



**The English Language Center
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**DOWNLOADABLE HANDOUT
TOPIC: PHRASES**

Phrase:

A phrase is a group of two or more words that function as a single unit in a sentence.

Examples:

- in the drawer
- very excited
- the golden-coloured tiara

Characteristics:

1. A phrase does not have both the subject and the verb at a time and does not express a complete thought on its own.
2. It works together with other words in a sentence to convey a particular meaning.
3. Phrases can act as nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs and modify other words in a sentence.
4. Common types of phrases include prepositional, participial, gerund, and infinitive phrases.

Types of Phrases:

There are several types of phrases in English, including:

1. **Noun Phrase:** A noun phrase consists of a noun and any associated modifiers, such as adjectives, articles, or prepositional phrases.

Example: The big brown dog with a wagging tail is lost.

2. **Verb Phrase:** A verb phrase consists of a main verb and any associated auxiliary verbs or modifiers.

Example: She is running in the park.

3. **Adjective Phrase:** An adjective phrase consists of an adjective and any associated modifiers or complements. It acts as an adjective in the sentence.

Example: The sky is a beautiful shade of blue.

4. **Adverb Phrase:** An adverb phrase consists of an adverb and any associated modifiers or complements.

Example: He speaks very softly.

5. **Prepositional Phrase:** A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition, its object, and any associated modifiers.

Example: The book on the shelf is mine.

6. **Gerund Phrase:** A gerund phrase consists of a gerund (a verb ending in "-ing" used as a noun) and any associated modifiers or complements.

Example: Swimming in the ocean is my favourite activity.

7. **Infinitive Phrase:** An infinitive phrase consists of an infinitive (the base form of a verb preceded by "to") and any associated modifiers or complements.

Example: She likes to read books.

8. **Participial Phrase:** A participial phrase is a phrase that begins with a present or past participle (the verb form ending in -ing or -ed/-en) and functions as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun in a sentence. Participial phrases can come at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence and provide additional information about the subject or object being described.

Example: Walking down the street, I saw a stray dog.

Exercise:

Identify the correct type of phrase from the options for each underlined phrase below:

1. The old man with a cane walked slowly down the street.

Noun Phrase

Adjective Phrase

Gerund Phrase

2. The experiment was quite risky in nature.

Adverb Phrase

Adjective Phrase

Noun Phrase

3. Running in the morning is a great form of exercise.

Verb Phrase

Gerund Phrase

Participial phrase

4. The cat jumped onto the table.

Noun Phrase

Adjective Phrase

Prepositional Phrase

5. She has been studying for hours.

Participial Phrase

Verb Phrase

Gerund Phrase

6. I need to buy some milk at the store.

Infinitive Phrase

Verb Phrase

Participial Phrase

7. He drove his car very carefully on the icy roads.

Adjective Phrase Prepositional Phrase Adverb Phrase

8. The exhausted runner crosses the finish line.

Participial Phrase Adjective Phrase Noun Phrase

9. The red dress in the store window caught my eye.

Prepositional Phrase Noun Phrase Adjective Phrase

10. The movie was incredibly predictable.

Adverb Phrase Adjective Phrase Noun Phrase

11. Writing stories is my passion.

Verb Phrase Participial Phrase Gerund Phrase

12. The bird flew over the tall building.

Adverb Phrase Prepositional Phrase Noun Phrase

13. They have been playing tennis for hours.

Verb Phrase Gerund Phrase Infinitive Phrase

14. To learn a new language takes dedication and practice.

Infinitive Phrase Verb Phrase Participial Phrase

15. She spoke inaudibly softly to avoid waking the baby.

Adjective Phrase Gerund Phrase Adverb Phrase