WHAT IS AN INFINITIVE?
An infinitive is a verbal which functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb. It takes the form of to + the verb in its simplest form (i.e. “to go”). The infinitive expresses an action or a state of being because it is formed from a verb.
For example: to walk

WHAT IS AN INFINITIVE PHRASE?
An infinitive phrase is a phrase that begins with an infinitive (to + the verb) and includes objects or modifiers. For example: to walk to the store

---

### Noun

An infinitive can function as a noun in a sentence. The following are some examples:

- To go to the mall seemed like a waste of time.
  (Here, the infinitive phrase “to go to the mall” is a noun that functions as the subject of the sentence.)
- The children needed to eat.
  (Here, the infinitive “to eat” is a noun that functions as the direct object of the sentence.)
- Mark’s idea was to go to the movies tomorrow.
  (Here, the infinitive phrase “to go to the movies” is a noun that functions as the subject complement of the sentence.)

### Adjective

She did not have the ability to speak.
(Here, the infinitive “to speak” functions as an adjective, modifying the noun “ability.”)

### Adverb

The professor teaches English 101 to help students write.
(Here, the infinitive phrase “to help students write” functions as an adverb, answering the question “why?”)

---

Note: Be careful not to confuse infinitive phrases with prepositional phrases. While some prepositional phrases begin with “to,” they are followed by a noun or pronoun. For infinitive phrases, the “to” is ALWAYS immediately followed by a verb.
For example: to drive (infinitive) to the car (prepositional phrase)