

## Avoiding To-do Phrases

Sometimes, it is okay to tell, but not always. In Deep POV, the goal is to show what is happening and not tell or explain the reason to the reader. Just show the evidence and the reaction.

To-do phrases, also known as full *infinitives* or *to-infinitive* phrases, are used to tell (explain) why a character does something (this or that).

These to-do phrases often replace “*in order to*” phrases.

Most to-do phrases start with *because*, *by*, *to*, and *with*, followed by an action verb or adverb, but not always. With practice, you will spot these unwanted to-do telling/explaining phrases.

### Note:

You cannot reword every instance of a to-do phrase (full infinitives or to-infinitive) in your manuscript, but you will find many you can.

### A few to-do phrase examples:

to bake	to grab	to see
to celebrate	to hit	to sit
to crawl	to kiss	to sleep
to cut	to meet	to watch
to dance	to run	

### Other common to-do phrases to watch for:

because ...	by his	to look
because he	by the ...	to make
because of	by their	to wait
because she	to ...	with ...

because the ...	to be	with her
because they	to do	with his
by ...	to get	with the ...
by her	to keep	with their

### Issue (with the)

The knife slid off the table. Joe caught it, but he cut his fingers *with the* sharp blade.

There is nothing wrong with this sentence. But if you want to write tight and deeper, this violates Deep POV principles. This is explaining/telling why/how Joe cut his fingers.

### Fix:

The sharp knife slid off the table. Joe caught it, but he cut his fingers.

Removing the explaining/telling to-do phrase (with the) makes this sentence more to the point.

Or.

The sharp knife slid off the table. Joe caught it, and blood dropped from his hand.

This sentence reads better. It has more imagery. Here, the word “*cut*” is not used. The reader knows by the blood dripping that Joe cut his hand. This imagery boosts the reader’s imagination.

### In Summary:

The more you avoid these pesky to-do (full infinitive, to-infinitive) explaining/telling phrases, the tighter your writing will become. Doing this will also enhance the plot.