Phrases

A phrase is a group of related words that lacks either a subject or a predicate. Within a sentence, it can function as an adverb, an adjective, or a noun. There are six types of phrases:

- **Noun Phrase:** contains a noun and its modifiers. It is called a "noun" phrase because it functions as a noun functions, either as a subject, an object, or as a complement.

As a *subject*:
Ex. *Stressed college students* are usually tired.
As an *object*:
Ex. Introverts prefer *studying alone*.
As a *complement:*
Ex. Plato's philosophy is *always included in introductory philosophy classes.*

- **Verb Phrase:** contains a main verb and its auxiliary (helping) verbs.

Ex. I *might have* time to study after work.
Ex. Jennifer *can come* at 12:00.

- **Prepositional Phrase:** contains a preposition, the object of the preposition (the noun or pronoun that follows the preposition) and any modifiers of the object. A prepositional phrase can either function as an adjective or an adverb.

As an *adjective*:
Ex. The building *on the corner* is a school.
In this sentence, "on" is the preposition, and "the corner" is the object of the preposition.

As an *adverb*:
Ex. *From the last row* I can't see the chalkboard.
In this sentence, "from" is the preposition and "row" is the object of the preposition. The adjectives "the" and "last" modify the noun "row."

*Note: The subject of a sentence cannot appear in a prepositional phrase. For example, in the sentence "One of the students works hard," theword "one" is the subject, not "the students." The word "students" is the object of the preposition which describe "one." This rule is important to remember because it affects subject/verb agreement.

- **Verbal Phrase:** A verbal is a word or a phrase formed from a verb that cannot stand alone as a verb. They function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. There are three kinds of verbal phrases.

1) Participle phrase: only functions as an adjective. It can be formed from the present participle (-ing words like walking") or the past participle (-en/ed words like "spoken" or "excited")

Ex. *Walking slowly*, I finally got to my class.
Ex. *Excited by the thought of it*, I jumped at the opportunity.

2) Gerund phrase: Gerunds take the -ing form of the present participle, and function as a noun.

As a *subject:*
Ex. *Laughing that hard* works my abdominal muscles.
As a *direct object:*
Ex. I heard *the loud howling,* and was frightened.

3) Infinitive Phrase: Infinitives are the unconjugated forms of the verb, meaning they include the verb preceded by the word "to" (to be, to walk, etc.). Infinitive phrases can function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

As a *noun:*
Ex. Janet likes *to run, to mountain climb, and to read.*
("To run, to mountain climb, and to read" are the direct objects of the verb like. They complete the thought "Janet likes to...")

As an *adjective:*
Ex. Studying the material is the only way *to learn it.*
("To learn it" describes the noun "way." It answers the question "which way?")

As an *adverb:*
Ex. *To get full credit* on the homework, you must show all your work.
("To get full credit..." describes the verb "show work." It tells "under what conditions" a student will get full credit.)

Clauses

A clause is a group of related words that, unlike a phrase, contains a subject and a verb. A clause can either be independent (main) or dependent (subordinate).

- ***Independent Clause:*** a complete thought containing a subject and a verb. One "independent clause" is a *complete* sentence.
  Ex. John finished the final exam.
- ***Dependent Clause:*** A dependent clause also contains a subject and a verb but is not a complete thought, so it cannot stand alone. Thus, it is "dependent" on another clause to make a *complete* sentence

Ex. *When we went to the lecture*, we saw our good friends.

*"When we went to the lecture" i*s a dependent clause. By itself, it does not make a complete thought. It is dependent upon the independent clause "we saw our good friends" to make a complete thought.

Here are a few things to remember about dependent clauses:

1) A dependent clause is introduced by a relative pronoun (such as *who, that, which*), a subordinate conjunction (such as *if, although, because*), or a connective adverb (such as, *why, whenever, before*).

Ex. She was the one *who knew the truth.*
Ex. Father said he would help me with my homework*if he had time.*
Ex. I understood *why my teacher assigned the paper.*

2) A clause can function in a sentence in several ways:
As a *noun:* (as the subject)
Ex. *That he quit* is disappointing.

As an *adverb:*
Ex. It was late *when I got home.*

As an a*djective:*
Ex. The room *intended to be used for formal entertaining* became the kids' playroom.

3) The dependent clause may appear before or after the independent clause. Note that when the dependent clause is first, a comma is needed between the two clauses. When the independent clause is first, no comma is necessary. Consider the following examples.

Dependent clause/independent clause:
Ex. *Because I was tired,* I didn't do well on the test.

Independent clause/dependent clause:
Ex. I didn't do well on the test *because I was tired.*

There are several kinds of dependent clauses:

- **Dependent Adjective Clause:** a dependent clause that functions as an adjective, meaning it describes a noun or a pronoun.

Ex. Luke wrote an essay *that challenged the professor's ideas.*
(The dependent clause describes the noun "essay.")

Ex. I went to the lecture yesterday, *which was very informative.*
(The dependent clause describes the noun "lecture.")

- **Dependent Adverbial Clause:** a dependent clause that functions as an adverb, meaning it describes when, where, how, or to whatextent.

Ex. Annette will get here *as soon as she can.*
(The dependent clause tells when Annette will "get here.")

Ex. We camped *where there were no other campers.*
(The dependent clause tells where we "'camped.")

- **Dependent Noun clause:** a dependent clause that functions as a noun does, that is, as a subject, a direct object, a subject complement, or object of the preposition. In general, noun clauses begin with relative pronouns (that, which, what, who, whom, whose, whatever, whomever, whichever) or with when, where, whether, why, or how.

Ex. He wanted to do *whatever he could to please his parents.*
(The dependent clause functions as the direct object of the verb "do.")

Ex. *Whether or not he would go to college* was an easy decision.
(The dependent clause functions as the subject.)

*Note: Information taken from The Everyday Writer by Andrea Lundsford and Robert Connors