The Infinitive

An infinitive usually begins with "to" followed by the basic form of the verb:

TO + BASIC VERB = infinitive

Infinitives can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs:

- Infinitive as a noun:
    - <u>To sleep</u> is the only thing he wants after working.
      ("To sleep" is a noun because it is the subject of the sentence.)

    - He turned his head and didn't want <u>to look</u>.
      ("to look" is a noun because it is the object of the verb "want.")

- Infinitive as an adjective:
    - Wherever she goes, she always brings a book <u>to read</u>.
      ("to read" is an adjective because it describes "book.")

- Infinitive as an adverb:
    - Richard went outside <u>to see</u> the weather.
      ("to see" is an adverb because it explains why Richard went outside.)

Sometimes an infinitive does not begin with "to":

- An infinitive does not have "to" when it follows the special verbs
  feel, hear, help, let, make, see, or *watch*:

  SPECIAL VERB + DIRECT OBJECT + INFINITIVE (without "TO")

    - As soon as Ted felt the rain <u>hit</u> his head, he knew that he should stop working outside.
      Felt = special verb; rain = direct object; hit = infinitive without "to."

    - When Dan heard the telephone <u>ring</u>, he stopped cooking to answer it.
      Heard = special verb; telephone = direct object; ring = infinitive without "to."

    - Our teacher spent time helping us <u>understand</u> Spanish.
      Helping = special verb; us = direct object; understand = infinitive without "to."

    - I let the baby <u>pet</u> my dog.
      Let = special verb; baby = direct object; pet = infinitive without "to."

    - She made her husband <u>take</u> her out for an expensive dinner.
      Made = special verb; husband = direct object; take = infinitive without "to."

    - I said a prayer when I saw my friends <u>enter</u> the airplane for the long flight.
      Saw = special verb; friends = direct object; enter = infinitive without "to."

    - She went to the airport to watch planes <u>take</u> off and <u>land</u>.
      Watch = special verb; planes = direct object; take, land = infinitives without "to."