Clauses and Phrases

SPaG Teaching Resources
Words, Phrases and Clauses

A sentence is a group of words which are put together in the right order and make sense to the reader. Within the sentence there are smaller units of meaning called clauses which are made up of phrases.

The words are put together to make phrases, phrases build up to clauses and clauses are put together to make complex sentences.
NC Objectives

Y1
Use joining **words** and joining **clauses** using *and*

Y2
Use **subordination** (using *when, if, that, because*) and **co-ordination** (using *or, and, but*)

Y3/4
Extend the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, e.g. *when, if, because, although*

Y5/6
Use relative clauses beginning with *who, which, where, when, whose, that* or with an implied (i.e. omitted) relative pronoun.
Phrases
Clauses are made up of phrases. Phrases are made up of small groups of words that form a meaningful unit within a clause. They do not contain a subject or a verb and do not make sense by themselves.

There are different kinds of phrases.

Here are the most common:

A noun phrase includes a noun:

the small, fluffy dog with the long tail

A verb phrase includes a verb:

was running

A prepositional or adverbiaal phrase tells the reader how, where, when, with what:

towards the park/ away from the house/ with a happy smile
Identify which are noun phrases and which are verb phrases from the following examples:

- Flung their leaves to the ground
- Walls shining with dampness
- Glittering array of shimmering crystals
- Crushed them between its sharp teeth
- Thick, tangled vines
- Palm trees swayed gently in the breeze
- Sparkled like a diamond
- Crystal blue water
- Sweet smell of flowers and spices
- Warm, fleecy blanket

Clue: find the verb in the sentence – if there isn’t one, it’s a noun phrase!
Noun phrases and verb phrases

**Flung** their leaves to the ground

**Walls shining** with dampness

**Glittering array of shimmering crystals**

**Crushed** them between its sharp teeth

**Thick, tangled vines**

**Palm trees swayed** gently in the breeze

**Sparkled** like a diamond

**Crystal blue water**

**Sweet smell of flowers and spices**

**Warm, fleecy blanket**
A clause is a group of related words that make sense when read together. The simplest clause contains a subject and a verb. Sentences are made up of clauses.

The dog ran.
Complex sentences

A complex sentence is made up of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Although the little dog ran as fast as he could towards the park, he could not escape the dog-catcher.
Subordinate clauses

A subordinate clause is a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence because it does not make sense by itself. It has a subject and verb.

The cat had been having violin lessons, although he had not been playing for long.

Despite its size, the cow managed to jump over the moon.

The dish grabbed the spoon and dragged her away, even though the little dog was laughing.
Underline the subordinate clauses in these sentences:

We turned off the lights before we left the room.
Sarah went to the party even though she wasn’t feeling well.
Although George was fast, Mary won the running race.
I always brush my teeth after I have eaten my breakfast.
Because I practise a lot, my piano playing is improving.
Danny took out his compass before looking at the map.
Unless it stops raining, we won’t be having a barbecue.
All the others has disappeared when they got back.
It was almost time for tea so Jane decided not to go out.
When she was standing next to her sister, Susie looked tall.
They finished the walk which seemed never-ending.
Underline the subordinate clauses in these sentences:

We turned off the lights **before we left the room.**
Sarah went to the party **even though she wasn’t feeling well.**
**Although George was fast,** Mary won the running race.
I always brush my teeth **after I have eaten my breakfast.**
**Because I practise a lot,** my piano playing is improving.
Danny took out his compass **before looking at the map.**
**Unless it stops raining,** we won’t be having a barbecue.
All the others has disappeared **when they got back.**
It was almost time for tea **so Jane decided not to go out.**
**When she was standing next to her sister,** Susie looked tall.
They finished the walk **which seemed never-ending.**
Relative clauses

Defining relative clauses are used to identify which person or thing we mean. Commas are not used in a defining relative clause but *who* and *which* are used to inform the reader of the subject.

Grandma was eaten by the wolf *who* then wore her clothes.

Two small children discovered the house *in the forest which* was made of gingerbread.

 WHO is used for people  WHICH or THAT is used for things
Create complex sentences with subordinate clauses using the following examples:

I stood close to the blind man. He held me in an iron fist.
I opened the parlour door. It creaked on its hinges.
I was so terrified of the blind beggar. I forgot my terror of the captain.
He tapped with his stick. It guided him out into the road.
He opened his hand to reveal the Black Spot. The Black Spot is a pirate’s warning.
My mother came in haste to the captain. He had toppled forward on to the floor.
He had been a terrifying guest. He had been with us for several weeks.
Create complex sentences with subordinate clauses using the following examples:

I stood close to the blind man who held me in an iron fist.
I opened the parlour door which creaked on its hinges.
I was so terrified of the blind beggar that I forgot my terror of the captain.
He tapped with his stick which guided him out into the road.
He opened his hand to reveal the Black Spot which is a pirate’s warning.
My mother came in haste to the captain who had toppled forward on to the floor.
He had been a terrifying guest who had been with us for several weeks.

Remember to change any words to make your sentences make sense.
Embedded clauses

If the relative clause is placed in the middle of the sentence, it is an embedded clause which needs a comma on either side of it.

Grandma, who had been eaten by the wolf, was rescued by the woodcutter.

The house, which was made of gingerbread, was discovered by two small children.

An embedded clause may be lifted from the sentence and it will still make sense.

WHO is used for people    WHICH is used for things
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main clause</th>
<th>Subordinate clause</th>
<th>Relative pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Highwayman arrived at the inn.</td>
<td>He was a wanted man.</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He wore a coat and breeches of brown</td>
<td>The coat was made of red velvet.</td>
<td>which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doe-skin.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bess was waiting for him.</td>
<td>She was the landlord’s daughter.</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim was listening in the inn-yard.</td>
<td>He was the ostler.</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bess’s hair tumbled over her shoulders.</td>
<td>Her hair was black.</td>
<td>which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The soldiers waited for the highwayman.</td>
<td>They drank the landlord’s ale.</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bess died in the darkness of her room.</td>
<td>She was watching for her love in the moonlight.</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The moonlight shines on the road.</td>
<td>It is compared to a ghostly galleon.</td>
<td>which</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember to remove the pronouns to make your sentences make sense.
The Highwayman, *who arrived at the inn*, was a wanted man.

He wore a coat, *which was made of red velvet*, and breeches of brown doe-skin.

Bess, *who was the landlord’s daughter*, was waiting for him.

Tim, *who was the ostler*, was listening in the inn-yard.

Bess’s hair, *which was black*, tumbled over her shoulders.

The soldiers, *who drank the landlord’s ale*, waited for the highwayman.

Bess, *who was watching for her love in the moonlight*, died in the darkness of her room.

The moonlight, *which is compared to a ghostly galleon*, shines on the road.

*Did you remember the commas before and after the embedded clause?*