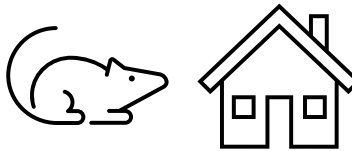


# Phrases & Clauses Cheat Sheet

**Phrases:** **What is a phrase?** A phrase is a group of words that act like a single part of speech (like a noun or adjective). A phrase does not have a subject or a predicate.

✓ **Prepositional Phrase:** The phrases start with a preposition and end with a noun. Prepositional phrases can act like an adjective or an adverb. Think the mouse and the house. The mouse goes [around, under, above, along, into, atop, along, etc.] the house. Click for a [list of prepositions](#) and click for a [Khan Academy](#) lesson on prep phrases.



*Prepositional Phrase as an ADJECTIVE:*

- The house around the corner is cute.
- The bear inside the cave is asleep.

*Prepositional Phrase as an ADVERB:*

- I stood beside the kitchen counter.
- Outside the strange house, a man stood watching.

*Prepositional Phrase as a SIMILE:*

- The little boy scurried like a frightened mouse.

THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE		
PREPOSITION	MODIFIERS	OBJECT OF THE PREP (NOUN)
Through	the	house



**Appositive Phrase:** These are groups of words that give more information about a noun in a sentence. These phrases act like nouns. The phrase is usually surrounded by commas because you can take the phrase out of the sentence and the sentence would still make sense. The appositive phrase answers WHO? or WHAT?

- The high school football coach, *a man who played for the Denver Broncos*, inspired his players.
- My dog, *the one with the floppy ears*, loves to play at the dog park.
- I work at the Dickenson High School, a fine arts school in Arlington.

The Appositive Phrase: Who or what?	
ARTICLE (a, an, the)	DESCRIPTION Includes a noun
a	man with a tall, black hat



**Absolute Phrase:** This phrase has a noun and an adjective or participle, plus modifiers.

To make an absolute phrase, remove the “to be” verb. It’s *almost* a complete sentence.

- **TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES:** *Combine the two sentences by turning one of them into an absolute phrase.*

Her expression was hopeless. Annie flopped onto the bed.

*Her expression hopeless, Annie flopped onto the bed.*

His face was red with embarrassment. Henry withdrew from the room.

*His face red with embarrassment, Henry withdrew from the room.*

- **A TRIAD OF ABSOLUTE PHRASES:**

The baby duck, *its tiny wings outstretched, its little voice peeping urgently, its orange feet pattering through the muddy grass*, ran toward its mother.

The baby duck ran toward its mother, *its tiny wings outstretched, its little voice peeping urgently, its orange feet pattering through the muddy grass*.

Possessive pronoun (my, his, her, its, our, their)	Noun	Past-tense verb (past participle) OR an -ing verb (present participle) OR an adjective
Her	dog	running quickly through the yard



**PARTICIPIAL PHRASE:** This verbal looks like a gerund phrase, but they act like adjectives. Participles can be past or present tense and they can be removed from a sentence.

- *Parked outside the school*, the mom waited for her kids.
- *Parking outside the school*, the mom ran into the front office.

Present or Past Participle (a verb with -ed or -ing)	The rest of the adjective
Resting	in the hammock
Sparked	by the firework

**INFINITIVE PHRASE:** Infinitives are always TO + VERB (to swim / to hunt / to laugh) Infinitive phrases combine TO + VERB + MODIFIERS. The phrase acts like a noun and can be the subject of a sentence.

- I love *to ride down the mountain*.
- *To ride down the mountain* is my favorite summer activity.
- My favorite summer activity is *to ride down the mountain*.

TO + VERB	modifiers
To wander	lonely as a cloud

**GERUND PHRASE:** These phrases act like nouns and can be the subjects of sentences. They always start with a verb that has an “-ing” at the end. They are formed from verbs. They cannot be removed from a sentence!

- **SUBJECT:** *Swimming in the pool* is refreshing.
- **OBJECT of the verb:** I love *swimming in the pool*.
- **OBJECT of the preposition:** I wrote a story about *swimming in the pool*.

Present Participle (a verb with -ing)	The rest of the noun
Dancing	with the daffodils

**Clauses:** What is a clause? Clauses are groups of words containing subjects and verbs.

An **INDEPENDENT** clause can stand alone as a complete sentence because it is a complete thought. A **DEPENDENT** clause cannot because it does not have a complete thought.

**Adjective Clause:** This is a DEPENDENT clause that make a statement about a person, place, or thing. It has a subject and a verb, but is only a sentence part.

- They usually begin with one of these words: *who, which, whose*
- They answer these questions:
  - What did the person, place, or thing do? (*who or which*)
    - The twins, **who had finished their homework**, were allowed to watch half an hour of TV.
    - His black hair, **which had been combed wet earlier in the day**, was dry now and blowing.
  - What did the person, place, or thing have? (*whose*)
    - The great coon dog, **whose rhythmic panting came through the porch floor**, came from under the house and began to whine.
- Nonrestrictive clauses (**describe** a person, place, or thing) is punctuated with commas!
- Restrictive clauses (**identifies**—or can replace—a person, place, or thing) is not punctuated with commas.

**Adverb Clause:** This is a DEPENDENT clause that gives more information about the rest of the sentence. It contains a subject and verb.

- They answer these questions about an independent clause and begin with subordinate conjunctions:
  - When does it happen? (*after, as, before, when, while, until*)
  - Why does it happen? (*because, since*)
  - How does it happen? (*as, if*)
  - Under what conditions does it happen? (*although, if*)

**Noun Clause:** This is a DEPENDENT clause that works like a noun. It has a subject and verb.

- Most start with *that, what, or how*.
- If the clause is removable, it's NOT a noun clause; it is an adverb or adjective clause. If it is removable, it is a noun clause.
- It can be a subject, direct object, object of preposition, predicate noun, or appositive.

## Punctuation Cheat Sheet

### IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:

1. **Subject**—This is who or what the sentence is about.  
e.g.: Mrs. Lemons loves her students.
2. **Verb/Predicate**—This is what the subject does.  
e.g.: Mrs. Lemons loves her students.
3. **Independent Clause**—this is a clause (a part of a sentence) that can stand on its own because it has a subject, verb, and is a complete thought. It is grown up and can take care of itself. 😊  
e.g.: *I am excited about going to college.*
4. **Dependent (or subordinate) Clause**—this is a clause (a part of a sentence) that CANNOT stand on its own because it does not express a complete thought even though it has a subject and a verb. It is dependent on an independent clause, like a baby is dependent on a mother.  
e.g.: *Although I have good grades*
5. **Simple Sentence**: One independent clause.
6. **Compound Sentence**: Two or more independent clauses.
7. **Complex Sentence**: Only one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.
8. **Compound-Complex Sentence**: At least two independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

## PUNCTUATION RULES:

1. **Put a period between the two independent clauses.**  
*e.g.: I want to go to the concert. I got off work.*
2. **Put a semi-colon between the two independent clauses.**  
*e.g.: I want to go to the concert; I got off work.*
3. Coordinating Conjunction: FAN BOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).  
**USE A COMMA BEFORE A COORDINATING CONJUNCTION!**  
*e.g.: I want to go to the concert, **but** I have to work.*
4. Transition Words: however, meanwhile, therefore, for example, in conclusion, additionally, etc.  
**USE A COMMA AFTER A TRANSITION WORD!**  
*e.g.: I want to go to the concert; **therefore**, I asked for the night off work.*
5. Subordinating Conjunctions: After, although, because, before, even if, until, since, when, while, etc.  
**USE A COMMA IF YOUR SENTENCE STARTS WITH A SUBORDINATE / DEPENDENT CLAUSE, BUT NOT AFTER!**  
*e.g.: **After I work**, I want to go to the concert. I want to go to the concert **after I work**.*