

Noun Phrase (NP)

- A word or group of words, functioning in a sentence exactly like a noun, with a noun or pronoun as head.
- A noun phrase (abbreviated as NP) can be a noun or pronoun alone, but is frequently a noun with pre- and/or post-modification.

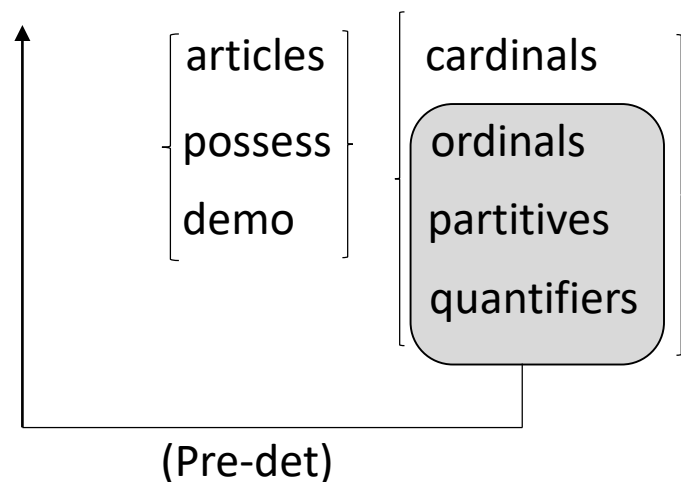
For example,

- 1) the name
- 2) an odd name
- 3) the name of the game
- 4) the name (that) he gave

In (1) and (2) sentences, there is only pre-modification to the head 'name'; but in (3) and (4), there is pre-modification as well as post-modification to the head.

THE FORM OF A NOUN PHRASE

Pre-det + Det + Post-det + Adj. P + Classifier + Noun + PP + Rel. Clause



The elements which come before noun-head are called pre-modifiers and those coming after it are called post-modifiers.

- **Pre-modification** comprises all the items before the head – notably determiners, adjectives and classifiers. Thus

the pretty girl

some pretty college girls

- **Post-modification** comprises all the items placed after the head – notably prepositional phrases and relative clauses (both finite and non-finite). Thus

the girl in the corner (PP)

the girl standing in the corner (non-finite relative clause)

the girl who is standing in the corner (finite relative clause)

DETERMINERS

- Closed class of words that precede nouns-heads.
- Limit or determine the meaning of this noun-head in some way.
 - a) pre-determiners
 - b) determiners (or strictly speaking, central determiners)
 - c) post-determiners.

(a) Determiners (or Central-determiners) : These are of three types.

(i) articles– a, an, the.

(ii) possessives– my, our, your, his, her, its, their.

(iii) demonstratives– this, that, these, those.

(b) Post-determiners : These are of four types.

(i) cardinals (showing count)– one, two, three, four, . . . , all.

(ii) ordinals (showing order)– first, second, third, fourth, . . . , last.

(iii) partitives (showing partition)– one-half of, two-third of, three-fourth of, (a) piece of, (a) bit of, (a) loaf of, (a) slice of.

(iv) quantifiers (showing quantity)– much, many, few, little, several, enough, lots of, some of, little bit of, both.

(c) Pre-determiners : These come before central determiners and are often ordinals, partitives, and quantifiers.

- Once the place of determiner or post-determiner is filled with any one of their sub-classes, then that NP element cannot take the other sub-class/sub-classes.

In other words, two sub-classes of any NP element cannot come together. There is a scope of only one sub-class :

a boy

my book

this book

but the following example is not possible English NP :

* a my book (wrong)

* my a book (wrong)

ADJECTIVE PHRASE

It occurs in a noun phrase after the sequence of determiners but before the classifier. For example,

- a very very foolish boy

In the above NP, 'very very foolish' is an adjective phrase and 'foolish' is the adjective-head. The word 'very' adjacent to the head is an adverb qualifying the adjective-head and another adverb 'very' qualifying the second adverb 'very'.

CLASSIFIERS

Classifiers are words which have the role of *identifying the class or kind of the following noun-head*. For example,

- a Colgate toothpaste
- a Hero cycle
- a Bajaj fan

In the above examples, 'Colgate', 'Hero', and 'Bajaj' are classifiers which classify the kind of noun that follows.

NOUN HEAD

The head of any phrase is an obligatory and absolutely necessary element of a phrase around which the other components cluster.

The head in a noun phrase has its agreement with the verb. Thus in the sentences

- The pretty girl standing in the corner . . . is . . .
- The pretty girls standing in the corner . . . are . . .

the noun-head 'girl(s)' has its agreement/concord with the finite verb 'is/are'.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE

A prepositional phrase (PP) may occur in a noun phrase after the noun-head. A typical PP is P+NP. For example,

- The pretty girl in the corner

As is obvious from the above example, it functions as a post-modifier in the NP as it occurs after the noun-head 'girl'.

RELATIVE CLAUSE

A relative clause may occur in the post-modifying position of NP. It typically starts with 'who', 'which', or 'that'. For example,

- The beautiful girl who is standing in the corner is Mary Smith.

THE FUNCTIONS OF A NOUN PHRASE

A noun phrase has typical eight functions:

(i) as a subject :

- The pretty girl in the corner is Mary Smith.
- The pretty girl in the corner who is talking to John is Mary Smith.

(ii) as a direct object :

- She loves her beautiful sister.
- I know the pretty girl in the corner.

(iii) as an indirect object :

- She asked her teacher a question.
- I gave the pretty girl in the corner a gift.

(iv) as a complement to the subject :

- He is a very famous doctor.
- Mary is a pretty girl.

(v) as a complement to the object :

- They make him the chairman every year.
- They selected Mary the prettiest girl.

(vi) as an apposition to another NP :

- Elizabeth II, the queen of England, is coming to India.
- That tall boy, a football player of our team, is playing well.

(vii) as a complement to a prepositional phrase :

- The pretty girl in the corner.
- The new gas stove in the kitchen has a very effective oven.

(viii) as an adverbial :

- He went home.
- It rained all the day.
- It was raining this morning.

NP ANALYSIS

- The beautiful girl who is standing in the corner is Mary Smith.
- The pretty girl in the corner who is talking to John is Mary Smith.