

ENGESH

Grammar: Phrases





Phrases



What is a Phrase?

A **phrase** is a group of words put together to be used in a sentence. Phrases do not hold much value in themselves, but they become meaningful when used along with a noun.

Example: Rajiv is a smart boy.

The phrase 'A smart boy' does not explain much when written independently, but it adds meaning when used in a sentence.

Example: Ram wore a turban for the function.

The phrase 'A turban' or 'for the function' does not explain much when written independently, but they add meaning when they are used in a sentence.

Types of Phrases

Noun Phrase

A **noun phrase** (NP) is a phrase which has a noun as its head word. It usually performs the function of a subject or an object in a sentence. It is the most commonly occurring type of phrase. A pronoun can also be identified as a noun phrase in cases where it functions as the subject or object of a sentence.

Examples:

- Rama will be going to the market in some time.
- The fat boy enjoyed bullying other children.
- The old man sat under the old oak tree.
- They did not appreciate his disregard for art.

Verb Phrase

Similar to a noun phrase, a **verb phrase** (VP) uses a verb as its head word. It always performs the function of a predicate in a sentence. A single verb can also be called a phrase if it functions as a predicate of the sentence.

Examples:

- Jay had been kind to the poor beggar who asked for alms.
- Meera is confident that she will crack the test.
- The mat was so dirty that the children threw it out.
- The sheriff will help you if you approach him.

Adjective Phrase 01





An adjective phrase (AjP), just like an adjective, modifies or describes the noun in a sentence. It may occur before or after a **noun** in a sentence. In cases where it occurs after the main verb and in the absence of a noun following it, it stands independently as a complement (C) in the sentence.

Example:

A very small book was lying on the floor.

In the above sentence, 'book' is a noun and 'very small' describes the size of the book; therefore, it is the adjective phrase functioning as a modifier.

Let us look at some more examples of the same kind.

- The lukewarm water did not cure his cold.
- An extremely valuable ring was found hidden in the store room.
- The mildly familiar news caught his attention.
- A very old friend visited me yesterday.
- The book lying of the floor is very small.

In the above sentence, the phrase 'very small' occurs after the verb 'is' and is not followed by the verb it describes, i.e. 'book'; therefore, it is the adjective phrase functioning as a complement in the sentence.

Let us look at some more examples of the same kind.

- The boy is too old for the part.
- He was very proud of his son's achievements.
- The wounded puppies were very tame.

Adverb Phrase

An **adverb phrase** (AvP) is a group of words used in a sentence to describe the predicate or the verb phrase in it.

Like adverbs, they answer the questions How, Where Why, When etc.

Examples:

- The thief entered the room very quietly. (How?)
- The poor boy was told to sit in a corner. (Where?)
- The train should reach Pune in an hour. (When?)