

BASIC INFORMATION

PHRASE--a group of words acting as a part of speech.

Ex. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. "On the moon" is a prepositional phrase which modifies the verb "walked"; therefore, the entire prepositional phrase acts as an adverb in this sentence.

Ex. The man in the red coat gave me a puppy. "In the red coat" is a prepositional phrase which modifies the subject "man"; therefore, the entire prepositional phrase acts as an adverb in this sentence.

CLAUSE--a group of words having a subject and a verb. A clause may be either independent or dependent. An independent clause could stand alone as a sentence because it expresses a complete thought. A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence because it relies on an independent clause to explain its meaning. Independent clauses are sometimes referred to as main clauses. Dependent clauses are sometimes also called subordinate clauses.

Ex. When I left the steak on the counter, my dog helped himself to a free lunch. The independent clause "my dog helped himself to a free lunch" is a complete sentence; it could stand alone and still make sense. The dependent clause "when I left the steak on the counter" is NOT a complete sentence; it relies on the independent clause to explain what happened.

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TYPES OF SENTENCES

SIMPLE--consists of one thought, although there may be a compound subject and/or verb.

Ex. Rollerblading requires a good sense of balance.

Ex. Rollerblading and ice skating require a good sense of balance and coordination.

COMPOUND--consists of two ideas that are related. Each idea is an independent clause which could be a separate sentence; however, we are combining them because they are related.

Ex. Rollerblading requires a good sense of balance, but channel-surfing does not.

Ex. My Australian Cattle Dog Badger can stand on his head and fly, and my Australian Shepherd Sheila is a canine ballerina.

COMPLEX--consists of a dependent clause and an independent clause.

Ex. When I win the lottery, I will take a long vacation and travel around the world.

Ex. I will take a long vacation and travel around the world when I win the lottery.

Notice that a comma is required when the dependent clause comes before the independent clause, but a comma is NOT used when the independent clause comes before the dependent clause.

COMPOUND-COMPLEX--consists of two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Ex. When I win the lottery, I will take a long vacation and travel around the world, and I will visit all the places that I have ever read about.