

Adjective Phrases

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Grammar Notes

ADJECTIVE PHRASES

A. Introduction to Adjective Phrases

Adjective clauses and phrases modify nouns. An adjective clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb. An adjective phrase is a reduced form where the subject is dropped and the verb is either dropped or shortened to a participle form.

Adjective phrases are very common in informal speaking and writing. They are also commonly used in news articles.

B. Formation

How do we reduce an adjective clause into an adjective phrase? Look at the following rules.

#	Rule	Adjective Clauses	Adjective Phrases
1	If there is a Be verb, eliminate the subject and Be verb.	Ms. Harrison, who is the vice president of the company , was promoted.	Ms. Harrison, vice president of the company , was promoted.
		The person who is talking to Yuri is our new teacher.	The person talking to Yuri is our new teacher.
		The team that was beaten in the semifinals was coached by Jim McMahon.	The team beaten in the semifinals was coached by Jim McMahon.
2	If there is no Be verb, it is sometimes possible to eliminate the subject and change the verb to the present participle (-ing).	Mr. Chin has a lawyer who speaks on his behalf .	Mr. Chin has a lawyer speaking on his behalf .
		Maya stayed in a hotel room that overlooked the river .	Maya stayed in a hotel room overlooking the river .*
		My mother, who doesn't want to work for anyone else , started her own company.	My mother, not wanting to work for anyone else , started her own company.**

Grammar Notes cont.

B. Formation cont.

#	Rule	Adjective Clauses	Adjective Phrases
3	If there are commas around the adjective clause, keep them in the adjective phrase.***	Ivan, who is my new roommate , is from Croatia.	Ivan, my new roommate , is from Croatia.
		Arabic, which is a language I studied last year , is difficult to learn.	Arabic, a language I studied last year , is difficult to learn.
		Pizza Go, which is located next to the river , had a successful year.	Pizza Go, located next to the river , had a successful year.

C. Notes

*Note #1

If there is only one verb, use the present participle form in the adjective phrase even when the sentence is in the past tense. (Do not use the past participle form.)

- ✓ She made a dessert **that consisted of flour, sugar, bananas, and eggs**. (clause)
- ✓ She made a dessert **consisting of flour, sugar, bananas, and eggs**. (phrase)
- ✗ She made a dessert **consisted of flour, sugar, bananas, and eggs**. (phrase)

To emphasize that one past action happened before another, we can use *having + past participle* in the adjective phrase.

- My friend, **who cooked us an amazing meal**, was tired after the party. (clause)
- My friend, **having cooked us an amazing meal**, was tired after the party. (phrase)

Grammar Notes cont.

C. Notes cont.

****Note #2**

For a negative form, use *not* + the reduced form of the verb.

- The person **who is not looking at us** is our new teacher. (clause)
- The person **not looking at us** is our new teacher. (phrase)
- Maya stayed in a hotel room **that didn't overlook the river**. (clause)
- Maya stayed in a hotel room **not overlooking the river**. (phrase)

*****Note #3**

The rules for commas around adjective phrases follow the same rules as adjective clauses.

Restrictive or *defining* adjective clauses and phrases don't take commas because the information is necessary to define a noun.

- The suitcase **missing one of its handles** is mine.

Non-restrictive or *non-defining* adjective clauses and phrases require commas because the information is not necessary to define a noun.

- Theodore Roosevelt, **the 26th president of the US**, had a pet hyena.

Note #4

Only clauses that start with a **subject** relative pronoun can be reduced to phrases. Clauses that start with an **object** relative pronoun cannot be reduced to a phrase.

- ✓ The person **who** worked with me today is from Korea. (**subject** pronoun)
- ✓ The person working with me today is from Korea.
- ✓ The person **who** I worked with today is from Korea. (**object** pronoun)
- ✗ The person I working with today is from Korea.
- ✗ The person working with today is from Korea

Exercise 1

REDUCTIONS

Reduce the adjective clauses to adjective phrases.

Ex. The person that was driving the red Toyota caused the accident.

The person driving the red Toyota caused the accident.

1. I know the student who is sitting in the front row of the theater.

2. The girl who was chosen to be the captain has played for three years.

3. John Brown, who is 23, works at Chase Bank.

4. Pauline Johnson, who is the manager of the restaurant, lives in Ottawa.

5. I went to a hotel that was located on 7th and Broadway.

6. Nancy likes restaurants that serve spicy food.

7. The reporter who was captured during the raid was released yesterday.

8. Ludlow knows the man who is standing in the corner of the room.

9. I finally saw the singer who was hidden by the crowd.

10. Megan knows the woman who is directing the movie.

Exercise 2

PUNCTUATION

Place a comma in the following sentences, if necessary.

Ex. She has never been to Africa[,] a continent rich in natural resources.

1. We took a trip to Vancouver an ethnically diverse city.
2. The words written on the blackboard are very difficult to read.
3. Rice the staple food in Korean cooking is rarely eaten in France.
4. Oliver is dating a woman holding a degree from Heidelberg University.
5. Professor Balango a lazy man doesn't prepare for class.
6. I have fond memories of my hometown located near our country's largest shopping mall.
7. The rice made by your sister yesterday tasted like glue.
8. San Diego located in southern California has great weather.
9. Dogs the most loyal of all animals usually love to take walks with their owners.
10. Usha Patel the director of human resources does not work on Sunday.

Exercise 3

SENTENCE COMBINATION

Combine the two sentences using an adjective phrase. Remember to place the adjective phrase immediately after the noun it describes and add commas when needed.

Ex. Thailand has never been ruled by a foreign power. It is situated in Southeast Asia.

Thailand, situated in Southeast Asia, has never been ruled by a foreign power.

1. Simon Bolivar was born in Venezuela. Venezuela is located in South America.

2. Germany is now a unified country. It was divided into East and West in 1945.

3. I met a woman on the bus yesterday. The woman was wearing a polka-dot dress.

4. Algeria has a population of 43,000,000. It is the largest country in Africa.

5. Jin has a dog. The dog weighs 25 pounds.

6. There are six principal dialects of Spanish. Spanish is the official language of nine South American countries.

7. Ranjett's mother won two tickets to travel anywhere in the continental United States. She is a dentist.

8. Oliver attended a university. It is known for its excellent biology department.

9. Beppina is a fantastic swimmer. She is 23 years old.

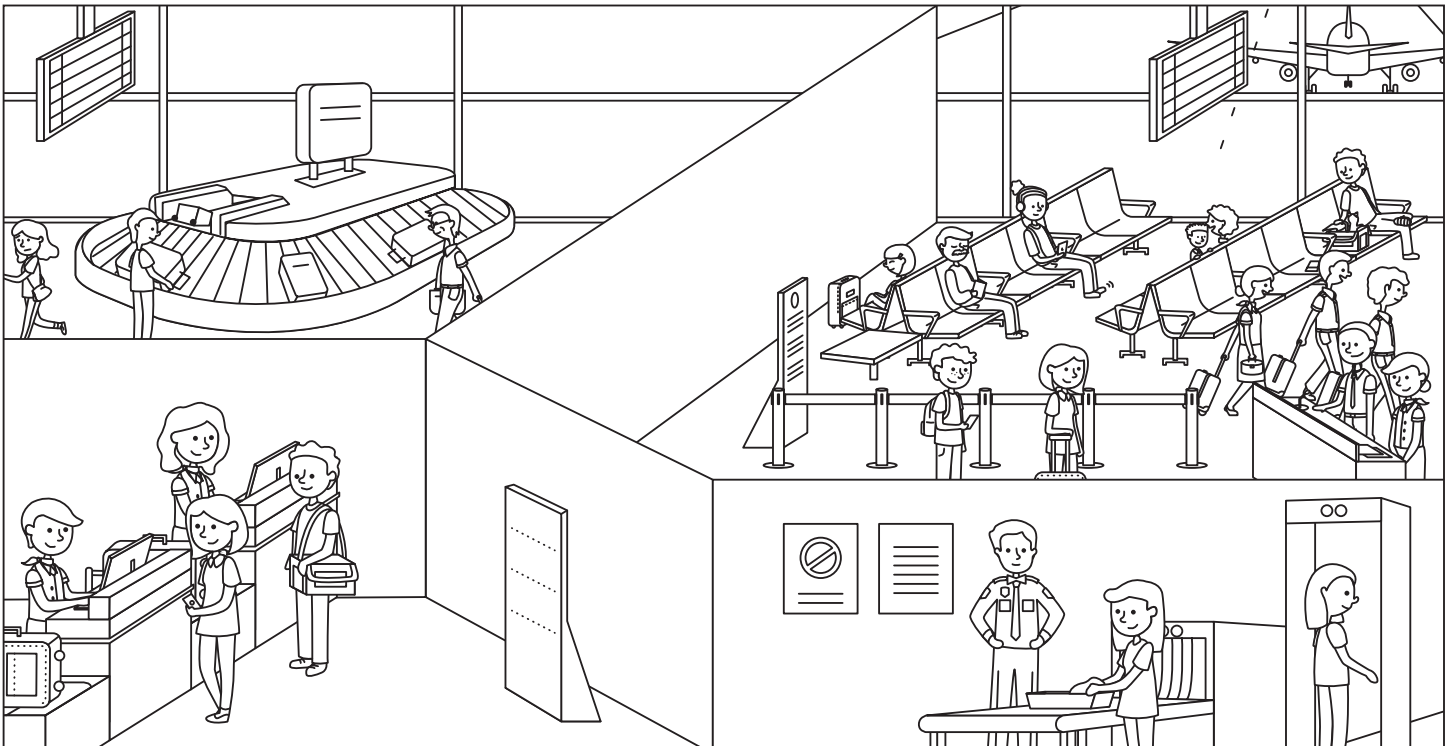
10. Harold lives in Brooklyn. He is a new teacher.

Exercise 4

SPEAKING

With a partner, take turns describing the scene using adjective phrases.

Ex. The woman wearing headphones is listening to a podcast.



Exercise 5

SENTENCE COMPLETION

Complete the sentences with an adjective phrase.

Ex. My sister owns an apartment *built in 1972* _____.

1. Gianna has a dog _____.
2. Juan, _____, is standing over there.
3. I would like to introduce you to my English teacher, _____.
4. The person who sits next to me in class is someone _____.
5. We like to eat at a restaurant _____.
6. The person who sits in front of me in class is someone _____.
7. I borrowed a pen from Andrew, _____.
8. I would like to tell you about my father, _____.
9. My mother is a woman _____.
10. My sister, _____, is very shy.
11. My brother, _____, is not married.
12. My friend lives in a city _____.
13. My aunt has six children _____.
14. My classmate, _____, lives with her aunt.
15. My coworkers, _____, usually ride their bicycles to work.

Exercise 6

IN THE NEWS

Identify all the adjective clauses and phrases in the passage. Underline the adjective phrases and put parentheses around the adjective clauses.

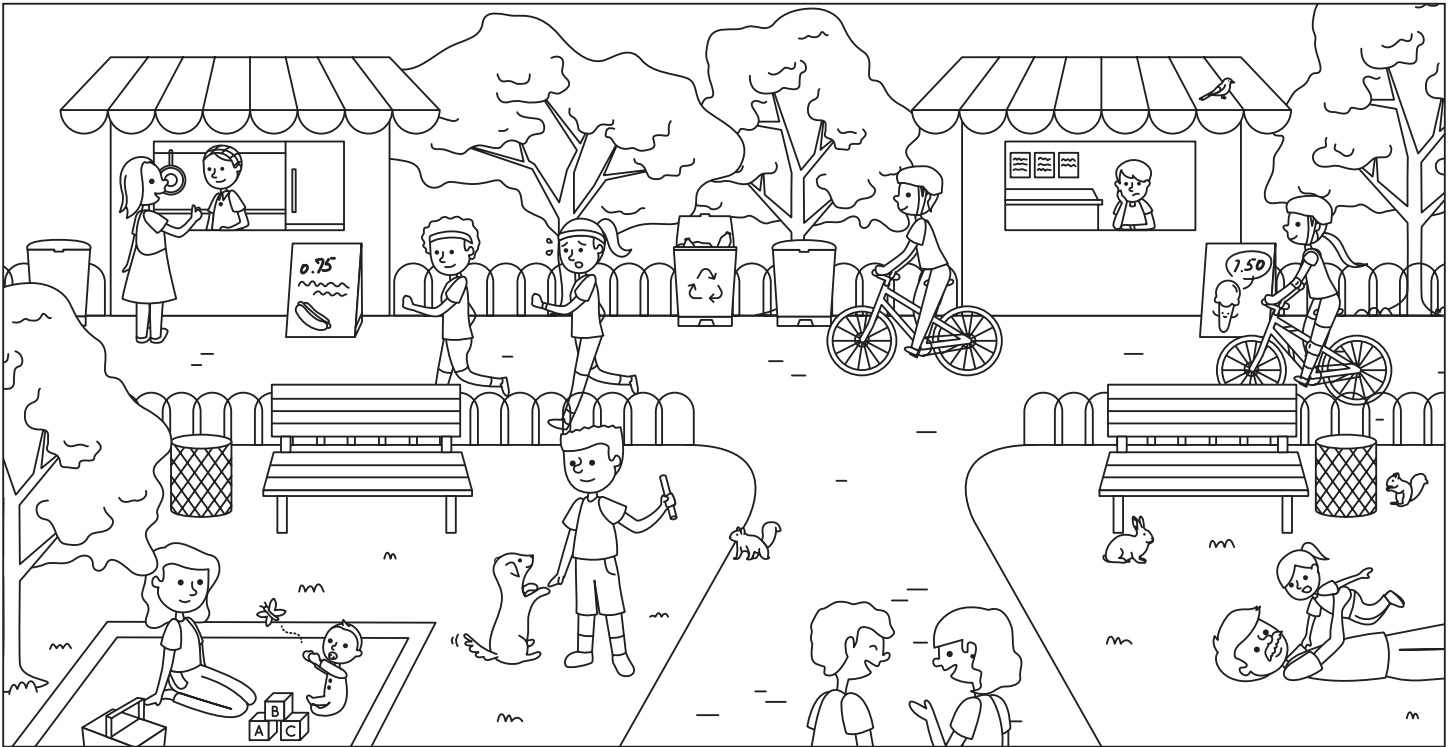
Sociologists Dispute the Threat of Violent Video Games Played by Teenagers

The debate raging over the impact of video games on teenage behavior continues unabated. Dr. Marvin Hanson, director of the Center for Research on Teenage Violence at the University of Guadara, said that there were no clear links between video game violence and teen behavior. "Some parents whose children play Mortal Kombat or Grand Theft Auto, considered the most violent video games on the market, have expressed concerns about aggressive behavior and anxiety in their children," said Dr. Hanson, who has three video-game playing children of his own. Harold Levkowitz, an irate parent whose son was assaulted by a fellow student after the two had played Rebel Squadron for five straight hours, said that he wished for a time when teenagers turned to sports to release their aggression. "Kids who don't play soccer or football and have all these pent-up emotions that they just can't release tend to be more in-your-face in their behavior," Mr. Levkowitz, a clinical psychologist, explained. However, Ms. Maya Bertoldi, a mother of two, does not agree. "Young people who play video games leave their aggression in the room when they leave. They are perfectly normal teenagers who clearly understand the difference between games and real life." Ronda Fleming, 23, an aerobics instructor and lifelong proponent of video games as a way to improve peripheral vision and reaction techniques, stated, "I don't feel that violent video games affect behavior. Kids understand it's just a game they're playing. They won't go around shooting at cars driving by as they do in Grand Theft Auto." The debate rages on. Meanwhile, young people, whose lives revolve around the video monitor, continue to enjoy the challenge offered by video games.

Exercise 8

REVIEW

Come up with 10 sentences that include adjective phrases to describe the scene.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Exercise 9

QUIZ


Circle the correct answer.

1. Natural disasters are increasing in frequency.
The increased frequency of natural disasters is a result of climate change.
 - a) Natural disasters are increasing in frequency a result of climate change.
 - b) Natural disasters are increasing in frequency, a result of climate change.
2. Kimchi is a staple dish in Korea. It is made of fermented cabbage.
 - a) Kimchi, made of fermented cabbage, is a staple dish in Korea.
 - b) Kimchi, a staple dish in Korea, it is made of fermented cabbage.
3. Some of the conference attendees were from the Opus Group. They enjoyed the conference.
 - a) The attendees from the Opus Group enjoyed the conference.
 - b) The attendees, from the Opus Group, enjoyed the conference.
4. My cat was sick for days. I took it to the vet.
 - a) I took my cat being sick for days to the vet.
 - b) I took my cat, having been sick for days, to the vet.
5. This semester we had to read many books.
The books featured famous historical figures.
 - a) This semester featuring famous historical figures we had to read many books.
 - b) This semester we had to read many books featuring famous historical figures.
6. He finally met his new sister-in-law.
She is from Poland.
 - a) He finally met his new sister-in-law from Poland.
 - b) He finally met his new sister-in-law having been from Poland.
7. The computer virus affected all our machines.
It caused multiple problems.
 - a) The computer virus, affected all our machines, caused multiple problems.
 - b) The computer virus, affecting all our machines, caused multiple problems.
8. A stranger helped me with my groceries yesterday.
This person was wearing a red jacket.
 - a) A stranger wearing a red jacket helped me with my groceries yesterday.
 - b) A stranger helped me with my groceries yesterday wearing a red jacket.
9. Julia is going to travel after she graduates.
She doesn't want to get a job right away.
 - a) Julia, not wanting to get a job right away, is going to travel after she graduates.
 - b) Julia, doesn't wanting to get a job right away, is going to travel after she graduates.
10. This park's trees can't be cut down.
They are protected by the federal government.
 - a) This park's trees, protecting by the federal government, can't be cut down.
 - b) This park's trees, protected by the federal government, can't be cut down.

Grammar Assessment

Student / Group: _____

Date	Level	Assessed By	Target	Skill
			Adjective Phrases	Grammar

Criteria	Achieved 	Achieved with Help 	Needs Improvement 
recognizes the difference between adjective clauses and phrases			
reduces adjective clauses to adjective phrases correctly			
forms adjective phrases correctly in writing			
uses adjective phrases correctly in speaking			
punctuates adjective phrases correctly			
knows how to combine simple sentences into complex ones using adjective phrases			

Notes




Self-Assessment

ADJECTIVE PHRASES

Add check marks (✓) to show what you've learned in this lesson.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Can I...	Yes (very well) 	Yes (with help) 	Not yet 
recognize the difference between adjective clauses and phrases?			
reduce an adjective clause to an adjective phrase?			
use adjective phrases correctly in speaking?			
punctuate adjective phrases correctly in writing?			
combine simple sentences into complex ones using adjective phrases?			

My Notes

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students learn how to use adjective phrases to define nouns. They also review adjective clauses and learn how to reduce them into adjective phrases.

NOTE:

We recommend completing the Adjective Clauses lesson before trying this lesson on Adjective Phrases.

LEVEL: High Int

TIME: 2–3 hours

TAGS: adjective phrases, adjective clauses, restrictive, non-restrictive, commas, comma placement, reductions, reducing, assessment, grammar, grammar practice exercises

Exercise 1

1. I know the student sitting in the front row of the theater.
2. The girl chosen to be the captain has played for three years.
3. John Brown, 23, works at Chase Bank.
4. Pauline Johnson, the manager of the restaurant, lives in Ottawa.
5. I went to a hotel located on 7th and Broadway.
6. Nancy likes restaurants serving spicy food.
7. The reporter captured during the raid was released yesterday.
8. Ludlow knows the man standing in the corner of the room.
9. I finally saw the singer hidden by the crowd.
10. Megan knows the woman directing the movie.

Exercise 2

1. We took a trip to Vancouver[,] an ethnically diverse city.
2. The words written on the blackboard are very difficult to read.
3. Rice[,] the staple food in Korean cooking[,] is rarely eaten in France.
4. Oliver is dating a woman holding a degree from Heidelberg University.
5. Professor Balango[,] a lazy man[,] doesn't prepare for class.
6. I have fond memories of my hometown[,] located near our country's largest shopping mall.

7. The rice made by your sister yesterday tasted like glue.
8. San Diego[,] located in southern California[,] has great weather.
9. Dogs[,] the most loyal of all animals[,] usually love to take walks with their owners.
10. Usha Patel[,] the director of human resources[,] does not work on Sunday.

Exercise 3

1. Simon Bolivar was born in Venezuela, located in South America.
2. Germany, divided into East and West in 1945, is now a unified country.
3. I met a woman wearing a polka-dot dress on the bus yesterday.
4. Algeria, the largest country in Africa, has a population of 43,000,000.
5. Jin has a dog weighing 25 pounds.
6. There are six principal dialects of Spanish, the official language of nine South American countries.
7. Ranjett's mother, a dentist, won two tickets to travel anywhere in the continental United States.
8. Oliver attended a university known for its excellent biology department.
9. Beppina, 23 years old, is a fantastic swimmer.
10. Harold, a new teacher, lives in Brooklyn.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 4

Answers will vary. You can choose to have pairs write down their sentences as well as say them out loud. To follow up, have pairs share one or two sentences as a class.

Exercise 5

Answers will vary. Monitor your students for correct adjective phrase formation.

Exercise 6

The debate raging over the impact of video games on teenage behavior continues unabated. Dr. Marvin Hanson, director of the Center for Research on Teenage Violence at the University of Guadara, said that there were no clear links between video game violence and teen behavior. "Some parents (whose children play Mortal Kombat or Grand Theft Auto), considered the most violent video games on the market, have expressed concerns about aggressive behavior and anxiety in their children," said Dr. Hanson, (who has three video-game playing children of his own). Harold Levkowitz, an irate parent (whose son was assaulted by a fellow student after the two had played Rebel Squadron for five straight hours), said that he wished for a time (when teenagers turned to sports to release their aggression). "Kids (who don't play soccer or football and have all these pent-up emotions) (that they just can't release) tend to be more in-your-face in their behavior," Mr. Levkowitz, a clinical psychologist, explained. However, Ms. Maya Bertoldi, a mother of two, does not agree. "Young people (who play video games) leave their aggression in the room when they leave. They are perfectly normal teenagers (who clearly understand the difference between games and real life)." Ronda Fleming, 23, an aerobics instructor and lifelong proponent of video games as a way to improve peripheral vision and reaction techniques, stated, "I don't feel that violent video games affect behavior. Kids understand it's just a game (they're playing). They won't go around shooting at cars driving by as they do in Grand Theft Auto." The debate rages on. Meanwhile, young people, (whose lives revolve around the video monitor), continue to enjoy the challenge offered by video games.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 7

Answers will vary. Monitor your students for correct adjective clause and phrase formation.

Exercise 8

Answers will vary. You can choose to do this review orally (one-on-one with you) or in writing. This task could also be assigned as homework.

Exercise 9

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. a | 5. b | 7. b | 9. a |
| 2. a | 4. b | 6. a | 8. a | 10. b |

Grammar Assessment

Use this tool for assessment purposes. Find Assessment Tools that you can personalize in our Resources section:

https://esllibrary.com/resource_categories/104/resources/2352

Self-Assessment

Have your students fill out this form.

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Theater*, *Center*, and *Behavior*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Theatre*, *Centre*, and *Behaviour*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.