

## Types of Phrases

A phrase is a group of words **without** both a subject and predicate. Phrases combine words into a larger unit that can function as a sentence element.

1. **Absolute Phrase** – Unlike participial phrases, absolute phrases have subjects and modify the entire sentence, not one noun.

Example: “**My cake finally baking in the oven** {*absolute phrase*}, I was free to rest for thirty minutes.”

*Almost a clause*, the absolute phrase can include every sentence element except a finite verb. For example, “**My cake finally baking in the oven**” would be its own sentence if you just added one finite verb: “**My cake was finally baking in the oven.**” [Notice that if you do NOT add the finite verb, you would have a FRAGMENT.]

2. **Adjectival Phrase** – As with adverbial phrases, adjectival phrases can either refer to a group of adjectives or any phrase (like participial or prepositional phrases) that acts as an adjective.

Example: “The **large red toy box** belongs to my little cousin Timmy.” {*group of adjectives*}

Example: “The toy **box full of toys** belongs to my little cousin Timmy.” {*prepositional phrase*}

- a) **Participial Phrase** – A participial phrase has a past or present participle as its head. Participial phrases always function as adjectives.

Example: “**Crushed to pieces by a sledgehammer**, the computer no longer worked.”

Example: “I think the guy sitting over there likes you.”

3. **Adverbial Phrase** – The adverbial phrase is defined as either a group of adverbs or any phrase (usually a prepositional phrase) that acts as an adverb.

Example: “The runner from Boston ran **amazingly and astonishingly fast**.” {*group of adverbs modifying an adjective*}

Example: “The runner from Boston ran fast **like a jack rabbit**.” {*adverbial phrase modifying the verb*}

4. **Infinitive Phrase** – An infinitive phrase is a noun phrase with an infinitive as its head. Unlike the other noun phrases, however, an infinitive phrase can also function as an adjective or an adverb. {*One of the two most versatile phrases; the other is the prepositional phrase.*}

Example: “I love **to bake cakes**.” {*noun phrase*}

Example: “The best way **to survive Dr. Peterson’s boring history lectures** is a sharp pencil to stab in your thigh if you catch yourself drifting off the lecture.” {*adjectival phrase*}

Example: “Kelvin, an aspiring comic book artist, is taking Anatomy and Physiology this semester **to understand the interplay of muscle and bone in the human body**.” {*adverbial phrase*}

5. **Noun Phrase** – A noun phrase consists of a noun and all of its modifiers, which can include other phrases (like the prepositional phrase *in the park*).

Example: “**The crazy old lady in the park** feeds the pigeons every day.”

- a) **Appositive Phrase** – An appositive (single word or phrase) renames another noun, not technically modifying it.

Example: “Bob, **my best friend**, works here.”

- b) **Gerund Phrase** – A gerund phrase is just a noun phrase with a gerund as its head.

Example: “I love **baking cakes**.”

6. **Prepositional Phrase** – A prepositional phrase, which has a preposition as its head, can function as an adjective, adverb, or even as a noun. {*One of the two most versatile phrases; the other is the infinitive phrase.*}

Example: “The food **on the table** looked delicious.”

7. **Verb Phrase** – The verb phrase can refer to the whole predicate of a sentence or just the verb or verb group.

Example: “I **was watching my favorite show yesterday**.” {*whole predicate*}

Example: “I **was watching** my favorite show yesterday.” {*just the verb group*}