

Phrases and Clauses

Often when we start putting two or three words together, we create either phrases or clauses. Here is some more information about both of these.

Phrases

A phrase is a short group of words (usually only about three or four) which has no subject and does not make a complete thought by itself. The two most common types of phrases are prepositional and verbal.

A **prepositional phrase** is one that begins with a preposition and contains a noun. Examples are phrases like these:

in the house
by the pool

at the school
from the governor

around the corner
under the table

An important thing to remember about prepositional phrases is that the noun that is part of a prepositional phrase can NEVER be the subject of the sentence.

Wrong: In your house is very beautiful.

Correct: Your house is very beautiful.

or

In your house, there are many beautiful things.

A verb phrase is a group of words containing a verb or a form of a verb. For example, all of the following italicized words are verb phrases:

I am going to the fair.

Jerry was studying late last night.

I should have done better on the test.

Susan will be taking her math course again.

Clauses

When you put enough words together so that there is a subject and a verb to go along with that subject, then you have a clause. If there is enough information there to make a whole thought, then the clause is called an independent clause (because it can actually stand by itself as a complete, whole sentence).

Example: The rain watered many lawns in my neighborhood.

