

Introductory it

When the subject is an infinitive phrase, the sentence often begins with it. Instead of saying 'To find fault with others is easy', we say, 'It is easy to find fault with others'. More examples are given below.

It is easy to learn English. (More natural than 'To learn English is easy'.)

It was not easy to understand his motive.

It may be advisable to consult a specialist.

It could be dangerous to drive so fast.

It was pleasant to sit on the beach.

However, when we want to emphasize the infinitive phrase, it may be put at the beginning especially if it is short.

To err is human.

To withdraw now will be sheer folly.

When the subject is a phrase that includes a gerund, it is used as a provisional subject to begin the sentence. Instead of saying 'Your trying to deceive us is no good', we may say 'It is no good your trying to deceive us'.

Will it be any good my talking to him about it?

It is no use arguing with him.

It won't be much good complaining to the officer about it.

Note that the gerund can be changed into the infinitive.

Will it be any good for me to talk to him about it?

When the subject is a clause, the sentence usually begins with it. Instead of saying 'That she was once a famous artist is true', we may say, 'It is true that she was once a famous artist'.

It does not matter whether he comes or not. (= Whether he comes or not does not matter.)

It is doubtful whether he can pay the dues. (= Whether he can pay the dues is doubtful.)

It cannot be denied that the doctors did their best to save his life. (= That the doctors did their best to save his life cannot be denied.)