Infinitivsätze
You have probably noticed that in many German sentences, infinitives appear with a "zu" before them. These "zu + infinitive" structures are called infinitive clauses, and they're quite common -- and luckily fairly easy. We have infinitive clauses in English, too.

For example:
Sie hat keine Zeit zu lesen.  
She has no time to read.
Er hat vergessen, seine Hausaufgaben zu machen.  
He forgot to do his homework.

The one possible confusion between German and English arises because in English, we use a 'to' with some modal verbs, but German does not. Remember that when using a modal verb in German, you simply place the infinitive verb at the end of the clause; in English we sometimes (with certain constructions) add a 'to'. In English th infinitive is 'to + verb' while the German infinitive is formed with the 'stem+en

For example:
Er will tanzen. (no zu)  
He wants to dance.
Er muss nach Hause gehen.  
He has to go home (or: He must go home.)

The difference between modal verb constructions and infinitive clauses is that modal verbs function as helping verbs, whereas in infinitive clauses, there are two main verbs which exist independently of each other. For clarification: with modal verbs, you cannot remove the infinitive and still have a complete sentence. ('He wants' is not a complete sentence; it needs the full infinitive, 'He wants to dance.') With infinitive clauses we have two separate complete thoughts ('She has no time. She doesn't read.' \rightarrow 'She has no time to read.')

Infinitive clauses can provide additional information, or they can substitute for a subject or an object in a sentence. If your infinitive clause has a direct or indirect object make sure to put it in its appropriate case:

Das ist leicht zu verstehen.  
[more information, no objects]
Es macht mir viel Spaß, mit dir zu tanzen.  
[object of prepositional phrase]
Ich habe Lust, diesen Film zu sehen.  
[direct object]
Es ist schwer, ihm zu helfen.  
[dative verb object]
Ich habe vor, meiner Schwester den Hut zu geben.  
[indirect object/direct object]
Infinitive clauses often appear with common phrases, such as:

- Es macht Spaß ...
- Es ist leicht/schwer ...
- Ich habe Lust ...

It’s fun to ...
It’s easy/hard to ...
I want to / I feel like ...

With **separable prefix verbs**, everything gets put together into one word: prefix+zu+verb:

- Ich darf nicht vergessen, meine Mutter anzurufen.
  - I mustn’t forget to call my mother.

Üben Sie! Schreiben Sie die folgenden Sätze zu Ende. **Benutzen Sie "zu" in jedem Satz.**

1. Was macht Ihnen Spaß? - Es macht Spaß, ________________________________.
2. Was ist schön? - Es ist schön, ________________________________________.
3. Wozu haben Sie Lust? - Ich habe Lust, ________________________________.
4. Was finden Sie schwer? - Ich finde es schwer, ____________________________.
5. Wozu ist es Zeit? - Es ist Zeit, ________________________________________.

In addition to simple infinitives, there are three other ways to use 'zu' in a subordinate clause. In English, we don't always use 'to' for these constructions, but German does. Fortunately, they're easy to learn and use:

**um ... zu = in order to**

This construction is used FAR more often in German than in English. In English, we sometimes leave out the "in order" part, and use a plain 'to'. **But anytime "in order to" works in English, you MUST use it in German.**

- Sie lernt viel, um gute Noten zu bekommen.  - She studies a lot (in order) to get good grades.
- Ich muss Geld verdienen, um für meine Familie zu sorgen. - I have to earn money in order to take care of my family.

**ohne . . . zu = without doing**

This is self-explanatory; the only thing to note is that in English, we use an -ing verb, where German uses a zu + infinitive.

- Er ist weggegangen, ohne ein Wort zu sagen.  - He left without saying a word.
stätt ... zu = instead of doing

Like the above, English uses an -ing verb. You will sometimes see "anstatt ... zu" instead of the slightly less formal "statt ... zu"; they mean exactly the same thing.

Wir werden sie anrufen, **anstatt** ihr einen Brief **zu schreiben**. *We'll call her instead of writing her a letter.*

**Note on word order:** If you put the infinitive phrase at the beginning of the sentence, it's just like any other subordinate clause: you put a comma between it and the main clause of your sentence, and the verb of the second clause moves to the front:

**Um** diesen Wagen **zu** kaufen, musste ich viel Geld sparen. *In order to buy this car, I had to save a lot of money.*

Üben Sie! Benutzen Sie "um. . . zu", "(an)statt. . . zu" oder "ohne. . . zu" in den folgenden Sätzen.

1. Warum lernst du jeden Abend? - Ich lerne jeden Abend, ________________________________________________________.
2. Geht er heute zur Uni? - Nein, er bleibt heute zu Hause, ________________________________________________________.
3. Ich gehe durch den Park, ________________________________________________________________.
4. Er macht jeden Tag Sport, ________________________________________________________________.
5. Kocht deine Mutter heute nicht? - Nein, meine Mutter geht ins Kino, ________________________________________________________.
6. Er findet einen guten Job, ________________________________________________________________.
7. Die Frau geht zur Bank, ________________________________________________________________.

... and here, you can practise online: um/ohne/statt + zu + Infinitiv