



Phrases: Learning Phrases in English Grammar

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Phrase is a small group of words appearing together as a conceptual unit, typically forming a component of a clause and **not containing subject or verb**.

- Absolute, Appositive, Gerund, Infinitive, Noun, Participial, Prepositional phrases.
- Noun phrase: (a, an, the before noun)
 - Example, The rabbit, an ant
 - Example, John's rabbit or her rabbit
 - The girl (noun) **that was late for class** (modifier)
 - The child (noun) **in the car** (preposition)
 - The boy (noun) **asking for a cookie** (participial phrase)

Here are some examples:

1. Her arms folded across her chest which made her relaxed. Identify the type of phrase used in this sentence.

- (A) Absolute Phrase
- (B) Appositive Phrase
- (C) Noun Phrase
- (D) Infinitive Phrase

Answer: a

Why?

- **Absolute Phrase** combines a noun and a participle with modifiers or objects and it modifies whole statement not just the noun.
 - Absolute phrase has a subject, but not an acting verb, so it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.
- So, here, in above sentence, Arms = noun; folded = participle; her, across her chest = modifiers.
- Then from the word which sentence "**which made her relaxed**" is **clause**.

2. My childhood home, a blue and white house, is just down the road. Identify the type of phrase used in this sentence.

- (A) Absolute Phrase
- (B) Appositive Phrase
- (C) Noun Phrase
- (D) Infinitive Phrase

Answer: b

Why?

- Appositive **Phrase** renames the preceding term or explains it with another noun. Appositive Phrase includes **punctuating appositives** in the sentence such as “,” “:”, “;”, “[]”, “>”, “+”, etc.
- In above sentence, **childhood home** is renamed as **blue and white house**, so it is appositive phrase.

3. A cat is sleeping on the table. Identify the type of phrase used in this sentence.

- (A) Absolute Phrase
- (B) Prepositional Phrase
- (C) Noun Phrase
- (D) Infinitive Phrase

Answer: b

Why?

- Prepositional **Phrase** provides more information about a noun or verb. It combines a preposition (describes relationships with ‘on’, ‘in’, ‘under’, ‘above’, ‘from’, ‘at’, ‘around’, ‘before’, ‘between’, ‘below’, ‘besides’, ‘by’, ‘for’, ‘of’, ‘with’ etc.) and object of the preposition.
- In above sentence ‘**on**’ is **preposition** and ‘**table**’ is **object of preposition**, so it is Prepositional Phrase.

4. The blue house behind my house is for sale. Identify the type of phrase used in this sentence.

- (A) Absolute Phrase
- (B) Prepositional Phrase
- (C) Noun Phrase
- (D) Infinitive Phrase

Answer: c

Why?

- **Noun** Phrase is a noun and any word in sentence that modify it. The word that modify the noun includes articles such as 'a', 'an', 'the', etc. A noun phrase can be a subject, direct object, object of preposition, indirect object.
- In above sentence, noun phrase is "**The blue house**".
- In this sentence there is also **prepositional phrase** which is "**behind my house**" where **behind** (preposition) and **my house** (object of preposition).

5. The broken door needed to get repair urgently. Identify the type of phrase used in this sentence.

- (A) Participial Phrase
- (B) Prepositional Phrase
- (C) Noun Phrase
- (D) Infinitive Phrase

Answer: a

Why?

- Participial **Phrase** starts with **present or past participle** and it includes objects and/or modifiers. If the participle is present it will dependably end with **ing** and past participle end with **ed**. Participle phrases always function as adjectives.
- Here, broken **is past participle** which **modifies door**.

6. Identify the sentence with Gerund Phrase.

- (A) Walking in the rain is enjoyable.
- (B) Everyone loves to watch movies.
- (C) Boy was waiting for the bus at bus-stop.
- (D) The black car is my favorite.

Answer: a

Why?

- The gerund **phrase** sentence starts with a gerund such as the verb with 'ing'.
- So, in all above sentences, "Walking in the rain is enjoyable" is the sentence which contains **gerund 'walking'**.

- While “Everyone loves to watch movies” contains **infinitive phrase ‘to watch movies’**.
- “Boy was waiting for the bus at bus-stop” contains **verb phrase ‘was waiting for the bus at bus-stop’**.
- “The black car is my favorite” contains **noun phrase ‘The black car’**.

7. Find the proper Infinitive Phrase in the place of underlined word which corrects the sentence. “I went to Germany for complete the master degree.”

(A) To (B) Because of (C) As (D) In

Answer: a

Why?

- Infinitive **Phrase** is a noun phrase which starts with an infinitive verb with direct object and modifier.
- Here, we have to put ‘to’ in the place of ‘for’. In which **‘to complete’** is **infinitive verb** and **‘the master degree’** is **noun phrase**.

8. Match the sentences with correct phrase.

Sentences Phrases

- (a) The old man was confused. (1) Gerund Phrase
(b) Singing for my mother is joyful. (2) Noun Phrase
(c) My brother is mad to watch cricket match. (3) Appositive Phrase
(d) A snake, Cobra, is very poisonous. (4) Infinitive Phrase

a b c d

- (A) 2 1 4 3
(B) 2 4 1 3
(C) 4 3 2 1
(D) 3 1 4 2

Answer: a

Why?

- The old man was confused contains **Noun phrase ‘The old man’**. **Noun Phrase** is a noun and any word in sentence that modify it. The word that modify the noun includes articles such as ‘a’, ‘an’, ‘the’, etc.

- Singing for my mother is joyful contains **Gerund phrase ‘Singing’**. The **gerund phrase** sentence starts with a gerund such as the verb with ‘ing’.
- My brother is mad to watch cricket match contains **Infinitive Phrase ‘to watch cricket match’**. **Infinitive Phrase** is a noun phrase which starts with an infinitive verb with direct object and modifier.
- A snake, Cobra, is very poisonous contains **Appositive Phrase ‘A snake, Cobra’**. **Appositive Phrase** renames the preceding term or explains it with another noun. Appositive Phrase includes **punctuating appositives** in the sentence such as “,”, “:”, “;”, “[]”, “>”, “+”, etc.

9. Find the sentence which contains more than one phrase.

- (A) An elephant, the Asian, had lost his teeth in circus by a man.
- (B) Swimming in river is more excited.
- (C) The meal was on the table.
- (D) The falling waterfall seems beautiful.

Answer: a

Why?

- The first sentence “An elephant, the Asian, had lost his teeth in circus by a man” contains more than one phrase.
- “**An elephant, the Asian**” is the **appositive phrase** and “**in circus**” is the **prepositional phrase**.
 - Appositive **Phrase** renames the preceding term or explains it with another noun.
 - Appositive Phrase includes **punctuating appositives** in the sentence such as “,”, “:”, “;”, “[]”, “>”, “+”, etc.
 - Prepositional **Phrase** provides more information about a noun or verb.
 - It combines a preposition (describes relationships with ‘on’, ‘in’, ‘under’, ‘above’, ‘from’, ‘at’, ‘around’, ‘before’, ‘between’, ‘below’, ‘besides’, ‘by’, ‘for’, ‘of’, ‘with’ etc.) and object of the preposition.
- There is also **participial phrase “lost his teeth”**.
 - Participial **Phrase** starts with **present or past participle** and it includes objects and/or modifiers.
- While “Swimming in river is more excited” contains only one phrase **gerund “swimming”**.

- “The meal was on the table” contains one phrase **prepositional phrase** “**On the table**”.
- “The falling waterfall seems beautiful” contains one phrase **participle phrase** “**falling waterfall**”.

10. From the following sentences, find the sentence with proper use of Absolute Phrase.

- (A) The boys heads down, all of them apologized.
- (B) The boys have their heads down and they all apologized.
- (C) The boys are having their heads down, they all apologize.
- (D) None of those

Answer: a

Why?

- **Absolute Phrase** has a subject but not an acting verb such as become, has, have, is, are, appear, etc.
- “**The** boys heads down, all of them apologized” shows proper use of Absolute Phrase as it doesn't use acting verb while other sentences use acting verbs 'have, are'.

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