

# Table of Contents

<b>Quick and Handy Grammar Review: Adjective Phrases</b>	2
<b>Exercise 1:</b> <i>Identify the adjective clauses and phrases in the passage.</i>	4
<b>Exercise 2:</b> <i>Identify the adjective clauses and phrases in the passage.</i>	5
<b>Exercise 3:</b> <i>Reduce the adjective clauses into adjective phrases.</i>	6
<b>Exercise 4:</b> <i>Combine two sentences into one using adjective phrases.</i>	7
<b>Exercise 5:</b> <i>Complete the sentences with adjective phrases.</i>	8
<b>Exercise 6:</b> <i>Complete the sentences with adjective phrases.</i>	8
<b>Exercise 7:</b> <i>Place a comma in the sentences.</i>	9
<b>Exercise 8:</b> <i>Place a comma in the sentences.</i>	9
<b>Answer Key</b>	10

## Quick and Handy Grammar Review: Adjective Phrases

Phrases and Clauses: A **phrase** is a *group of words with no subject and no main verb*. A **clause** is a *group of words with a subject and a main verb*.

Phrases do not need to have a subject or a verb. Many adjective phrases begin with the present or past participle forms of the verb. Look at the following examples:

1. Maya stayed in a hotel room **overlooking the river**.
2. The man **robbed on 6<sup>th</sup> Street yesterday** was walking home from work.
3. The woman **sitting in the last row** is Helena's sister.
4. The professor **teaching biology** is new at the school.
5. The team **beaten in the semi-finals** was coached by Jim McMahon.

Adjective phrases are actually *reductions* from adjective clauses. Let's learn how to reduce an adjective clause to an adjective phrase.

### *Reducing an Adjective Clause to an Adjective Phrase:*

Adjective phrases are very common, especially in newspaper and magazine articles. Notice that because it is a phrase, you do not need a subject.

1. If there is a **Be** verb in the adjective clause, eliminate the subject and the Be verb.

Clause: Ms. Harrison, who is the vice president of the company, was promoted.

Phrase: Ms. Harrison, vice president of the company, was promoted.  
**[Note that the subject of the adjective clause is *who* and the form of the Be verb is *is*.]**

Clause: The man who was arrested yesterday was from Cleveland.

Phrase: The man arrested yesterday was from Cleveland.  
**[Note that the subject of the adjective clause is *who* and the form of the Be verb is *was*.]**

Clause: The person that was driving the red Toyota caused the accident.

Phrase: The person driving the red Toyota caused the accident.  
**[Note that the subject of the adjective clause is *that* and the form of the Be verb is *was*.]**

Clause: The building which is located near the cafeteria is Scotsdale Hall.

Phrase: The building located near the cafeteria is Scotsdale Hall.  
**[Note that the subject of the adjective clause is *which* and the form of the Be verb is *is*.]**

### *It's in the Paper*

**Adjective clauses and phrases** are probably the most common grammatical construction in the daily newspaper. People and their ages, positions, company affiliations, as well as places with descriptions, and times with memorable data all appear in adjective clauses and phrases. On any given page of the paper, you will probably find 20 of them, such as this one:

The place *where the secret meeting took place* was Marra's restaurant, **located next to the house of John Demarco, a butcher, who saw the two spies wearing black overcoats and ski masks.**

2. If there is no **Be** verb, eliminate the subject and change the verb to the present participle form (*-ing*).

Clause: My cousin Tina has an apartment that overlooks the cemetery.

Phrase: My cousin Tina has an apartment overlooking the cemetery.  
**[Note that there is no Be verb in the sentence, so we eliminate the subject [that] and change the verb from *overlooks* to *overlooking*.]**

Clause: The woman who teaches Psychology was educated at Yale.

Phrase: The woman teaching Psychology was educated at Yale.  
**[Note that there is no Be verb in the sentence, so we eliminate the subject [who] and change the verb from *teaches* to *teaching*.]**

### Grammar in Context: Locating Adjective Clauses and Phrases

A good exercise to practice adjective clauses and phrases is to locate them in newspaper articles, where they are used at the rate of at least twenty per page. The following is a list of hints that will help you to locate adjective clauses and phrases:

1. Look for **the name of a company, a place, or a person followed by a comma** in either the object or the subject position. The words that follow usually indicate something about the company or place and the person's job or position. If the words *who*, *when*, *where*, *which*, or *whose* appear after the comma, it is an *adjective clause*.  
If instead the words *a*, *the*, or *one* appear after the comma, it is an *adjective phrase*.

#### Adjective Clauses:

- Mia Hamm, who is the world's most famous female soccer player, played in the World Cup in fall 2003.
- *The Lion King's* songs were written by Elton John, who also composed the music for Broadway's version of *Aida*.
- The Lincoln Memorial, where Martin Luther King's famous 1963 speech took place, has a commanding view of the Mall.

#### Adjective Phrases:

- Anthony Hanson, the new chief financial officer of Judson Electronics, is a former marine.
  - Agatha Christie, the mother of singer Petula Clarkson, was a famous mystery writer.
  - The stock price of Microsoft, one of the richest companies in the world, dropped more than 27%.
2. For **adjective clauses**, search for nouns followed by the keywords *who*, *when*, *where*, *that*, *which*, and *whose*.
    - Officials in Newark, which has one of the nation's highest car theft rates, are clearly perplexed.
    - After Michael Moore's documentary, Walmart received hundreds of email messages that demanded the halting of ammunition sales.
    - The governors met at Patsy's Restaurant, where politicians have met for more than sixty years.
    - Eminem, whose songs touch on personal moments of tragedy in his life, is one of the most popular singers today.
  3. For **adjective phrases**, search for nouns followed by *past* or *present participles*.
    - Margaret Hague Hospital was the first facility *built* in Jersey City under Mayor Hague.
    - The lawyer *appearing* on behalf of Jack Kevorkian said that his client was just carrying out the wishes of the deceased.
    - The man *killed* in the fire was the manager of a bagel shop.
    -

**Exercise 1:**

*Underline or use a highlighter pen to identify all the adjective clauses and phrases in the following passage.*

*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 2:**

*Underline or use a highlighter pen to identify all the adjective clauses and phrases in the following passage.*

**RUN DMC DJ GUNNED DOWN IN NEW YORK**

NEW YORK (Oct. 31) – Jam Master Jay, a founding member of the pioneering rap trio Run DMC, was shot and killed at his recording studio near the New York neighborhood where he grew up, police said. Two men were buzzed into the second-floor studio shortly before shots were fired inside its lounge at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, police said. As of early Thursday, police had made no arrests.

The 37-year-old disc jockey, whose real name was Jason Mizell, was shot once in the head in the studio's lounge and died at the scene, said Detective Robert Price, a police spokesman. Urieco Rincon, 25, who was not a member of Run DMC, was shot in the leg, police said. About five other people in the studio at the time were not hurt.

“Rest In Peace Jam Master,” Run DMC’s official website read early Thursday, underneath a picture of Mizell. Mizell served as the platinum-selling group’s disc jockey, providing background for singers Joseph Simmons, better known as Run, and Darryl McDaniels, better known as DMC. The group is widely credited with helping bring hip-hop into music’s mainstream, including the group’s smash collaboration with Aerosmith on the 1980s standard “Walk This Way” and hits like “My Adidas” and “It’s Tricky”. “We always knew rap was for everyone,” Mizell said in a 2001 interview with MTV. “Anyone could rap over all kinds of music.” Mizell is the latest in a line of hip-hop artists to fall victim to violence. Rappers Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac Shakur were murdered within seven months of each other in 1996 and 1997—crimes that some believe were the result of an East Coast–West Coast rap war. But Run DMC and their songs were never about violence. The group promoted education and unity. In 1986, the trio said they were outraged by the rise of fatal gang violence in the Los Angeles area. They called for a day of peace between warring street gangs. “This is the first town where you feel the gangs from the minute you step into town to the time you leave,” Mizell said at the time.

Mizell’s friends and fans gathered near the studio, located above a restaurant and a check-cashing business. The crowd included many people from the Hollis section of Queens, where the members of Run DMC grew up.

“They’re the best. They’re the pioneers in hip-hop,” said Arlene Clark, 39, who grew up in the same neighborhood. “They took it to the highest level it could go.” Chuck D, the founder of the hip-hop group Public Enemy, blamed record companies and the advertising for perpetuating “a climate of violence” in the rap industry. “When it comes to us, we’re disposable commodities,” he said. Doctor Dre, a New York radio station DJ who had been friends with Mizell since the mid-1980s, said, “This is not a person who went out looking for trouble.... He’s known as a person that builds, that creates and is trying to make the right things happen.” Leslie Bell, 33, said the band members often let local musicians record for free at the studio, and had remained in Queens to give back to the community. “He is one great man,” said Bell. “As they say, the good always die young.”

Publicist Tracy Miller said Mizell and McDaniels had planned to perform in Washington, DC, on Thursday at a Washington Wizards basketball game. Mizell had performed on Tuesday in Alabama, she said. Mizell was married and had three children, she said. Run DMC released a greatest-hits album earlier this year. In 2001, the rappers produced “Crown Royal”, breaking an eight-year silence.

**Exercise 3:**

*Reduce the adjective clauses into adjective phrases.*

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

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

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

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

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5. I went to a hotel that was located on 7<sup>th</sup> and Broadway.

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6. Nancy likes restaurants that serve spicy food.

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

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

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

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

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**Exercise 4:**

*Combine the two sentences into one, using the second as the adjective phrase. Remember to place the adjective phrase immediately after the noun it describes.*

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

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

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3. Sudan has a population of 121,000,000. It is the largest country in Africa.

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

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5. There are six principal dialects of Spanish. Spanish is the official language of twelve South American countries.

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

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7. My brother has never visited a place as exotic as Tahiti. He is a nurse.

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

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

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

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**Exercise 5:**

*Complete the sentences with adjective phrases.*

1. I met a person \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. That is the woman \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. My sister has an apartment \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Gianna has a dog \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. John, \_\_\_\_\_ , is standing over there.
6. I would like to introduce you to \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. The person who sits next to me in class is \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. Bob likes to eat at a restaurant \_\_\_\_\_ .
9. The person who sits in front of me in class is \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ .
10. I borrowed a pen from \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Exercise 6:**

*Complete the sentences with adjective phrases.*

1. My brother, \_\_\_\_\_ , lives in California.
2. I would like to tell you about my father, \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. My mother is a woman \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. My sister, \_\_\_\_\_ , is very shy.
5. I have two cousins, \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. My sister lives in a city \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. My aunt has six children \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. My mother and father, \_\_\_\_\_ , live \_\_\_\_\_ .
9. I resemble my mother more than my father, \_\_\_\_\_ .
10. My brother, \_\_\_\_\_ , is not married.



**Exercise 7:**

*Place a comma in the following sentences, if necessary.*

1. The elk standing by the cabin was six feet tall.
2. Dogs the most loyal of all animals usually love to take walks with their owners.
3. Rice the staple food in Korean cooking is rarely eaten in France.
4. The rice made by your sister yesterday tasted like glue.
5. Prof. Balango a lazy man doesn't prepare for class.
6. I have fond memories of my hometown located near a nuclear waste dump.
7. We took a trip to Vancouver the hockey capital of western Canada.
8. San Diego located in southern California has perfect weather.
9. Joanna's husband a dirty scoundrel left her for good, which caused her to celebrate for four days.
10. I fell in love with the woman wearing the army uniform.

**Exercise 8:**

*Place a comma in the following sentences, if necessary.*

1. I took a trip to a town in Colombia located near Cali.
2. She has never been to Africa the mysterious continent.
3. The man working in the fields was very hot.
4. Elephants the largest mammals in the world love to eat grass.
5. Usha Patel the director of personnel for Nintendo does not work on Sunday.
6. The problems facing the new dean are very simple to solve.
7. The words written on the blackboard are very difficult to read.
8. Jason Pridie a rookie has never played in the National League before.
9. Oliver is dating a woman holding a degree from Heidelberg University.
10. Rashid works for a manager known for her patience.