

COMMON PHRASES & IDIOMS

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Read the following sentences:

1. This is a gold chain.
2. This is a chain made of gold.

All these sentences make the same meaning , but there is a difference of formation of the underlined words:

1. Gold chain:- Is a group of words (Noun+Noun) without any finite verb. It acts as unit; so it is a phrase. Here it acts as a Noun; so it is a Noun phrase (NP).

2. Made of gold:- Is a group of words without a finite verb and it acts as a unit. Moreover, it qualifies the preceding word chain. Hence chain made of gold is an Adjective Phrase.

So we can say:

A phrase is a group of words
which acts as a unit and which has no finite verb.

PHRASES

Noun phrase

- **Adverbial phrase**

Adjective phrase

- **Prepositional phrase**

1.NOUN PHRASES (NP)

Read the following sentences:

1. The man wants something.

(Sub)+(Verb)+(Noun)

2. The man wants something to eat.

(Sub)+(Verb)+NP with infinitive

3. Fatima took her supper.

(Sub)+(Verb)+Noun

4. Fatima took her supper early.

(Sub)+(Verb)+NP+Adverb

5. Praising is a good virtue.

Noun as Sub+Verb

6. Praising all is equal to praising none.

(NP+Verb+Adjective)+NP

7. Mr.Ali showed his student a computer.

(Sub)+(Verb)+Noun

8. Mr.Ali showed his student how to assemble a computer.

with how to

In each of the above pairs of sentences, we first have a single Noun and then a group of words extending the same.

- In the first sentence **something** is a Noun and it is object of the verb **wants**.

- * In the second sentence **something to eat** is also object of the verb **wants**. But it is a group of words and it act as a Noun. It is, therefore, a Noun Phrase.

- * In the fourth sentence **her supper early** is also the object of the verb **took**. But it is a group of words and acts as a Noun. It is a Noun Phrase.

*In the fifth sentence **praising** is a Noun and it is a subject of the verb **is**.

*In the sixth sentence **praising all** is also the subject of the verb **is**. But it is a group of words and it acts as a Noun Hence it is a Noun Phrase .

*In the eighth sentence **how to assemble a computer** is also a Noun Phrase.

A Noun phrase is a group of words that acts as a noun. It may be a subject or object/ complement of a verb.

Read the following Nouns and Noun Phrases.

Nouns	Noun Phrases
<p><u>Cricket</u> is a good game.</p> <p><u>Reading</u> is a good habit.</p> <p>Your <u>bed</u> is ready.</p> <p>Any <u>prize</u> is a prestigious thing.</p>	<p><u>Playing cricket</u> is the style of the day.</p> <p>Have you enjoyed <u>reading this novel</u>?</p> <p><u>Early to bed</u> is a healthy habit.</p> <p><u>To win a prize</u> is not an easy task.</p>

NOTE:-

A Noun phrase includes the process of using **Infinitive, Verbal Noun** and **Gerund as a subject or object / complement.**

2. Adjective Phrases

Read the following sentences:

- i. A boy met me yesterday.
- ii. A boy with blue eyes met me yesterday.
- iii. He tells a tale.
- iv. He tells a tale with the ring of truth in it.

In the first and third sentences, we have a **Single Noun** (a person or a thing), and in the second and fourth sentences we have **a group of words describing that person or thing**. These group of words act as an Adjective and are, therefore, **Adjective Phrases**.

So we can say:

An adjective phrase is a group of words that acts as an Adjective for qualifying a noun or pronoun. It may be in the Subject part or in the Predicate part.

Read the following Adjectives and the Adjectives Phrases that are same in meaning:

Adjectives	Adjectives Phrases
A blank page.	A page with on writing on it.
A heavy load.	A page of great weight.
A black coat.	A coat of black colour.
A goldan crown.	A crown made of gold.
A white elephant.	A elephant of white colour.
A jungle track.	A track through the jungle.
The Indian flag.	The flag of India.

NOTE:-

An Adjective Phrase includes some Prepositions and Participles that qualify a Noun.

3. Adverbial Phrases

Read the following sentences:

- i. The horse fast / quickly.
- ii. The horse runs with great speed.
- iii. He behaved rudely.
- iv. He behaved in a rude manner.

In the first and third sentences, we have a **single Adverb** and in the second and fourth sentences we have **a group of words** modifying in the same way. These groups of words in the second and fourth sentences act as an Adverb and are , therefore, **Adverb Phrases.**

So we can say:-

An Adverbial phrase is a group of words that acts as an adverb. It may generally modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb denoting manner, place or time.

Read the following Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases that are same in meaning

Adverbs	Adverbial Phrases
MANNER	
bravely	In a brave manner / with bravery
carefully	with care.
carelessly	with out any care.
fast / quickly	With great speed.
beautifully	In a beautiful style.

Adverbs		Adverbial Phrases
PLACE	here	At this place / on this spot.
	there	At that place / on that spot.
	away	To another place.
	abroad	To (in) a foreign country.
	everywhere	In all places.

Adverbs		Adverbial Phrases
TIME	now	At this very moment,
	then	at that time / moment.
	soon	Before very long / at an early date.
	formerly	In former times / once upon a time.
	recently	At present / at a recent date.

POSITION OF ADVERBIAL PHRASES

When there are two or more Adverbs or adverbial phrases after a verb, the normal order is Adverb of manner, place and Time – MPT.

Soma sang sweetly in the town hall last evening.
(Manner) (Place) (Time)

NOTE :

An adverbial phrase includes some **Adverbs with Preposition** called **Adverbials** that modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

4. Prepositional Phrases

Read the following sentences :

(i) (a) He is ill. (b) He still works.

(ii) **In spite of** his illness ,he works.

(iii) (a) He made a promise. (b) He kept it also.

(iv) **Besides making** a promise, he kept it.

In sentence (ii) In spite of and in sentence (iv) Besides making are groups of words beginning with a preposition and act as a unit other than a noun phrase, an Adjective phrase or adverb phrase. Such phrases are called prepositional phrases.

NOTE:

Some **Adjective Phrases** and **Adverbial Phrases** also begin with a **Preposition**. But such an **Adjective Phrase** qualifies a noun and such an **Adverb Phrase** modifies a **Verb, Adjective** or another **Adverb**, while a purely **Prepositional Phrase** keeps its main force on **Preposition** construction. However, in a broader sense, **Prepositional Phrase** include **Adjective Phrase** beginning with a **Preposition**, **Adverb Phrase** beginning with a **Preposition** and a purely **Prepositional Phrase** with its main force on **Preposition**.

In sentence (ii) In spite of and in sentence (iv) Besides making are groups of words beginning with a preposition and act as a unit other than a noun phrase, an Adjective phrase or adverb phrase. Such phrases are called prepositional phrases.

NOTE:

Some adjective phrases and adverbial phrases also begin with a preposition. But such an adjective phrase qualifies a noun and such an Adverb phrases modifies a verb, Adjective or another Adverb, while a purely prepositional phrase keeps its main force on preposition construction. However, in a broader sense, prepositional phrase include Adjective phrase beginning with a preposition, Adverb phrase beginning with a preposition and a purely prepositional phrase with its main force on preposition.

IDIOMS

What is the difference between a phrase and an idiom?

A phrase is a group of words without a subject and a finite verb. But it is used as a 'Part of Speech' in a sentence. However, an Idiomatic Phrase expresses a special meaning beyond its literal meaning.

ABC (primary knowledge)-

He does not know even the ABC of music.

Achilles' heel- (weak point)

Hankering for votes is the Achilles' heel of the so-called leaders of our country.

Apple of discord (matter of dispute)-

The paternal property has become an apple of discord between the two brothers.

At one's finger- tips/ends (ready at hand)-

All these facts are at his finger-tips/ends.

At stake (in danger)-

His life is at stake now.

Bird's eyeview (a over all/rough idea)-

He took a bird's-eye view of the flood stricken area from an aeroplane.

Bosom friend (intimate friend)-
Salil is my bosom friend.

Build castles in the air (indulge in idle vision)-
Don't idle a way your time in building castles
in the air.

Burning question (matter of strong debate)-
The problem of the dowry system is the
burning question of the day.

By fits and starts (irregularly)-

He works by fits and starts.

By hook or by crook (by fair means or foul) –

You must do this work by hook or by crook.

Come off with flying colours (win a victory) –

Our school – team came off with flying colours.

Dead language (a language which is no longer in use)-

Sanskrit is a rich language, but it is now a dead language.

Dead of night (midnight)-

The wolves began to howl at dead of night.

End in smoke (fail)-

All his plans ended in smoke.

Fall flat (have no effect)-

My advice fell flat on him.

Gala day (a day of festivity)-

The 'Holi' is a gala day to the Indians.

Hard nut to crack-(a difficult problem)-

The problem of adult education is really a hard nut to crack.

In a fix (in a difficult position)-

He is in a fix and does not know what to do.

In a full swing (in full activity)-

The school is now in full swing.

In cold blood (without provocation)-

They committed this murder in cold blood.

In the nick of time (in tight time)-

The school team arrived in nick time.

In vogue (in fashion)-

Polygamy is not in vogue now.

In one's teens (between thirteen and nineteen years of age)-

She is yet in her teens.

In vain (fruitless)-

All his attempts were in vain.

Irony of fate (by bad luck)-

He could not succeed by irony of fate.

Maiden speech (first speech)-

His maiden speech fell flat on the audience.

Make both ends meet (live within means)-

I cannot make both ends meet with my small income.

Nip in the bud (destroy in the initial)-

All his hopes were nipped in the bud.

On the contrary (just opposite)-

I do not hate him; on the contrary, I love him.

Red between the lines (understand the inner significance)-

Try to read between the lines of the letter.

Slip of the tongue (a slight mistake in writing or speaking)-

This is a slip of tongue; don't lay much stress on it.

Wild goose chase (useless pursuit)-

Do not waste time in wild goose chase.

1-Face the music(to meet the criticism)-
Do not lie low; face the music boldly.

To find fault with(to pick holes)-
Do not find fault with every one;it is a bad habit.

To gain ground(to become popular)-
This rumour is gaining ground and will become
known to every one.

To hit below the belt(to use unfair means)-
Criticize openly;do not hit below the belt.

To kick up a row(create disturbance)-
Do not kick up a row otherwise you will be in a
trouble.

Poke one's nose(to interfere in something that is not
your business)-
Do not poke your nose in the affairs of anyone.

Plume oneself on (feel proud) –

This is an ordinary achievement; do not plume yourself on it.

To take the bull by the horns-(to face danger bravely)-

He is a success in life because he takes the bull by the horns.

To win laurels(win honour)-

By his adventurous actions he has won laurels.

A wolf in sheep's clothing(hypocrite)-

This man seems to be innocent,he is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

To curry favour(to win favour)-

Some curry the favour of their boss by flattering them.

A child's play(a simple work)-

Passing the examination is not a child's play;work hard.

Cry up(to praise)-

Never cry up your own achievements.

Cut no ice (have no effect)-

Your advice will cut no ice; take the case to the court.

An axe to grind(selfish purpose to serve)-

He has an axe to grind, that is why he is so sweet in tolls.

An oily tongue (flatterer)-

In the present day world only an oily tongue can get promotion in the organization.

A bolt from the blue (suddenly calamity) –

He was already bankrupt, his father's death proved to be a bolt from the blue.

A black sheep (one who betrays friends or any other group of persons)-

Neither his friend nor his brothers like him because he acts like a black sheep.

To behind and glove with (very close to each other)

—

Both of these class fellows are hand and glove with each other and so know each others secrets.

Burning question (Hotly debated)-

This is the burning question and so every one is talking about it.

To be in one's good book (to be favourite of)-

Till you are in the good book of the principal, nobody can do any harm to you.

To beat about the bush (not to talk to the point) –
He has been beating about the bush and did not come to the point.

To break ice(to start speaking in an atmosphere of silence)-

There was complete silence in the hall , I broke the ice by requesting him to speak.

Earn the sobriquet of(earn nickname)-

My maths teacher has earned the sobriquet of 'Guru' due to his sincere work.

In a pickle (in difficulty)-

The mother warned her son that he would land himself in pickle if he did not change his bad habits.

Trail along behind(walk slowly behind)-

The old woman was trailing along behind the others.

To sue (make a legal claim)-

The house owner decided to sue the tenant for not vacating his house.

To raise a query(question)-

After the staff meeting, one of the teachers raised a query about student's indiscipline.

To usher in(bring in)-

All the members of the family ushered in the guest.

To appeal(to attract)-

The modern dresses appeal to the young but not the old.

Be the concern of(worry)-

To fight the problem of unemployment should be the concern of every Indian.

To pay one's debt to(to be grateful to)-

Businessman should pay their debt to the nation by paying all taxes.

Widow's mite (small contribution of a poor man)-

A widow's mite is on less important than a large contribution of a poor man.

THANKYOU

