Identifying Phrase Types

**Absolute Phrase:** a modifying (gives more detail) phrase that is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. It starts with a noun and has a verb ending in “ing” or “ed.”

Example: **Legs sprinting as fast as possible,** the Olympian crossed the finish line

Hermione read the pages fervently, **head buried deep in the book.**

\*\*This is different from a participle phrase because an absolute starts with a noun.

**Infinitive Phrase:** a phrase that starts with “to” followed by a verb in its simplest form.

Example: He was starting **to think seriously about college after graduation.**

**To give up his favorite seat** would be the best sacrifice he could think of for the cute girl in his 3rd period class.

**Nominal Phrase: (also called a noun phrase)** a phrase that includes a noun and any words that modify (explain) it.

Example: **Almost every single person in the room that day** was crying at the speaker’s words.

She threw the meat in the cage to **the eight hungry dogs.**

**Prepositional Phrase:** a phrase that starts with a preposition and ends with the object of the preposition.

Example: She would never be caught dead **with that ugly grey sweater.**

There was a ravenous Bengal tiger running **toward us**.

**Participle Phrase:** a phrase that starts with a participle (words ending in “ing,” “ed,” or “en”) and functions as an adjective. It starts with a participle and includes all words that modify the participle.

Example: **Crunching caramel corn for the entire movie,** Bob sat there enthralled.

Harry sat bored and apathetic, **cramped in the cupboard under the stairs with nobody to talk to.**

\*\*This is different from an absolute phrase because it starts with an “ing,” “en,” or “ed” word instead of a noun.

**Gerund Phrase:** a phrase that begins with a gerund (“ing” word) and includes other modifiers. This functions as a noun.

Example: **Eating ice cream on a windy day** can be a messy experience if you have long, untamed hair.

**Running toward the flock of seagulls** was not a good idea.

\*\*This is different from a participle phrase because it functions as noun rather than an adjective.

1. Which of the following is an absolute phrase?
   1. The pizza that was hot and cheesy
   2. To take her on a date
   3. Arms swinging back and forth
2. Which of the following is an infinitive phrase?
   1. To walk all the way
   2. The dog over on the lawn
   3. A bag full of presents
3. Which of the following is a nominal phrase?
   1. Hand planted on her hip
   2. Over on the couch
   3. All 500 red purses
4. Which of the following is a prepositional phrase?
   1. Caring only about herself
   2. Around the river bend
   3. To have a fire drill
5. Which of the following is a participle phrase?
   1. After her friends left
   2. A smashed up banana
   3. Exhausted from a long day at work
6. Which of the following is a gerund phrase?
   1. Wasting time doing nothing
   2. Head tilted to one side
   3. A big welcome home

I studied these terms for at least 30 minutes, and I am prepared to take a test on them in class.

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Student’s Signature

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Parent or Guardian’s Signature

\*\*\*For more practice and to check your answers to the questions above, go to [www.english10christensen.weebly.com](http://www.english10christensen.weebly.com) and click on the tab called “Powerpoints/Notes.” Go through the powerpoint labeled “Identifying Phrase Types” until you are confident. Good luck!