A phrase is a group of words without both a [subject and predicate](http://learningnerd.com/2006/09/10/english-grammar-basic-sentence-elements/). Phrases combine words into a larger unit that can function as a sentence element. For example, a participial phrase can include adjectives, nouns, prepositions and adverbs; as a single unit, however, it functions as one big adjective modifying a noun (or noun phrase). See this overview of [phrases](http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/tta/phrases/phrases.htm) for more.

* [**Noun Phrase**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun_phrase) - "*The crazy old lady in the park* feeds the pigeons every day." A noun phrase consists of a [noun](http://learningnerd.com/2006/08/29/english-parts-of-speech-nouns-and-pronouns/) and all of its modifiers, which can include other phrases (like the prepositional phrase *in the park*). [More examples](http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/phraseformulas.html#noun).
  + [**Appositive Phrase**](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/596/01/) - "Bob, *my best friend*, works here" or "My best friend *Bob* works here." An appositive (single word, phrase, or clause) renames another noun, not technically modifying it. See this page from the [Armchair Grammarian](http://community-2.webtv.net/solis-boo/Grammar3/page7.html) for everything you ever wanted to know about appositives.
  + [**Gerund Phrase**](http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/phraseformulas.html#gerund) - "I love *baking cakes*." A gerund phrase is just a noun phrase with a [gerund](http://learningnerd.com/2006/08/29/english-parts-of-speech-nouns-and-pronouns/#other) as its [head](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_%28linguistics%29).
  + [**Infinitive Phrase**](http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/phraseformulas.html#infinitive) - "I love *to bake cakes*." An infinitive phrase is a noun phrase with an [infinitive](http://learningnerd.com/2006/08/29/english-parts-of-speech-nouns-and-pronouns/#other) as its head. Unlike the other noun phrases, however, an infinitive phrase can also function as an adjective or an adverb. [More examples](http://grammar.uoregon.edu/phrases/infinitiveP.html).
* [**Verb Phrase**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verb_phrase) - The verb phrase can refer to the whole predicate of a sentence (I *was watching my favorite show yesterday*) or just the [verb](http://learningnerd.com/2006/08/31/english-parts-of-speech-verbs/) or [verb group](http://www.usingenglish.com/glossary/verb-group.html) (*was watching*)*.*
* [**Adverbial Phrase**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adverbial_phrase) - The [adverbial](http://learningnerd.com/2006/09/02/english-parts-of-speech-adjectives-determiners-and-adverbs/#adverbials) phrase also has two definitions; some say it's a group of adverbs (*very quickly*), while others say it's any phrase (usually a prepositional phrase) that acts as an [adverb](http://learningnerd.com/2006/09/02/english-parts-of-speech-adjectives-determiners-and-adverbs/#adverbs) -- see this [second definition](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/phrfunc.html#phradv).
* [**Adjectival Phrase**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adjectival_phrase) - As with adverbial phrases, adjectival phrases can either refer to a group of adjectives *(full of toys*) or any phrase (like a participial or prepositional phrase) that acts as an [adjective](http://learningnerd.com/2006/09/02/english-parts-of-speech-adjectives-determiners-and-adverbs/) -- see this [second definition](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/phrfunc.html#phradj).
* [**Participial Phrase**](http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/phraseformulas.html#participial) - "*Crushed to pieces by a sledgehammer*, the computer no longer worked" or "I think the guy *sitting over there* likes you."  A participial phrase has a past or present [participle](http://learningnerd.com/2006/09/02/english-parts-of-speech-adjectives-determiners-and-adverbs/#other) as its head. Participial phrases always function as adjectives.
* [**Prepositional Phrase**](http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/phraseformulas.html#prepositional) - "The food *on the table* looked delicious." A prepositional phrase, which has a [preposition](http://learningnerd.com/2006/09/04/english-parts-of-speech-prepositions-conjunctions-and-interjections/) as its head, can function as an adjective, adverb, or even as a noun.
* [**Absolute Phrase**](http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/course/sentence/2_4e.htm#absolute) - "*My cake finally baking in the oven*, I was free to rest for thirty minutes." Unlike participial phrases, absolute phrases have subjects and modify the entire sentence, not one noun. Almost a [clause](http://learningnerd.com/2006/09/08/english-grammar-types-of-clauses/), the absolute phrase can include every sentence element except a [finite verb](http://www.usingenglish.com/glossary/finite-verb.html). For example, "*My cake finally baking in the oven*" would be its own sentence if you just added one finite verb: "My cake *was*finally baking in the oven." See [Absolute Phrase](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/phrases.htm#absolute) for more.