

In *Writers' Choices*, Michael Kischner and Edith Wollin define the split infinitive as “an infinitive with an adverb between the *to* and the verb” (154). Today, they write, “the admonition never to use [the split infinitive] is generally seen as a bit stuffy” (115). However, they add, the split infinitive is still “often considered nonstandard English language use” (154) and should therefore generally be avoided in formal expository writing.

## What Is the Infinitive?

In some languages, such as French, the infinitive is one word:

✓ Je veux discuter le roman intelligemment.  
**infinitif** (adverbe)

In English, the infinitive is two words, *to* + verb:

✓ I want to discuss the novel intelligently.  
**infinitive** (adverb)

## What Is Splitting the Infinitive?

The insertion of the adverb between the infinitive (i.e., splitting the infinitive) in languages whose infinitives are one word is impossible, as it results in a nonsense word.

× Je veux discutintelligemment le roman.  
**infinitif** (adverbe) **fendu**

Splitting the infinitive in English, therefore, is also grammatically incorrect, strictly speaking.

× I want to intelligently discuss the novel.  
**split** (adverb) **infinitive**

## How to Fix the Split Infinitive

Correct a split infinitive by moving the adverb elsewhere in the sentence.

× I want to intelligently discuss the novel.  
**split** (adverb) **infinitive**

✓ I want to discuss the novel intelligently.  
**infinitive** (adverb)

### Works Cited

Kischner, Michael, et al. *Writers' Choices: Grammar to Improve Style*. Thomson, 2002.