

# Clauses of Purpose (to & for)

## What are clauses of purpose?

Clauses of purpose explain the reason for a person's action. Familiar clauses of purpose begin with *so, because, so that, to,* and *for*. We will focus on *to* and *for* only. Take a look at the following:

Katie will go to England *to study gardening next September*.  
Bill joined a gym *for his health*.

The sentences explain Katie's purpose in going to England and Bill's purpose in joining a gym.

## What is the sentence structure?

The sentence structure for *to* is as follows:

subject | verb | object/complement | to infinitive verb | object /complement  
He | studied | English | to get | a better job.  
Albert | tried to save | money | to buy | an engagement ring.

Here is the sentence structure for *for*:

subject | verb | object/complement | for | noun  
Alex | went to | the bar | for | a drink.  
She | wakes up | at seven a.m. every day | for | school.

## How are clauses of purpose used?

Although both *to* and *for* describe the reason or purpose of an action, a distinction must be made between the two. *To* is used only with verb clauses. *For* is used only with noun clauses. In addition, a sentence may use more than once clause of purpose. For example:

He went to Australia *to learn English*.  
He went to Australia *for a homestay*.  
He went to Australia *for a homestay to learn English*.

It's important to note that gerunds (verb + ing) are nouns. However, they generally aren't used to describe the reason for something. Instead, gerunds describe the purpose of a thing or how it gets used. Let's look at the following examples. The first two provide the reason for Tammy's action, and so shouldn't use gerunds. The second set of examples provides the purpose of a thing, in this case an updated resume and its effect on job searches:

OK: Tammy updated her resume *to find a better job*.  
not OK: Tammy updated her resume *for finding a better job*.  
OK: An updated resume is important *to find a better job*.

OK: An updated resume is important *for finding a better job*.

## Is there additional information on clauses of purpose?

Yes, there's one point. *In order to* functions the same as *to*, but is often used more formally. In addition, *in order to* states a negative purpose. For example: I got a flu shot *in order to not be sick*.

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