

# ENGLISH

**Grammar:** Phrases and Clauses



# Phrases, Clauses and Sentences

## Parts of a Sentence

A sentence is a group of words which makes complete sense. However, the sentence itself is made up of smaller elements called **phrases** and **clauses**.

### Phrase

Technically, words are the smallest units of a sentence. A group of words which has no subject or predicate is called a **phrase**. Grammatically, the phrase is the basic unit of English Grammar.

- A phrase can be a short group of words.

the man	in the jungle	an old man	on time
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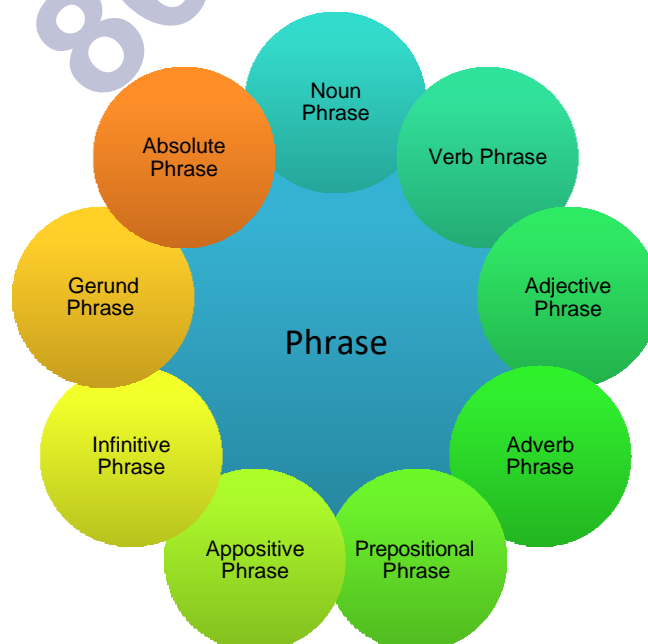
- It can also be a long group of words.

a small piece of jewellery which was handed down by my ancestors  
the room no one knows about

- Phrases represent various parts of speech.

<u>The man standing at the other end of the room</u> gestured to me.	Noun phrase/subject
He wielded a sceptre <u>made of gold and diamonds</u> .	Adjective phrase
Manisha shifted <u>to a house at the end of the street</u> .	Adverb phrase
I <u>have heard</u> this song before.	Verb phrase

### Types of Phrases



### Noun Phrase

- A phrase which functions as a noun in a sentence is called a noun phrase.

The old creaky stairs of the haunted mansion makes eerie sounds when stepped on.  
I saw women with large feathers on their hats.

- The phrase comprises a **noun** along with one or more **modifiers**.

an important point      the long road      a toothbrush      a noun phrase

### Verb Phrase

- A verb phrase contains both a verb and an auxiliary or helping verb.
- It may contain a direct or an indirect object.
- It is the main part of the predicate of the sentence.

The manager had judiciously averted the problem.  
Little Red Riding Hood was hopping and skipping her way through the woods.

### Adjective Phrase

- An adjective phrase is a group of words which functions as the adjective in the sentence.
- The main word in the phrase is the adjective.
- It is placed before a noun or as a part of the predicate of the sentence.

The tiny grey tabby kitten mewed for its mother.  
The Sun is a bright golden fireball.

### Adverb Phrase

- An adverb phrase is a group of words which functions as the adverb in the sentence.
- It can modify either an adjective or another adverb in the sentence.

They spoke very softly to avoid attracting attention.  
I can speak Tamil quite fluently.

### Prepositional Phrase

- A prepositional phrase comprises a preposition and a noun or a pronoun which functions as its object.
- The prepositional phrase may also contain modifiers.
- It may function as an adjective or an adverb in the sentence.

A woman with a blue umbrella stepped out of the carriage.  
Manisha bought flowers for her mother.

### Appositive Phrase

- An appositive is a word which is placed next to another word in order to explain it.

Shah Rukh Khan, the actor, has contributed immensely to Bollywood cinema.

Raju, my nephew, has secured a distinction in his examination.

- An appositive phrase is nothing but a noun phrase which is used for modifying or explaining another word in the sentence.

Shivaji Maharaj, an Indian warrior king, is the greatest member of the Maratha clan.

The Mossad, Israel's secret service, is one of the most efficient espionage systems in the world.

### Infinitive Phrase

- An infinitive phrase comprises an infinitive (to + verb) and modifiers and complements.
- The complement of an infinitive is its indirect object and its modifier is its adverb.
- They can act as adjectives, adverbs or nouns.

The patient started to slowly open his eyes.

To know her is to love her.

### Gerund Phrase

- Gerunds are words which end in '**-ing**'.
- They look like verbs but act like nouns.
- The gerund phrase comprises a gerund, its object and modifiers.
- It performs all the functions of a noun.
- Prepositional phrases are often part of gerund phrases.

Working for this organisation has helped me hone my skills. (Subject of the sentence)

Ranjani enjoys knitting sweaters for the children in the orphanage. (Object of the sentence)

### Participial Phrase

- A participial phrase is an adjective phrase which comprises a **participle** (past or present) along with relevant complements and modifiers.
- It always functions as an adjective.
- It is separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma if they are used at the beginning of the sentence.
- It is separated from the rest of the sentence by two commas if it is used in between a sentence.

Leaving in a hurry, she dropped the keys with her neighbour.

The clock, frozen in time, has been standing at half past 10 for a century.

### Absolute Phrase

- An absolute phrase is a combination of a noun and a participle along with other complements and modifiers.
- It qualifies an entire sentence.

His lips quivering, he finally gathered the courage to confess.

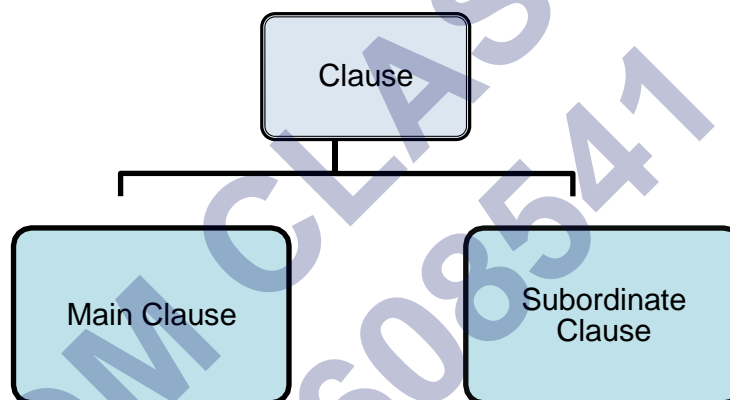
God willing, we will be able to face all adversities.

### Clause

A clause is a group of related words which contains a subject and a predicate. Unlike a phrase, a clause is complete in meaning and can function as an independent sentence.

There are two basic types of clauses:

- Main clause
- Subordinate clause



### Main Clause

The main clause contains a subject and a verb which can stand independently as a sentence.

One should take good care of one's teeth or one may end up with none.

The renowned singer rendered the song melodiously.

To err is human; to forgive is divine.

I admire his courage, but I cannot justify his actions.

Function	Conjunction	Conjunctive Adverb	Example
To add information or idea	and	in addition, besides, also, furthermore, moreover	Jagadish studied at the University during the day, and he worked as a waiter at the local bar at night.
To show the order of things or actions		first, second, later, lastly, ultimately	First, he opened the door. He then called out to anyone inside. Ultimately, when he got no answer, he ventured inside.
To show contradiction or contrast	but, yet	however, on the other hand, nevertheless, in contrast	She always passed by the expensive boutique, but she never dared to enter it.

Function	Conjunction	Conjunctive Adverb	Example
To show the consequence	so	hence, therefore, consequently, as a result, thus	Growing children have nutritional needs which are different from adults. Thus, a kids' health drink is made by keeping their requirements in mind.
To show alternatives	either...or	otherwise	Akshaya rings up her parents twice every day. Otherwise, they become extremely anxious.
To put emphasis on		certainly, indeed, in fact	I enjoy watching regional movies. In fact, they are the only ones I enjoy.
To provide an example		For example, for instance	Do a kind deed every day. For instance, say a kind word to someone to make them happy.
To conclude or to summarise		in conclusion, in short	Farid siphoned money from all the companies he had worked for. In short, he was the greediest and the most amoral person I have ever met.

### Subordinate Clause

The subordinate clause contains a subject and a verb, but unlike the main clause, it cannot stand independently as a sentence. It requires the support of the main verb in order to function properly.

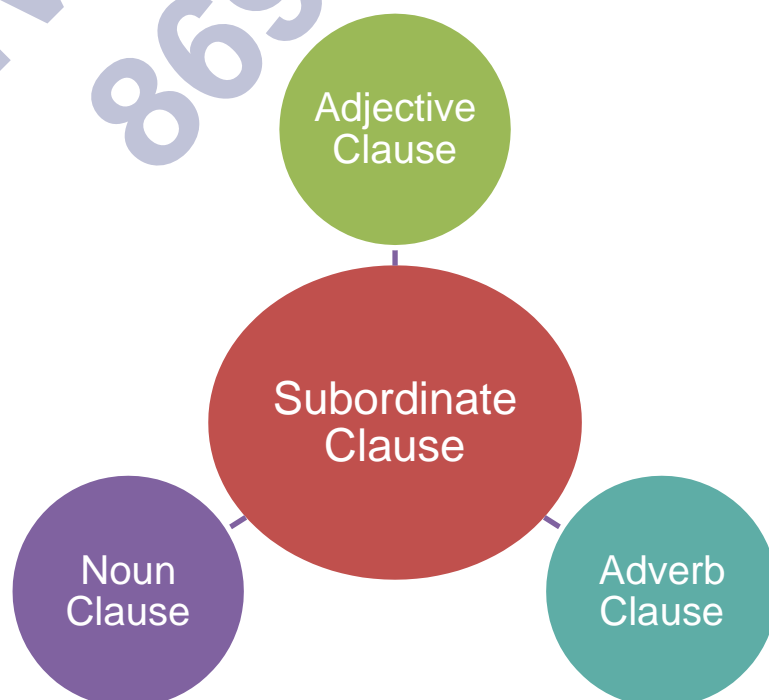
Though he was a wealthy man, he never took pride in his riches.

Unless the accused confesses to the crime, the case will not proceed any further.

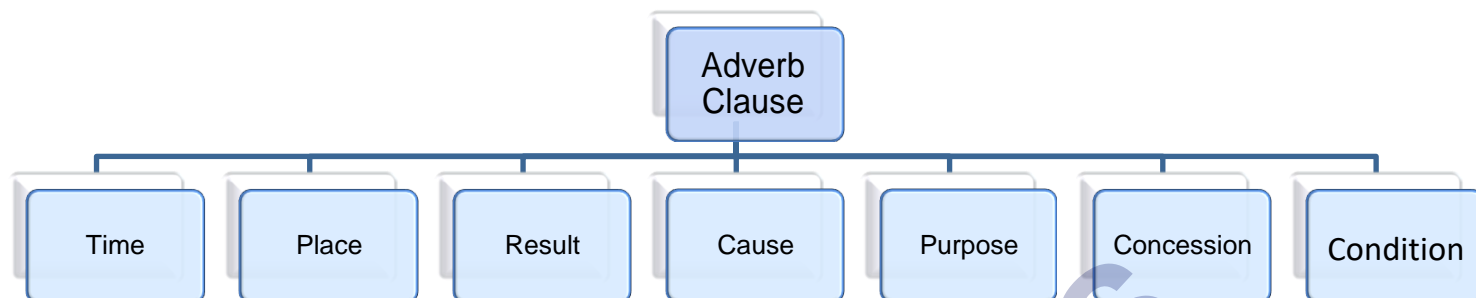
Geeta failed to understand how the thief got in because she had locked all the doors and windows.

Sarita gasped loudly when she saw a snake slither by.

### Types of Subordinate Clauses



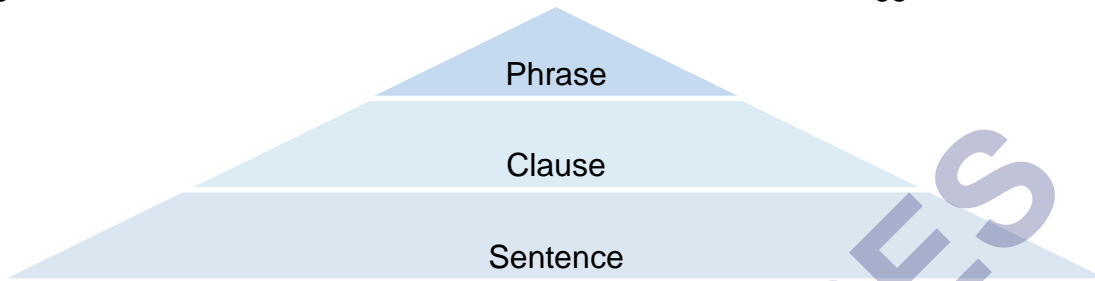
Adverb clauses can be further divided into 7 types:



Types of Clauses		Subordinators	Examples
Noun Clause		What, when, why, where, how, who, whom, which, whose, whether, that, if	Gauri believes <u>that she can get away with anything.</u>
		who, whom, which, whose, that, where, when	The flower <u>that has the unique markings</u> is a tiger lily.
Adjective Clause	Time	when, before, after, since, till, until	The lady left <u>before help could arrive.</u>
	Place	where, wherever	She will go <u>wherever she pleases.</u>
Adverb Clause	Result	so... that, such...that	Property in Mumbai is so expensive <u>that the common man finds it difficult to buy a house for himself.</u>
	Cause	because, since	Kajal travels by taxi <u>since bus journeys make her sick.</u>
	Purpose	in order to, so that	I took leave <u>so that I could tend to my sick friend.</u>
	Concession	although, even though	<u>Although Ram is highly qualified,</u> he settled for a low-paying job.
	Condition	if, unless	<u>Unless you try,</u> you will not succeed.

## Relationship between Phrases and Clauses

- Phrases are groups of words which act as parts of speech. When phrases come together, they form clauses.
- Clauses are simple sentences by themselves; however, two or more clauses can be joined together to form bigger sentences.



The little pup	was chewing	on a rubber ball
Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase	Prepositional Phrase

Clause

The little pup	was chewing	on a rubber ball	and	the kitten	was playing	with a piece of string
Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase	Prepositional Phrase	Conj.	Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase	Prepositional Phrase

Independent  
Clause

Independent  
Clause

When	the little pup	was chewing	on a rubber ball	the kitten	was playing	with a piece of string
Adv.	Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase	Prepositional Phrase	Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase	Prepositional Phrase

Subordinate  
Clause

Main  
Clause

