

# Grammar Review: Phrases

I. **Definition of a phrase:** a group of words that acts in a sentence as a single part of speech

## II. Prepositional

A. Definition: a group of words that begins with a preposition and usually ends with a noun or pronoun, called the object of the preposition

B. Common prepositions:

About	Behind	In
Above	Below	Into
Across	Beside	Like
After	Between	Near
Against	Beyond	Of
Along	By	On
Around	Down	Over
At	During	Past
Before	For	

There are also compound prepositions, which are made up of more than one word:

according to	as to	instead of
ahead of	because of	next to
along with	in addition to	out of

C. Examples: The door **of the car with the skis on top** is scratched.

## III. Appositive

A. Definition: an appositive is a noun or pronoun that is placed next to another noun or pronoun to identify or give additional information about it. Example: My sister *Amelia* was sick.

B. An appositive phrase is an appositive plus any modifiers or complements, also known as the words that go along with it.

C. Examples:

1. Dr. Rudes, *the new principal*, is perpetually optimistic.
2. Please give your homework to Jonathan, *the boy in the plaid shirt*.

## IV. Verbal

A. The remaining phrases are types of verbals. A verbal is a verb form that functions in a sentence as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

B. A verbal phrase is a verbal plus any complements or modifiers.

## V. Participles/Participial Phrases

A. A participle is a verb form that functions as an adjective.

1. *Rising* gas prices may cause consumers to reduce their driving.
  2. The *opening* scene of King Lear shows how Cordelia loses her father's affection.
- B. A participial phrase contains a participle plus complements and modifiers.
1. Mr. Davision called after the boy *running down the hall*.
  2. *Pulling down her skirt quickly*, Valerie told the teacher that yes, her skirt is long enough.

## VI. Gerund

- A. A gerund is a verb form that ends in -ing and functions as a noun.  
Example: I hate *ironing*.
- B. A gerund phrase is a gerund plus any modifiers and complements.  
Examples:
1. *Waiting in line for the movie* only heightened my anticipation.
  2. Many AP English teachers grow weary of *grading endless timed essays*.

## VII. Infinitive

- A. An infinitive is a verb form that is preceded by the word to and is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.  
Example: My youngest daughter, Lillian, is finally learning *to read*.
- B. An infinitive phrase contains an infinitive plus any complements and modifiers.  
Example: *Struggling to read her students' handwriting*, Ms. Chapman adjusted her glasses.

## VIII. Absolute

- A. An absolute phrase, also known as a nominative absolute, consists of a noun or pronoun that is modified by a participle or participial phrase
- B. Technically an absolute phrase has no grammatical relation to the rest of the sentence; it stands alone. (Note: You will NEVER be tested on this particular fact.)
- C. If you were to add either *was* or *were* to an absolute phrase, the phrase would form a complete sentence.
- D. Examples:
1. *Her hair blowing in the breeze*, Connie laughed and enjoyed riding in her new convertible.
  2. The race car rounded the track, *its tires screaming*.