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# Yoda-speak

Yoda’s language is created by moving groups of words. But we cannot move just any group of words. The words we can move must constitute a ‘phrase’: a group of words which go together.

1. [Powerful] you have become \_ . [The dark side] I sense \_ in you.

NB We can’t say \*[Have become powerful you] have \_\* , or \*[Side] I sense in you the dark \_\*

1. [Mourn them] do not \_ . [Miss them] do not \_ . Attachment leads to Jealousy.
2. If once you start down the dark path, [forever] will it dominate your destiny \_ , [consume you] it will \_ , as it did Obi-Wan’s apprentice
3. No. Not yet. One thing remains. Vader. You must confront Vader. Then, only then, [a Jedi] you will be \_ . And [confront him] you will \_.

# Phrases

So far we have looked at words and morphemes. Now we are going to combine these into units called ‘phrases’

A phrase is a **group of words which behaves like a single single unit.** The phrase tends to takes its name from the word which expresses the meaning of the phrase, e.g.

1. Jack saw [a fascinating TV programme] -> Phrase is about a programme, *programme* is a noun, therefore it is a NOUN PHRASE
2. Rufus likes drinking beer [in his local pub] -> Phrase is about a location, the location is expressed by the preposition, therefore this is a PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE.

Phrases are also sometimes referred to as **constituents**

# Tests for Phrasehood

The groups of words which form a phrase may for a **syntactic**, **semantic**, or **phonological** unit

## Syntactic tests for phrasehood

First three are most reliable.

1. **Replacement test**

* A phrase can be replaced with ‘placeholder’ expression (e.g. a pronoun)
  1. [Elliot ] loved [the cute green alien ] -> [He] loved [it]
  2. Elliot [hugged the cute green alien ] and Gertie [did so ] too (and [so did ] Gertie)

1. **Question test**

* A phrase can be questioned
  1. Who did Elliot love? [ The cute green alien ]
  2. Where did Elliot find ET? [ In the toolshed ]
  3. What is Elliot doing? [Hugging the cute green alien ]

1. **Standalone test**

* When questioned, the phrase can stand alone as an answer (see above)

1. **Coordination test**

* Phrases may be coordinated, i.e. they may be produced in a series linked by a coordinator (*and*, *but*, *or*) e.g.
  1. [Elliot **and** Gertie ] loved [the cute green alien **and** the soft brown Teddy ]
  2. Elliot [hugged the cute green alien **and** cuddled the soft brown Teddy ]

1. **Movement test**

* Phrases may, under circumstances move. If we attempt to move a group of words which is not a phrase, the sentence sound ungrammatical. Yoda (above) speak provides plenty of examples of the movement test, e.g.
  1. [Mourn them] do not \_ . (Movement of Verb Phrase)
  2. [Consume you] it will \_ . (Movement of Verb Phrase)
  3. [The dark side] I sense \_ in you. (Movement of Noun Phrase)
  4. [Forever] it will dominate your destiny \_ (Movement of Adverb Phrase. NB phrases can be single words. We can turn this into a multi-word phrase: *For the rest of time….*)

1. **Omission test**

* Some phrases may be omitted. If a group of words may be omitted, it is likely to be a phrase, e.g. *The man (in the moon) came down (too soon)* (omission of prepositional phrase, and adverb phrase).
* This test is probably the weakest test, as not all phrases may be omitted.

1. **Filler test**

* Fillers are words which we use to ‘fill in’ pauses. We tend to use them to ‘cover up’ disfluences. A classic example is ‘like’. In general, fillers cannot be inserted within phrases, e.g.
  1. Elliot, *like*, loved the cute green alien (*like* inserted between phrases - sounds okay)
  2. ? Elliot loved the, *like*, cute green alien (*like* inserted within the Noun Phrase - sounds odd.)

To remember these tests learn the following acronym: Really Quick Snakes Can Make Orangutans Flee

## Semantic tests for phrasehood

The phrase is about a single thing. That thing is expressed by the ‘head’ of the phrase.

1. I stepped in [a large heap of dung]
2. They played a game of basketball [in the park]
3. He is [good at playing chess]
4. Jack can run [really quickly]

For the above sentences (a) what is the phrase about? (b) identify the head of the phrase? (c) what kind of phrase is it?

## What to do about the verb?

According to the coordination test, replacement test, and the movement test, the verb is part of a bigger phrase consistent of the verb and following Noun Phrases, e.g.

1. Patrick [loved the fish **but** hated the chips ]
2. Mary [loved the mousse ], and Shania [did so ] too.
3. [Mourn them ] do not \_ . [Miss them ] do not \_ . Attachment leads to Jealousy.

Notice that auxiliary verbs (and negative particles) are not part of the Noun Phrase (\*[Mourn them ] **do** not, [Eaten them ] she **has** \_\* ).

But the Noun Phrases which come after the verb are also phrases. Therefore we have **phrases inside phrases!**

1. Patrick [ loved [ the fish ] ]

**BE WARNED THAT DIFFERENT RESEARCH FIELDS USE THE TERM “VERB PHRASE” DIFFERENTLY**

Many clinicians and speech and language scientists use the term “Verb Phrase” to refer to the Verb and all associated words, e.g. *Mary* ***is greedily eating*** *the food*. This is also the definition which David Crystal uses. However, we will be using the definition preferred by linguists: the main verb and following Noun Phrases. This is because this unit meets the tests for phrasehood described above.

# Teaching an autistic child about sentence structure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1Vqlk_ZsHg>

The big cat was crying because he was hungry

What was he doing?

Why was he crying?

Was he a little cat or a big cat?

The red dog was running because a cat was chasing him?

What was he doing?

Why was he running?

Was he a blue dog or a red dog?

# 5 minute exercise

Try to learn the following artificial language

1. Gugo bikavit lamnok = ‘The cat chased the dog’
2. Lopo bikavit tunglish = ‘The cat ate the food’
3. Lopo gugo lamnok = ‘The dog likes the food’

What does the following sentence mean?

1. Bikavit gugo tunglish