hand.

Expressions like *had better* and *would rather* are followed by ϕ + *verb* (not to + verb).

35. You had better leave this place.
36. I would rather look into it.

E. The non-finite verbs after the following ones are usually to + verb :

agree	demand	hesitate	need	refuse
				request
appear	desire	hope		seem
attempt	expect	intend	plan	tend
claim	fail	learn	prepare	want
decide	forget	manage	pretend	wish

37. I hope to see you soon.
38. He requested me to help him.
39. They expected to travel by air.
40. They expected me to travel by air.

In 37, *to + verb* comes after the full verb. No other words can come between them. Other verbs of this type are *begin, deserve, prefer, try, remember*, etc.

In 38, there is a Noun Phrase (noun or pronoun) between the verb and *to + verb*. Other verbs of this type are *advise, allow, command, compel, force, instruct, invite, order, permit, remind, tell* etc.

Now compare 39 with 40. Verbs like *expect* can be followed immediately by *to + verb*. They can also take a noun phrase between the main verb and *to + verb*. Other verbs of this type are *ask, like, want*, etc.

Activity - 2

Break the following sentences into two simple sentences each.

- (a) I want my friend to get the medal.
- (b) She helped me do the exercise.
- (c) I hate telling lies.
- (d) I expect to write a story by tomorrow.
- (e) I expect you to write a story by tomorrow.
- (f) Our teacher made us write the story.

Activity - 3

What are the functions of the non-finite verbs clauses in the following sentences ?

[The functions are : subject, object, complement, adjunct]

- (a) She plans to buy some presents for her sister.
- (b) Don't allow others to get into the room.
- (c) He killed a snake to save the child.
- (d) I heard her sing a song.
- (e) To find fault with others is easy.
- (f) He is to go abroad next month.

Activity - 4

Complete the following sentences by adding a non-finite clause using the words given in the brackets.

- (a) They made (I / do / it)
- (b) The gardener won't let (they / touch / the flowers)
- (c) We heard (the beggar / curse / the rude boys)
- (d) The clerk doesn't allow (anyone / see / the files)
- (e) Please remind (he / write / the letter)

Activity - 5

Complete the following sentences using the non-finite verbs given in brackets. Some of these non-finite verbs may go with a noun phrase of your choice.

- (a) The teacher doesn't let ____ (make) a noise in the class.
- (b) I would like ____ (meet) my uncle.
- (c) Hot weather makes ____ (feel) uncomfortable.
- (d) Please remind ____ (phone) Ashok tomorrow.
- (e) The film was very sad. It made ____ (cry).
- (f) Lata's parents have always encouraged ____ (study).
- (g) He would like ____ (come) to the party.

Activity - 6

Fill in the blanks with to + verb, ϕ + verb, or verb-ing.

- (a) I enjoy ____ (play) on the river bank.
- (b) Where do you want ____ (go) ?
- (c) I learnt ____ (swim) when I was eight years old.
- (d) I am trying ____ (study). Please stop ____ (talk).
- (e) I don't mind ____ (travel) by bus but I prefer ____ (travel) by train.
- (f) She would not let me ____ (read) the letter.
- (g) Good bye. I hope ____ (see) you soon.

Activity - 7

Fill in the blanks with to + verb or ϕ + verb, using the verbs given in the list.

Select the appropriate ones.

[climb, do, go, cry, clean, come, walk, laugh, sleep, hear]

- (a) He is very funny, He makes me _____
- (b) Please stay with me. I don't want you _____
- (c) Do you want to go on a bicycle ? No, let's _____
- (d) Don't wake up tomorrow morning. Let me _____ for some more time.
- (e) I helped my brother _____ his room.
- (f) Talk quietly. I don't want anybody _____ us.
- (g) We persuaded our teacher _____ with us.
- (h) I saw him _____ over the wall.

Activity - 8

Read the following sentences and the hints are given in the brackets. Write another sentence with a related meaning using the hints given. The first one has been done as an example.

- (a) Please don't tell anyone that I have been punished.

(I / not / want / anyone / know)

Ans. I don't want anyone to know about it.

- (b) I was sure that Ashok would help me.

(I / had / asked / him / help me)

- (c) "Don't touch that wire", the man said to me.

(man / told / not / touch)

- (d) My father said that I could use his watch.

(Father / allow / use / his watch)

- (e) He told me that it would be good if I told the police about this accident.
(He / advise / report / to the police)
- (f) There is a football match between Mohan Bagan and East Bengal.
(You / want / East Bengal / win ?)

Activity - 9

Put the verb given in brackets in the proper form, by using + verb, ϕ + verb or verb-ing, whichever is appropriate.

- (a) When you see Mr. Dash, remember _____ him my regards. (give)
- (b) I hate _____ what I have heard about you. (repeat)
- (c) I prefer _____ alone. (be)
- (d) I prefer _____ silent in this case. (remain)
- (e) I hate _____ lies. (tell)
- (f) Don't forget _____ the letter. (post)
- (g) Can you ever forget _____ that important letter without any postage on it ? (post)

