Recognize a *noun phrase* when you see one.

A noun phrase includes a noun—a person, place, or thing—and the modifiers which distinguish it.

You can find the noun *dog* in a sentence, for example, but you don’t know which canine the writer means until you consider the entire noun phrase: *that dog, Aunt Audrey’s dog, the dog on the sofa, the neighbor’s dog that chases our cat, the dog digging in the new flower bed.*

Modifiers can come before or after the noun. Ones that come before might include articles, possessive nouns, possessive pronouns, adjectives, and/or participles.

**Articles:** *a dog, the dog*

**Possessive nouns:** *Aunt Audrey’s dog, the neighbor’s dog, the police officer’s dog*

**Possessive pronouns:** *our dog, her dog, their dog*

**Adjectives:** *that dog, the big dog, the spotted dog*

**Participles:** *the drooling dog, the barking dog, the well trained dog*

Modifiers that come after the noun might include prepositional phrases, adjective clauses, participle phrases, and/or infinitives.

**Prepositional phrases:** *a dog on the loose, the dog in the front seat, the dog behind the fence*

**Adjective clauses:** *The dog that chases cats, the dog that looks lost, the dog that won the championship*

**Participle phrases:** *The dog whining for a treat, the dog clipped at the grooming salon, the dog walked daily*

**Infinitives:** *The dog to catch, the dog to train, the dog to adopt*

Less frequently, a noun phrase will have a pronoun as its base—a word like *we, everybody,* etc.—and the modifiers which distinguish it. Read these examples:

*We who were green with envy*

*We* = subject pronoun; *who were green with envy* = modifier.
Someone intelligent

Someone = indefinite pronoun; intelligent = modifier.

No one important

No one = indefinite pronoun; important = modifier.