Purpose clauses

They are introduced by the subordinating conjunction "so (that)" and by subordinators like the "to-infinitive, in order to, so as to". These clauses are used to indicate the purpose of an action, that is, they explain why someone does something.

Uses:
- The "to-infinitive" is the most common structure to indicate purpose:
Elvis ran **to catch** the train.
- "In order to, so as to" can also be used, but are more formal:
She brought the subject up **in order to** annoy Sandra.
I drove at 50 mph **so as to** save fuel.
- To express a negative purpose we **cannot** use "not" with a "to-infinitive", we use "in order <u>not</u> to" and "so as <u>not</u> to":
I agreed to her suggestion **in order <u>not</u> to** upset her.
We went along silently on tiptoe **so as <u>not</u> to** disturb anyone.
- The subordinating conjunction "so (that)" is also used for purpose:
He lowered his voice **so** Doris couldn't hear.
Why don't you start out early **so that** you don't have to hurry?

Word order: purpose clauses can have an initial (in more formal contexts) or final position (i.e. they can be used before or after the main clause), but those introduced with "so that" and "so as to" have a final position:
1) (In order) + to infinitive …, / subject + main verb…:
In order <u>to</u> <u>achieve</u> these goals, <u>other factors</u> <u>must be considered</u>.
<u>**To assess**</u> the impact on education, <u>we</u> <u>turn</u> to some specific cases.
2) subject + main verb…/ to infinitive …:
<u>I</u> just <u>called</u> **to invite** you to a party.
<u>We</u> <u>are saving</u> money **in order <u>to</u> buy** a new car.
<u>They</u> <u>went</u> on foot, **so as not <u>to</u> be heard**.
2) subject + main verb …/ subordinating conjunction "so that" + subject + verb …:
<u>He</u> <u>works</u> hard **so that** <u>he</u> <u>can make</u> a lot of money.

Tenses used:
1) After "so that" we use present tenses or the modal verbs "can", "may" (formal) or "will" to refer to the <u>present</u> or <u>future</u>:
Send the letter express **so that** she <u>gets</u>/ <u>will</u> get it before Tuesday.
He works hard **so that** he <u>can</u> make a lot of money.
We send them reports **so that** they <u>may</u> have full information about progress. (formal)
After "so that" we use past tenses or the modal verbs "could", "might" (formal), "should" or "would" to refer to the <u>past</u>:
He walked quietly, **so that** nobody <u>could</u> hear his footsteps.
She reserved a table **so that** she <u>wouldn't</u> have to wait in a queue.
They held the meeting on a Saturday **so that** everybody <u>should</u> be free to attend.
I spent a year in Germany **so that** I <u>might</u> learn German. (formal)

2) With the other subordinators, we always use a to-infinitive form:
I just called **to invite** you to a party.
We are saving money **in order <u>to</u> buy** a new car.
I took photos of the baby **so as <u>to</u> send** them to my friends abroad.

* Notice: we can also use the preposition "for" in the following cases:

1) **People's purposes**: the preposition "for" can be used to talk about somebody's purpose in doing something, but only followed by a noun:

We stopped at the pub for a drink.

I went to the college for an interview with Professor Taylor.

"For" is not used to express a person's purpose before a verb. The to-infinitive is used for this:

~~We stopped at the pub for having a drink.~~

We stopped at the pub to have a drink.

2) **The purpose of things**: the preposition "for" can be used followed by an –ing form to talk about the "purpose" of a thing, i.e. what it is used for, especially when the thing is the subject of the clause. The to-infinitive is also possible:

This heater is for keeping/ to keep the plants warm in winter.

This machine is used for cutting/ to cut plastic.

This is a knife for cutting bread/ to cut bread.

When the subject is a person, we use a to-infinitive:

I put the heater on to keep the plants warm.

We use altimeters to measure height above sea level.

3) **After reactions**: the preposition "for" can be used followed by an –ing form, after a positive or negative reaction, to explain the behaviour that caused the reaction:

We are grateful to you for helping us out.

I'm angry with you for waking me up.

They punished the child for lying.

* Notice: the "to infinitive" can also be used in noun clauses. When we use them in noun clauses, they function as a noun (subject, object, etc.):

To fly an airplane upside down can be very dangerous. (The infinitive clause is the subject of the sentence).

I want to enjoy myself tonight. (The infinitive clause is the direct object of the verb *want*).