

To... (afraid to do) and preposition + -ing (afraid of -ing)

Afraid to (do) and afraid of (do)ing

I am **afraid to do** something = I *don't want* to do it because it is dangerous or the result could be bad. We use **afraid to do** for things we do intentionally:

- A lot of people are **afraid to go** out at night. (= they don't want to go out because it is dangerous – so they don't go out)
- He was **afraid to tell** his parents about the broken window. (= he didn't want to tell them because he knew they would be angry)

I am **afraid of something happening** = it is possible that something bad will happen (for example, an accident). We do not use **afraid of -ing** for things we do intentionally:

- The path was icy, so we walked very carefully. We were **afraid of falling**. (= it was possible that we would fall – *not* 'we were afraid to fall')
- I don't like dogs. I'm always **afraid of being** bitten. (*not* 'afraid to be bitten')

So, you are **afraid to do** something because you are **afraid of something happening** as a result:

- I was **afraid to go** near the dog because I was **afraid of being** bitten.

B Interested in (do)ing and interested to (do)

I'm **interested in doing** something = I'm thinking of doing it, I'd like to do it:

- I'm trying to sell my car but nobody is **interested in buying** it. (*not* 'to buy')

We use **interested to** especially with **hear/see/know/read/learn**. I was **interested to hear** it = 'I heard it and it was interesting for me':

- I was **interested to hear** that Diane has got a new job.
- Ask George for his opinion. I would be **interested to know** what he thinks. (= it would be interesting for me to know)

This structure is the same as **surprised to / delighted to...** etc. (see Unit 64C):

- I was **surprised to hear** that Diane has got a new job.

C Sorry to (do) and sorry for (do)ing

We usually say **sorry to...** to apologise when (or just before) we do something:

- I'm **sorry to bother** you, but I need to talk to you.

We use **sorry to (hear/read etc.)** to show sympathy with somebody (see Unit 64C):

- I was **sorry to hear** that Fiona lost her job. (= I was sorry when I heard...)

You can use **sorry for (doing something)** to apologise for something you did before:

- (I'm) **sorry for shouting** at you yesterday. (*not* 'Sorry to shout...')

You can also say:

- (I'm) **sorry I shouted** at you yesterday.

D Note that we say:

I want to (do) / I'd like to (do)	<i>but</i>	I'm thinking of (do)ing / I dream of (do)ing
I failed to (do)	<i>but</i>	I succeeded in (do)ing
I allowed them to (do)	<i>but</i>	I prevented them from (do)ing

For examples, see Units 53–54 and 61.

EXERCISES

65.1 Read the situation and use the words in brackets to write a sentence with **afraid**.

- 1 The streets are unsafe at night.
(a lot of people / afraid / go / out) *A lot of people are afraid to go out.*
- 2 We walked very carefully along the icy path.
(we / afraid / fall) *We were afraid of falling.*
- 3 I don't usually carry my passport with me.
(I / afraid / lose / it)
- 4 The sea was very rough.
(we / afraid / go / swimming)
- 5 We rushed to the station.
(we / afraid / miss / our train)
- 6 In the middle of the film there was a particularly horrifying scene.
(we / afraid / look)
- 7 The glasses were very full, so Jane carried them very carefully.
(she / afraid / spill / the drinks)
- 8 I didn't like the look of the food on my plate.
a (I / afraid / eat / it)
b (I / afraid / make / myself ill)

65.2 Complete the sentences using one of these verbs:

~~buy~~ get go hear read start

- 1 I'm trying to sell my car but nobody is interested *in buying* it.
- 2 Julia is interested her own business.
- 3 I was interested your letter in the newspaper last week.
- 4 Bill wants to stay single. He's not interested married.
- 5 You must tell me what you think. I'm always interested your opinion.
- 6 There's a party tonight but I'm not interested

65.3 Complete the sentences using the verb in brackets.

- 1 I'm sorry *for shouting* at you yesterday. (shout)
- 2 Sorry you but have you got a pen I could borrow? (disturb)
- 3 Sorry late last night. I didn't realise the time. (be)
- 4 I'm sorry what I said yesterday. I didn't really mean it. (say)
- 5 'I've just had my exam results. I failed.' 'Oh? I'm sorry that.' (hear)

65.4 Complete the sentences using the verb in brackets.

- 1 a We wanted *to leave* the building. (leave)
b We weren't allowed the building. (leave)
c We were prevented the building. (leave)
- 2 a Fred failed the problem. (solve)
b Amy succeeded the problem. (solve)
- 3 a I'm thinking away next week. (go)
b I'm hoping away next week. (go)
c I'm looking forward away next week. (go)
d I'd like away next week. (go)
- 4 a Mary wanted me a drink. (buy)
b Mary promised me a drink. (buy)
c Mary insisted me a drink. (buy)
d Mary wouldn't dream me a drink. (buy)