



University of Catania

Scientific Writing Resources

Words and phrases that can confuse

(a bit of grammatical help)

We stopped to analyze the results

We stopped analyzing the results





University of Catania

Scientific Writing Resources

We stopped to analyze the results

We stopped analyzing the results

These two sentences appear to be similar, some say they are the same, and many prefer the first.

However, they are completely different and normally the first is wrong.

The problem is **To stop**.

We **stopped** *the machine*

We **stopped** *analyzing*

The verb **to stop** needs a **NOUN**: *machine* and *analyzing* are nouns.

The first sentence “**We stopped to analyze the results**” has a verb after the verb “**stopped**”; two verbs, this is not good!

In fact, the first sentence really means: **We stopped (something) to analyze the results**

So, **we stopped the centrifuge to start the analysis.**

we stopped to start the analysis.

Now, that is better, isn't it?



University of Catania

Scientific Writing Resources

We stopped to analyze the results

We stopped analyzing the results

Let's look at some more examples.

Yesterday I stopped to read my phone

(You must stop [working] to read your phone!)

You must stop reading your phone!

(Do not read your phone anymore!)

My wife will stop to sleep

(She will stop doing something and then go to sleep)

My wife must stop sleeping!

(My wife sleeps too much and must stop)

Stop playing with your ball

(You are playing now, you must stop)

Stop to play with your ball

(You are doing something, stop it and begin playing with the ball)



University of Catania

Scientific Writing Resources

We stopped to analyze the results

We stopped analyzing the results

I must stop smoking

(I smoke, it is bad for me, I must stop)

I must stop to smoke

(I am doing something, I must stop this so I can begin to smoke)

Stop doing it

(Whatever you are doing, stop!)

Stop to do it

(Whatever you are doing, stop, now begin doing it)

She stopped to wait for the lift

(She was walking, she saw the lift and stopped walking and waited in front of the lift)

She stopped waiting for the lift

(She was in front of the lift, she was waiting for the lift, she then walked away)



University of Catania

Scientific Writing Resources

We stopped to analyze the results

We stopped analyzing the results

I stopped to drink a coffee

(I was working, I stopped and started to drink a coffee)

I stopped drinking coffee

(I used to drink coffee, I do not drink coffee now)

So:

to stop + noun = the noun stops

**to stop + verb = something stops
and the verb begins**