

Phrases

5a. A **phrase** is a group of related words that is used as a single part of speech and that does not contain both a verb and its subject.

EXAMPLES Colors can influence the way we feel **about a place or thing**. [prepositional phrase]
 A room **painted white** often seems larger than it is. [participial phrase]
Painting something orange draws people's attention to it. [gerund phrase]
 Studies show that more women than men seem **to prefer red**. [infinitive phrase]
 Green, **the color of many things in nature**, relaxes people. [appositive phrase]

A group of words that has both a verb and its subject is called a *clause*.

EXAMPLES The class has been conducting a survey. [*Class* is the subject of the verb *has been conducting*.]
 after I completed my research [*I* is the subject of the verb *completed*.]

EXERCISE Determine whether the underlined word group in each of the following sentences is a phrase or not. If the word group is a phrase, write *phrase*. If the word group is not a phrase, write *not a phrase*.

Example _____ *phrase* 1. The cup slipped from her hands and shattered on the floor.

- _____ 2. Please place the keys on the table.
- _____ 3. They decided to watch a movie.
- _____ 4. The glasses are on the shelf.
- _____ 5. Enrique became excited when he heard the news.
- _____ 6. Jimmy, fearing a low score, studied diligently for his exam.
- _____ 7. In 1934, my grandfather came to the United States.
- _____ 8. The clothes in the corner should be donated to charity.
- _____ 9. Casper, a master of the violin, is learning to play the guitar.
- _____ 10. To repair a car, you need to have tools and experience.
- _____ 11. Before she left home, Helena ate breakfast and read a magazine.

The Prepositional Phrase

5b. A **prepositional phrase** includes a preposition, a noun or pronoun called *the object of the preposition*, and any modifiers of that object.

EXAMPLES up the Amazon River on a memorable trip
by themselves along with my family and me

EXERCISE A Underline the prepositional phrase(s) in each of the following sentences.

Example 1. For several years farmers in England found strange patterns throughout their grain fields.

1. The first reports about the cause of these mysterious patterns appeared in 1978.
2. In the middle of a field, the grain would be flattened in huge circles.
3. Some people believed the circles in the fields were made by extraterrestrials.
4. Many others throughout the country attributed the designs to rare weather conditions.
5. Instead of circles, more elaborate designs appeared in 1990.
6. Investigators said that no one had actually seen any of the patterns being formed.
7. In 1991, the mystery may have been solved.
8. The strange patterns could have been made by two pranksters as a practical joke.
9. Since these two hoaxers' confessions, the number of occurrences of these strange patterns has declined significantly.
10. Several books about the mysterious phenomenon were written during the 1980s and 1990s.

EXERCISE B Complete each of the following sentences by writing in the blank an appropriate prepositional phrase.

Example 1. The birthday gift from his parents surprised Mateo.

11. _____ Mateo's parents bought him a pony.
12. The pony had black patches _____.
13. So Mateo said _____, "Let's call the pony Salt and Pepper."
14. Mateo's father helped his son into the saddle, and Mateo rode _____.
15. Then they led the pony _____ and gave it some fresh hay and water.

The Adjective Phrase

5c. A prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or a pronoun is called an **adjective phrase**.

An **adjective phrase** tells *what kind* or *which one*.

EXAMPLES My favorite writer **for young readers** is Beverly Cleary. [The adjective phrase modifies the noun *writer*, telling *what kind*.]

I have read most **of Beverly Cleary's books**. [The adjective phrase modifies the pronoun *most*, telling *which one*.]

An adjective phrase usually follows the word it modifies. That word may be the object of another prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLE Jane read a book **about the fall of Rome**. [The adjective phrase of *Rome* modifies *fall*, which is the object of the preposition *about*. The adjective phrase *about the fall* modifies *book*.]

More than one adjective phrase may modify the same word.

EXAMPLE The bowl **of fruit salad in the refrigerator** is for the party. [The adjective phrases of *fruit salad* and *in the refrigerator* modify the noun *bowl*.]

EXERCISE In each of the following sentences, underline the adjective phrase or phrases. Then, circle the word that each adjective phrase modifies.

Example 1. The town beyond those mountains to the east is no longer inhabited.

1. My favorite writer of science fiction is Ray Bradbury.
2. The pie needs four cups of fruit.
3. A student from Mr. Levy's class won first prize.
4. The loud crash of the cymbal was deafening.
5. The directions for the assignment confused Gilbert.
6. The glass of water on the table is mine.
7. The play of the sunlight on the water was a beautiful sight.
8. Somebody with feet of large proportions has scuffed the gym floor.
9. Susie mowed the area around the trunk of the tree.
10. The house on the corner of Main and Elm has been abandoned.