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The Noun Phrase

Recognize a *noun phrase* when you see one.

A noun phrase includes a noun—a person, place, or thing—and the modifiers which distinguish it.

You can find the noun *dog* in a sentence, for example, but you don't know which canine the writer means until you consider the entire noun phrase: *that dog*, *Aunt Audrey's dog*, *the dog on the sofa*, *the neighbor's dog*, *that chases our cat*, *the dog digging in the new flower bed*.

Modifiers can come before or after the noun. Ones that come before might include articles, possessive nouns, possessive pronouns, adjectives, and/or participles.

Articles: *a* dog, *the* dog

Possessive nouns: *Aunt Audrey's* dog, the *neighbor's*

dog, the police **officer's** dog

Possessive pronouns: **our** dog,
her dog, **their** dog

Adjectives: **that** dog, the **big**
dog, the **spotted** dog

Participles: the **drooling** dog,
the **barking** dog, the well
trained dog

Modifiers that come after the noun might include prepositional phrases, adjective clauses, participle phrases, and/or infinitives.

Prepositional phrases: a dog **on the loose**, the dog **in the front seat**, the dog **behind the fence**

Adjective clauses: the dog **that chases cats**, the dog **that looks lost**, the dog **that won the championship**

Participle phrases: the dog **whining for a treat**, the dog **clipped at the grooming salon**, the dog **walked daily**

Infinitives: the dog **to catch**, the dog **to train**, the dog **to adopt**

Less frequently, a noun phrase will have a pronoun as its base—a word like **we**, **everybody**, etc.—and the modifiers which distinguish it. Read these examples:

We who were green with envy

We = subject pronoun; **who were green with envy** = modifier.

Someone intelligent

Someone = indefinite pronoun;
intelligent = modifier.

No one important

No one = indefinite pronoun;
important = modifier.



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