

Question word + infinitive as object

A question word + infinitive can serve as the object of a verb. Study the following sentences.

I don't know what to do. (Here the structure 'what to do' is the object of the verb know.)

We must find out what to do next.

I don't know where to turn for help.

Let us decide when to start.

We will have to find out how to reach the place.

We must remember where to turn off the main road.

Do you know what to look for?

I will show you how to manage it.

Could you tell me where to find a good hotel?

Somebody should teach you how to behave.

Note that a question word + infinitive cannot stand alone. We cannot say 'what to do'. Instead we must say: '*What shall we do?*' or '*What is to be done?*'

The question word + infinitive structure can be changed into a noun clause.

I don't know what to do means *I don't know what I should do.*

I don't know where to turn for help means *I don't know where I should turn for help.*

Exercise

Change the question word + infinitive structure in the following sentences into noun clauses.

1. A good dictionary tells you how to pronounce the words.
2. I will show you how to do it.
3. Could you tell me where to find a good hotel?

Answers

1. A good dictionary tells you how you should pronounce the words.
2. I will show you how you can do it.
3. Could you tell me where I can find a good hotel?