

TO / FOR

FOR + NOUN OR TO + INFINITIVE

To talk about the purpose of an action, we use a **for + noun** construction or a **to + infinitive** structure. Compare the following:

- ◆ We stopped off at the Goose **for a drink** and then we carried on to embassy **for dinner**.
- ◆ I'm going to Brussels next week **for an interview**. I hope to work **for the UN**.
- ◆ I've come to Dublin **to attend a seminar** and **to meet** the new members of the faculty.

FOR + -ING

To talk about the purpose of something, we use a **for + -ing** construction:

- ◆ What are these two knives used **for**?
- ◆ This one is **for cutting** bread and that one is just **for slicing** meat.

WHAT...FOR?

Note that **What...for?** can be used in questions to talk about the purpose of both actions and things:

- ◆ **What** are these two buttons **for**?
- ◆ The blue one is **for gaining** access to the main menu and the green one is **for quitting** teletext.

GIVING REASONS AND EXPLAINING BEHAVIOUR

Note that the same constructions, **for + noun** and **for + -ing**, are used with **thank**, **apologise** and **be / feel sorry**: With **be / feel sorry** a **to + infinitive** structure is also possible. Compare the following:

- ◆ Thanks **for the lift**. Thank you **for driving** me home.
- ◆ South Western trains would like to apologise **for the late arrival** of this train and **for the inconvenience** this may cause you.

Note also the way in which the **for + -ing** construction is used to explain the reasons for the following actions:

- ◆ He was criticised **for not coming forward** as a witness to the accident.
- ◆ He was fined heavily **for speeding** on the motorway.
- ◆ He was sent to prison **for falsifying** the accounts.

IN ORDER (NOT) TO / SO AS (NOT) TO + INFINITIVE

Note that **to + infinitive** is one of the most common ways of expressing purpose. When we want to be explicit or sound more formal we can also use **in order to** or **so as to**. These structures are especially common before negative infinitives, **in order not to** and **so as not to**:

- ◆ **To get a better job** I decided to take a computer course.
- ◆ **In order to get a better job** I decided to take a computer course.
- ◆ I left home early **in order not to be late** for the appointment.
- ◆ I left the house early **so as not to be late** for the job interview.