WHAT IS AN INFINITIVE?

An infinitive is a verb which functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb. It takes the form of “to + verb” in its simplest form. An infinitive expresses an action or state of being.

Examples
To walk
To go

WHAT IS AN INFINITIVE PHRASE?

Infinitive phrases begin with the infinitive and include objects or modifiers.

Examples
To walk to the store
To go to the beach

FUNCTIONS OF INFINITIVES

Noun Examples
To walk to the store was too much for my grandmother.
*”To walk to the store” is a noun phrase that functions as the subject of the sentence.

The baby needed to eat.
*”To eat” is a noun that functions as the direct object of the sentence.

Donald’s idea was to order pizza while studying.
*”To order pizza” is a noun that functions as the subject complement of the sentence.

Adjective Examples
Mary did not have the ability to walk.
*”To walk” functions as an adjective that modifies the noun “ability.”

Adverb Examples
Professor Kingsley teaches ESL to help international students learn English.
*”To help international students learn English” functions as an adverb, answering the question, “why”? 