

The phrase

*e learning (creating a lesson on a moodle
platform tutorial)*

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Objectifs

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

* *define* the phrase

* *to distinguish* between the different types of phrases

* *to identify* the function of different phrases.

Introduction



A phrase^{p.20 ↗} is a group of related words that does not include a subject and verb. (If the group of related words does contain a subject and verb, it is considered a clause.) There are several different kinds of phrases. Understanding how they are constructed and how they function within a sentence can bolster a writer's confidence in writing sentences that are sound in structure and various in form^{p.20 ↗}.

English Language – Phrases and Clauses

A phrase is a group of words that has a finite verb. It cannot stand alone, it must be part of a sentence. A phrase conveys a single idea.

Types of Phrases

Noun Phrases

These are groups of words that tell us 'who' or 'what' does something, in relation to the noun. These phrases can act as the subject or object of a sentence.

Verb Phrases

These are groups of words that act as the verb in the sentence. They have a main verb and an auxiliary (helping e.g. is, are, was) verb.

Adverbial Phrases

These are groups of words that tell you more about the verb. There are four main types of adverbial phrases:

- 1. Manner (how something happens)**
Example - John ran as quickly as possible.
- 2. Time (when something happens)**

Adjectival Phrases

These are groups of words that describe the noun and are used instead of an adjective.

MY CYBERWALL

image 1: types of phrases

Phrases

- * **A phrase isn't a complete sentence.**
- * **It doesn't contain a subject or a verb and doesn't make sense of its own.**
- * **It is used to add detail to a sentence.**

Types of Phrases

1. Adjectival

- * **It acts the same as an adjective.**
- * **It gives more information about a noun.**
- * **Example :**
The cat **with the fluffy tail** is beautiful.

2. Adverbial

- * **It acts the same as an adverb.**
- * **It gives more information about a verb.**
- * **Example :**
Mahmoud studied **as much as he could**.

3. Noun

- * **It replaces the noun in a sentence.**
- * **Example :**
Father bought me **a beautiful silver bangle**.

4. Linking

- * **It joins ideas and gives order to events.**
- * **Example :**
Later in the afternoon, if you have done everything, you can contact Mahmoud.

1. The prepositional phrase

1.1. Form and function

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition, a noun or pronoun that serves as the object of the preposition, and, more often than not, an adjective or two that modifies the object.

Prepositional phrases usually tell when or where: in forty minutes, in the sun, against the side, etc. Prepositional phrases can perform other functions, however: Except Jo, the children were remarkably like their father.

A prepositional phrase at the beginning of a sentence constitutes an introductory modifier, which is usually a signal for a comma. However, unless an introductory prepositional phrase is unusually long, we seldom need to follow it with a comma.

You may have learned that ending a sentence with a preposition is a serious breach of grammatical etiquette. It doesn't take a grammarian to spot a sentence-ending preposition, so this is an easy rule to get caught up on (!). Although it is often easy to remedy the offending preposition, sometimes it isn't, and repair efforts sometimes result in a clumsy sentence. Based on shaky historical precedent, the rule itself is a latecomer to the rules of writing. Those who dislike the rule are fond of recalling Churchill's rejoinder: "That is nonsense up with which I shall not put." We should also remember the child's complaint (attributed to E.B. White): "What did you bring that book that I don't like to be read to out of up for?"

COMMON TYPES OF PHRASES

- Adverb phrase is a prepositional phrase that modifies a verb, an adjective, or adverb by pointing out where, when, in what manner, or to what extent.
- Examples:
 - Wanting to impress Sue, Tom planned to make reservations *at an expensive restaurant*. (Make reservations *where?*)
 - The volcano rumbled *in the early morning*. (Rumbled *when?*)
 - Tom consumed the sundae *in short order*. (Consumed *in what manner?*)
 - The shovel bit deep *into the earth*. (Deep *to what extent?*)

COMMON TYPES OF PHRASES

3. VERBAL AND VERBAL PHRASES

- PARTICIPLES AND PARTICIPIAL PHRASES
- A participle is a form of a verb that acts as an adjective.

Kind of Participle	Form	Examples
Present Participle	Ends in <i>-ing</i>	His <i>fascinating</i> responses convinced us.
Past Participle	Ends in <i>-ed</i> , <i>-t</i> , <i>-en</i>	The <i>extended</i> table accommodated more people.
Perfect Participle	Includes <i>having</i> or <i>having been</i> before a past participle.	<i>Having exercised</i> , I rested.

COMMON TYPES OF PHRASES

3. VERBAL AND VERBAL PHRASES

- GERUNDS AND GERUND PHRASES
- A gerund is a form of a verb that acts as a noun.
- Examples:
 - Vaulting* is my best event in gymnastics.
 - Swallowing* hurt my sore throat.

COMMON TYPES OF PHRASES

Two sentences can be combined by turning the information in one sentence into an appositive.

Examples:
 Two sentences: The fruit was picked. The fruit was sun-ripened pears.
 Sentence with appositive phrase: The fruit, *sun-ripened pears*, was picked.

2. The noun phrase

2.1. Form and function

An *n.p.* phrase comprises a noun and any associated modifiers:

The long and winding road

A *n.p.¹⁹ AA* phrase

Any associated modifiers

The modifiers that accompany a noun can take any number of forms and combination of forms: adjectives, of course (“the tall and brilliant professor”); a participial phrase (“the road following the edge of the frozen lake”); an infinitive phrase (“the first man to walk on the moon”); a modifying clause (“the presentation that he had made the day before”); and prepositional phrases (“the building next to the lodge, over by the highway”). [See below for definitions of participial, infinitive, and prepositional phrases.] Usually, a noun phrase will be all of a piece, all the words that compose it being contiguous with the noun itself. It is possible, however, for a noun phrase to be broken, to become what we call discontinuous. Sometimes part of the noun phrase is delayed until the end of the sentence so that that portion of the phrase (usually modifying phrases — participial or prepositional) can receive end weight or focus. In our first example, for instance (noun phrase in italics) ,

Several accidents have been reported involving passengers falling from trains.

we could have put the entire noun phrase together: “Several accidents involving passengers falling from trains have been reported recently.” Shifting the modifying phrases of the italicized part of the phrase to the end puts additional emphasis on that part. Here are some other examples:

A rumor circulated among the staff that he was being promoted to Vice President. (instead of “A rumor that he was being promoted to Vice President circulated among the staff.”)

The time had come to stop spending money foolishly and to put something away for the future. (instead of “The time to stop spending money foolishly and to put something away for the future had come.”)

That hard drive was faulty that you sold me. (instead of “That hard drive that you sold me was faulty.”)

What business is it of yours? (instead of “What business of yours is it? ”)

Clearly, there is nothing inherently wrong with a discontinuous noun phrase. One very good reason for a discontinuous noun phrase is to achieve a balance between a subject and its predicate:

The story is told that he was once a soldier in French Foreign Legion.

Without the discontinuous noun phrase in the sentence above, we end up with a twelve-word subject, a linking verb, and a one-word predicate — sort of lop-sided.

* Authority: A Grammar of Contemporary English by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. Longman Group: London. 1978.

One thing you want to watch out for with noun phrases is the long compound noun phrase.** This is sometimes called the “stacked noun phrase”*** or “packed noun phrase.” It is common to find one noun modifying another: student body, book cover, water commission. But when we create a long string of such attributive nouns or modifiers, we create difficulties:

People who author web-pages have become aware of what is now known as the uniform resource locator protocol problem.

The difficulty we have here is knowing what is modifying what. Also, the reader keeps expecting the string to end, so the energy of the sentence (and our attention) dwindles into a series of false endings. Such phrases are a particular temptation in technical writing. Usually, the solution to an overly extended compound noun phrase is to take the last noun of the series and liberate it from the rest of the string (putting it at the beginning of the sentence) and then to turn at least one of the modifying nouns into a prepositional phrase:

The problem with the protocol of uniform resource locators is now recognized by people who author web-pages as. . . .

(This is one situation in which making a sentence longer is probably an advantage.)

A vocative — an addressed person's name or substitute name — is often a single word but sometimes takes the form of a noun phrase. A vocative is always treated as a parenthetical element and is thus set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma or a pair of commas (if it appears within the flow of a sentence). When vocatives are proper nouns (usually the case), they are also referred to as “nouns of address.” Vocatives are like adverbs: they can pop up almost anywhere in the sentence. Do not, however, get into the habit of throwing commas at people's names; unless the name refers to someone who is actually being addressed, it is not a vocative and will not necessarily be parenthetical:

He told Jorge to turn the boat around.

Jorge, turn the boat around

Quirk and Greenbaum enumerate four different kinds of vocatives:

Single names, with or without a title: Jorge, Mr. Valdez, Dr. Valdez, Uncle, Grandma. Dr. Valdez, will you please address the graduates?

The personal pronoun you (not a polite form of address): “You, put down that gun!” The second person pronoun is sometimes combined with other words (but the result is often rather rude and is never used in formal prose: “You over there, hurry up! You with the purple hair and silver nose rings, get back in line!” The indefinite pronouns can also serve as a vocative: “Call an ambulance, somebody! Quick, anybody! Give me a hand!”

Appellatives (what we call people)Nominal clause: Whoever is making that noise, stop it now.

Of endearment (Darling, Sweetheart, My dear, Love): “Come sit next to me, my dear.”

Of respect (Sir, Madam, Your Honor, Ladies and gentlemen): “I would ask you, Sir, never to do that again.”

Of profession or status (Professor, Mr. President, Madam Chairman, Coach): “Please, Coach, let me play for a while.”

Nominal clause: Whoever is making that noise, stop it now.

** Authority for this section: A University Grammar of Englishby Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum. Longman Group: Essex, England. 1993. Used with permission; examples our own.

*** We are indebted to David A. Eason and to Joseph M. Williams's Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and

Grace for the description of “stacked noun phrases.”

3. The appositive phrase

Form and function

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The absolute phrase

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3.1. Form and function

An appositive is a re-naming or amplification of a word that immediately precedes it. (An appositive, then is the opposite of an appositive.) Frequently another kind of phrase will serve in apposition.

My favorite teacher, a fine chess player in her own right, has won several state-level tournaments.
[Noun phrase as appositive]

The best exercise, walking briskly, is also the least expensive. [Gerund phrase as appositive]

Tashonda's goal in life, to become an occupational therapist, is within her grasp this year, at last.
[Infinitive phrase as appositive]

3.2. The absolute phrase

3.2.1. Form and function

Usually (but not always, as we shall see), an absolute phrase (also called a nominative absolute) is a group of words consisting of a noun or pronoun and a participle as well as any related modifiers. Absolute phrases do not directly connect to or modify any specific word in the rest of the sentence; instead, they modify the entire sentence, adding information. They are always treated as parenthetical elements and are set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma or a pair of commas (sometimes by a dash or pair of dashes). Notice that absolute phrases contain a subject (which is often modified by a participle), but not a true finite verb.

Their reputation as winners secured by victory, the New York Liberty charged into the semifinals.

The season nearly finished, Rebecca Lobo and Sophie Witherspoon emerged as true leaders.

The two superstars signed autographs into the night, their faces beaming happily.

When the participle of an absolute phrase is a form of to be, such as being or having been, the participle is often left out but understood.

The season [being] over, they were mobbed by fans in Times Square.

[Having been] Stars all their adult lives, they seemed used to the attention.

Another kind of absolute phrase is found after a modified noun; it adds a focusing detail or point of focus to the idea of the main clause. This kind of absolute phrase can take the form of a prepositional phrase, an adjective phrase, or a noun phrase.

The old firefighter stood over the smoking ruins, his senses alert to any sign of another flare-up.

His subordinates, their faces sweat-streaked and smudged with ash, leaned heavily against the firetruck.

They knew all too well how all their hard work could be undone — in an instant.

It is not unusual for the information supplied in the absolute phrase to be the most important element in the sentence. In fact, in descriptive prose, the telling details will often be wrapped into a sentence in the form of an absolute phrase:

Coach Nykesha strolled onto the court, her arms akimbo and a large silver whistle clenched between her teeth.

The new recruits stood in one corner of the gym, their uniforms stiff and ill fitting, their faces betraying their anxiety.

A noun phrase can also exist as an absolute phrase:

Your best friends, where are they now, when you need them?

And then there was my best friend Sally — the dear girl — who has certainly fallen on hard times.

It might be useful to review the material on misplaced modifiers because it is important not to confuse an absolute phrase with a misplaced modifier.

4. The absolute phrase

4.1. Form and function

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7.1. form and function

Present participles, verbals ending in -ing, and past participles, verbals that end in -ed (for regular verbs) or other forms (for irregular verbs), are combined with complements and modifiers and become part of important phrasal structures. Participial phrases always act as adjectives. When they begin a sentence, they are often set off by a comma (as an introductory modifier); otherwise, participial phrases will be set off by commas if they are parenthetical elements.

The stone steps, having been worn down by generations of students, needed to be replaced. [modifies "steps"]

Working around the clock, the firefighters finally put out the last of the California brush fires. [modifies "firefighters"]

The pond, frozen over since early December, is now safe for ice-skating. [modifies "pond"]

8. Exercice

[solution n°1 p.17]

which of these sentences contain a gerund phrase

- He liked the girl dressed in red very much.
- Working till dusk is really exhausting.
- I have been waiting for you since morning.
- the boy with glasses is so good looking.

Solutions des exercices



> Solution n° 1

Exercice p. 15

which of these sentences contain a gerund phrase

- He liked the girl dressed in red very much.
- Working till dusk is really exhausting.
- I have been waiting for you since morning.
- the boy with glasses is so good looking.



Abréviations



n. : noun



Bibliographie



http://plato.algonquincollege.com/applications/guideToGrammar/?page_id=3257#nou

