An **infinitive** can be used as the subject of a clause; however, this is not very common. When the subject of a clause is an infinitive expression, we usually prefer to start the sentence with an **it**.

Compare:

- **To talk to you** is nice.

Although this sentence is grammatically correct, it doesn’t sound very natural. We can make it sound more natural by beginning the sentence with **it**.

- **It is nice** to talk to you.

More examples are given below.

- **It** is my ambition to become a superstar. (More natural than ‘To become a superstar is my ambition’.)

**It** can also be used as a preparatory subject for the **for + infinitive** structure.

- **It is essential** for the party to be a success.

Preparatory **it** is also used when the subject of the clause itself is another clause. A **noun clause**, for example, can be the subject of a clause. However, this doesn’t sound very natural.

- **It seems probable that** she will lose the battle. (More natural than ‘That she will lose the battle seems probable.’)
- **It is essential that** she should behave. (More natural than ‘That she should behave is essential.’)

**It takes .... + infinitive**

This structure is used to talk about the time necessary for things to happen.

- **It takes** me only five minutes to get dressed.
- How long does **it take** to get to Manchester from here?

**It** can also be used to emphasize one part of a sentence.

- **It was John** who broke the window. (Emphasis on the word John)
- **It was the window** that John broke. (Emphasis on the word window)