A phrase is a group of related words without a subject and a predicate. Because a phrase has no subject or predicate, it is only part of a sentence – it cannot stand alone. There are seven kinds of phrases.

1. Verb phrases: consist of a simple verb + one or more “helping” (auxiliary) verbs
   
   e.g. had gone; can see; will write; will have been working

2. Noun phrases: consist of a noun + its modifiers; function as either subject, direct object, or complement
   
   e.g. Becoming a parent is a big step in life.

3. Prepositional phrases: consist of a preposition + a noun or noun phrase serving as its object; function as either an adjective or adverb to indicate a relationship in time, place, manner.

   e.g. We went to the theatre. (place)  
       The cat jumped onto the fence. (place)  
       It won’t happen in our lifetime. (time)  
       The man drove in an erratic way. (manner)

4. Participial phrases: consist of verbal ending in “ing”, “t”, “ed” + its modifiers; function as adjectives to describe nouns.  

   Note: A participle is NEVER the verb in a sentence.

   e.g. The dogs, panting and tired, lay down. (participial phrase describing dogs)  
       The girl wearing the scarf is my sister. (participial phrase describing girl)

5. Absolute phrases: consist of a subject + a participle that function to modify the entire sentence.
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6. Gerund phrases consist of a verb + its modifiers and ALWAYS function as a noun

   e.g. **Final exams having ended**, I went home for Christmas.

   e.g. **Reading for pleasure** is my hobby

   You can use my basement for **storing your books**.

   **Cooking creatively** is a skill you must learn.

7. Infinitive phrases: consist of “to” + simple verb and function as a noun, an adjective or an adverb.

   **NOTE**: The infinitive NEVER functions as the verb in a sentence.

   e.g. **To be famous** is my goal. (noun)

   Language **to suit your purpose** is important. (adjective)

   I am happy, **to be sure**. (adverb)

### Clauses

A clause is a group of related words that contain **both a subject and a predicate** – in other words, a clause can stand alone. There are two types of clauses:

1. **Main clauses**: consist of a subject + a verb as well as any (principle or independent) modifiers of these. It forms a complete sentence.

   e.g. The dog (subject) growled (verb).

   **Note**: When two main clauses are joined by and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet, they are said to be coordinate clauses.

2. **Subordinate clauses**: (dependent) consist of a subordinating word + a main clause. The subordinating word makes the clause dependent on another clause. To test for a
subordinate clause – remove the subordinating conjunction – you should then have a main clause.

**Some subordinating conjunctions are: after, although, as, because, before, if, once, since, that, though, until, unless, when, whenever, where, wherever, while.

3. Relative clauses: are a type of subordinate clause that begin with a relative pronoun. Relative pronouns ALWAYS function as adjectives because the relative pronoun always relates to a noun in the main clause.

**Some relative pronouns are: that, what, which, who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose.

**Some subordinating conjunctions are: after, although, as, because, before, if, once, since, that, though, until, unless, when, whenever, where, wherever, while.