Idiomatic Verb Patterns Worksheet: Can’t Help, Would Sooner

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NAME

DATE

Remember

Form	Example
can’t help + -ing / can’t help but + verb	I can’t help laughing. I can’t help but wonder.
would sooner / would just as soon + base verb	I’d sooner stay in than go to that party.
have yet to + verb: not yet	We have yet to receive a reply.
be to + verb (plans, orders) · there’s no telling / no knowing	All staff are to leave by six. There’s no telling what he’ll do.

Typical mistakes

× Learners often say	✓ Say instead
I can’t help to laugh.	I can’t help laughing.
I’d sooner to stay at home.	I’d sooner stay at home.
We have yet received an answer.	We have yet to receive an answer.

1. Complete

Complete with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. I can’t help _____ (feel) we’ve forgotten something.
2. I’d sooner _____ (walk) than wait for the bus.
3. The new hospital has yet _____ (open).
4. Visitors are _____ (sign) in at reception.
5. She couldn’t help but _____ (smile).
6. There’s no _____ (tell) how long the strike will last.
7. It’s high time the council _____ (do) something.
8. I would just as soon _____ (not / go) to the meeting.

2. Choose

Circle the correct option.

1. I can’t help (worrying / to worry) about her.
2. He’d sooner (die / to die) than apologise.
3. The winner has yet (to be / be) announced.
4. The President (is to / is going) visit Brazil next month, the palace announced.
5. There’s no (knowing / know) what she’ll say.
6. I couldn’t help but (notice / noticing) his shoes.
7. You (are not to / don’t have to) tell anyone. It’s an order.
8. I’d sooner you (didn’t / don’t) smoke here.

3. Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has one mistake. Write it correctly.

1. I can’t help to think about it.

2. We have yet to receiving the money.

3. I’d sooner staying at home.

4. There’s no tell what will happen.

5. All students are to arriving by eight.

6. She couldn’t help but laughing.

Writing

Write a short opinion paragraph (6–7 sentences) about a new technology. Use at least five patterns from this sheet.

Speaking

- What can’t you help doing, even though you know you shouldn’t?
- What would you sooner do than go to a big party?
- What is something you have yet to try?
- Is there a situation in your country where there’s no telling what will happen?

Answer key

1. Complete: 1 feeling · 2 walk · 3 to open · 4 to sign · 5 smile · 6 telling · 7 did · 8 not go

2. Choose: 1 worrying · 2 die · 3 to be · 4 is to · 5 knowing · 6 notice · 7 are not to · 8 didn’t

3. Correct the mistakes: 1 I can’t help thinking about it. · 2 We have yet to receive the money. · 3 I’d sooner stay at home. · 4 There’s no telling what will happen. · 5 All students are to arrive by eight. · 6 She couldn’t help but laugh.

Writing, model answer: I can’t help feeling that artificial intelligence is moving faster than our laws. The government has yet to publish clear rules. There’s no telling what these tools will be able to do in five years. Personally, I’d sooner use them for boring tasks than for anything creative. Companies are to report their use of AI from next year, which is a start. Still, I can’t help but wonder who will check those reports. It’s high time we had a serious public debate.