

THE NOUN PHRASE

Recognize a noun phrase when you find one.

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

You can find the noun **dog** in a sentence, for example, but you do not 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 appears lost, the dog that won the agility 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 that distinguish it.

Read these examples:

We who were green with envy

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

Someone spoiling for a fight

Someone = indefinite pronoun; ***spoiling for a fight*** = modifier.

No one important

No one = indefinite pronoun; ***important*** = modifier.

