Phrases

A phrase is a group of words that does not contain both a subject and a predicate. It contains either a subject or a predicate, so a phrase does not function as an independent unit.

A prepositional phrase is a group of words that begins with a preposition (Ex: near, through, into, over, on) and ends with a noun or pronoun.

Ex: The brief meeting will be held [near the coke machine] [on the third floor of the LC].

An adjective phrase is a phrase that is used to modify a noun. An adjective phrase answers the following questions: “Which one?” “What kind?”

Ex: Bob likes hot chocolate with whipped cream. Tom likes the backpack on the top shelf.

An adverbial phrase is a prepositional phrase that is used to modify a verb, an adjective, or an adverb. It answers the following questions: “Where?” “When?” “Why?” “How?” “To what extent?”

Ex: Lily found her notebook under her bed. Jill wanted to fly like an eagle.

An appositive phrase is a phrase that embodies a noun or pronoun that identifies or explains another noun or pronoun.

Ex: Heather, Jill’s younger sister, is wearing new shoes.

Verbal Phrases include participial phrases, infinitive phrases, and gerund phrases. Each verbal phrase contains a verb form that is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

• A participial phrase is a phrase containing a verb form that is used as an adjective.

Ex: The Smiths keep all of their [broken toys and stuffed animals] in the basement.

• An infinitive phrase is a phrase containing a verb form that usually begins with “to.” It may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.
Ex:  *Kelly likes to hike during the summer.* [noun]
The best way *to survive* a tornado is to take shelter. [adjective]
Todd’s family was eager *to start* the surprise party. [adverb]

- A **gerund phrase** is a phrase that embodies a verb form that is used as a noun. Gerunds end in “ing.”

Ex:  *Eating too much ice cream* makes children *sick.*