**Phrases**

**What is a phrase?**

A phrase is a group of words that has no finite verb.

In other words, it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

I know that boy with red hair.

The words with red hair form a phrase that tells us more about the noun ***boy***.

**Different types of phrases**

Phrases can do the work of different parts of speech.

**Adjectival phrases**

Phrases that do the work of adjectives are called *adjectival phrases*. Like adjectives, they add meaning to, describe or modify nouns or pronouns.

Helena is the girl in the blue jeans.

The phrase in the blue jeans describes the noun ***girl*** and so is an adjectival phrase. Adjectival phrases can begin in different ways.

**Beginning with a preposition**

They may begin with a preposition.

Helena is the girl in the blue jeans.

The adjectival phrase in the blue jeans begins with the preposition ***in*** and describes the noun ***girl.***

Did you know there are about 300 prepositions in English?

**Beginning with a present participle**

The children, wearing their hats, played in the sun.

The adjectival phrase wearing their hats begins with the present participle ***wearing*** and modifies the noun ***children***.

**Beginning with a past participle**

I felt sorry for the boy locked in the classroom.

The adjectival phrase locked in the classroom begins with the past participle ***locked*** and modifies the noun ***boy***.

**Beginning with an infinitive**

He got the message to be quiet.

The adjectival phrase to be quiet begins with the infinitive ***to be*** and modifies the noun ***message***.

Look at the sentences below and highlight the adjectival phrase. Remember adjectival phrases do the same work as adjectives in that they add meaning to, describe or modify nouns or pronouns.

1. Wild animals, in small cages, are a sorry sight.
2. The front-rower, with the bushy beard, scored the first try.
3. He was a young man of great potential.
4. A man, carrying a backpack, asked me for directions.
5. The dog, covered with mud, jumped on the lounge.
6. Beaming with joy, the baby lit up the room.
7. She was proud of her daughter, winning the writing competition.
8. The boy, on the stage, is my brother.
9. In a low voice, he narrated the tale of his adventures.
10. Strikers, demanding their rights, picketed the work site.
11. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

**Make the following sentences more interesting by adding an adjectival phrase**

1. The dog was taken to the vet.
2. The boy got off the bus.
3. The class got the message.
4. The house has a beautiful garden.
5. The football belongs to the school.
6. The teacher rewarded the students.

In case this is a challenge, choose one of the adjectival phrases below to make the above sentences more interesting.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| over the fence | to obey the rules | with the injured paw |
| with the heavy bag | across the street | Beaming with pride |

**Answers for Teachers**

1. Wild animals, in small cages, are a sorry sight.
2. The front-rower, with the bushy beard, scored the first try.
3. He was a young man of great potential.
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9. In a low voice, he narrated the tale of his adventures.
10. Strikers, demanding their rights, picketed the work site.
11. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
12. The dog, with the injured paw, was taken to the vet.
13. The boy, with the heavy bag, got off the bus.
14. The class got the message to obey the rules.
15. The house, across the street, has a beautiful garden.
16. The football, over the fence, belongs to the school.
17. Beaming with pride, the teacher rewarded the students.

**References**

Winch, G., & Blaxell, G. (2011). *Primary Grammar Handbook* (3rd ed.). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.