



Phrases

What is a Phrase?

A phrase is a group of related words that does not contain a subject or a verb. There are two types of phrases.

Two Types of Phrases:

1. Prepositional Phrase

It begins with a preposition and includes the object, plus any modifiers.

prep. obj.

Ex: The dog ran across the field

- A prepositional phrase functions as an **adjective** (describing a noun) or **adverb** (telling where, when, why, how, or to what degree.)

Ex of adj ph: The man with the red shirt crossed the road.
("with the red shirt" describes "man")

Ex of adv ph: The soldier fought with great valor.
("with great valor" tells *how* the soldier "fought")

2. Verbal Phrase

It begins with a verb form and functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb. There are three types of verbal phrases.

- **Infinitive Phrase**

It begins with an infinitive ("to" + verb) and includes any subject, objects, or modifiers. It can function as a **noun, adjective, or adverb**.

Ex of noun ph: To exercise every day enhances one's health.
("to exercise every day" is the subject)

Ex of adj ph: Gary made a list to remind him of his responsibilities at work.
("to remind" describes "list")

Ex of adv ph: Jeremy studied all night to pass his math exam.
("to pass his math exam" answers *why* Jeremy "studied")

- **Participial Phrase**

It begins with a participle (a verb ending in "ed," "en" or "ing") and includes any objects or modifiers. It functions only as an **adjective**.

Ex: Amazed and scared, she rowed frantically to shore.
("amazed and scared" describes "she")

Ex: Written by a professional, the article was flawless.
("written by a professional" describes "article")

Ex: Looking into the ocean, Lisa saw a shark.
("looking into the ocean" describes Lisa)

- **Gerund Phrase**

It begins with a gerund (the "ing" form of the verb) and includes any objects or modifiers. It always functions as a **noun**.

ger obj.
Ex: Living in Corpus Christi was not Helen's idea of paradise.
("living in Corpus Christi" is the subject)

ger mod.
Ex: Running long distances is fun.
("running long distances" is the subject)

Remember:

A phrase is a group of related words that does not contain both a subject and verb. There are two main types of phrases: prepositional and verbal. There are three types of verbal phrases: infinitive, participial and gerund.