Chapter 4: The Noun Phrase

The Structure of a Noun Phrase
Noun Determiner + Modifiers + Noun Headword

an insightful and thought provoking remark
the laughing, smiling, sunny baby
some painfully annoying wisdom teeth
those rotten and terribly smelly athletic socks
her most challenging class

Noun Determiners
Four Categories of Noun Determiners

Articles:
a, an, the

Numbers (including words that imply numbers):
none, one, two, three, four, some many, few, all, several, no, first, second, third, another, each, both, any

Possessives:
my, your, his, her, its, our, their, one’s, Herman’s, Rita’s, Sandy’s

Other Noun Determiners:
this, that, these, those
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Noun Phrase Exercise A

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the free modifier noun phrases for each, adding appropriate modifiers as the spaces indicate. Provide noun determiners as required.

Example:

2 By the age of eighteen,
1 he had clearly defined his future role,
2 the ________ rebel.
2 the sensitive rebel.

(1) 1 The teacher knew what to expect from the boy,
2 the ________ clown.

(2) 2 Throughout high school,
1 Sally, / , had been repeatedly elected to class office.
2/ a/an ________, ________ organizer

(3) 1 The new school seemed to be a terrifying place,
2 a/an ________, ________ building.

(4) 1 Tim had a knack for guessing the top ten songs of the week,
2 a/an ________, ________ skill.

(5) 1 The road, / , stretched out for miles.
2/ a/an ________, ________ route

(6) 1 Sharon could not find her favorite sweater,
2 _____ ________, ________ cardigan.

(7) 1 He hurried to join the playing children,
2 a/an ________, ________, ________ trio.

(8) 1 Kino, / , allows the pearl to take control of his life.
2/ _____ ________, ________ hero in Steinbeck's novel

(9) 1 Montresor, / , cleverly tries to justify his behavior.
2/ _____ very ________, ________ narrator of Poe's short story
NOUN PHRASE EXERCISE B

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the diagrams below and add appropriate noun determiners and modifiers as the spaces indicate. Also, add appropriate punctuation where called for.

EXAMPLE: 1 It was an unforgettable trip,
2 some skillfully guided sight-seeing,
2 the excellent, varied food,
2 and some satisfyingly good snapshots.

(1) 1 Carla found that she liked everything about college,
2 _______ _______ _______ courses,
2 _______ _______ _______ dormitory,
2 and _______ _______ _______ dates.

(2) 1 She was overwhelmed by the paperwork,
2 _______ _______ _______ reports,
2 _______ _______ _______ memos,
2 and _______ _______ _______ recommendations.

(3) 1 I'll never forget that last summer at camp,
2 _______ _______ _______ days,
2 _______ _______ _______ evenings,
2 and _______ _______ _______ weekends.

(4) 1 Jessica carried in all of the packages from the car,
2 _______ _______ _______ groceries,
2 _______ _______ _______ shoes,
2 and _______ _______ _______ pants.

(5) 1 The day before vacation seemed to drag on interminably,
2 _______ _______ _______ classes,
2 _______ _______ _______ afternoons,
2 and _______ _______ _______ paperwork.

(6) 2 On Friday,
1 two guests appeared on our doorstep,
2 _______ _______ _______ friend,
2 and _______ _______ _______ uncle.
NOUN PHRASE EXERCISE C

Directions: Complete this exercise on a separate sheet of paper. You are going to construct a total of five sentences for this exercise. Use the underlined word in your base clause. Then, pick any two of the words that follow and make them each a headword of a noun phrase. Each noun phrase should start with a noun determiner and have at least two modifiers describing the noun headword.

Examples:
car: body, engine, trim, color, model, power, lights, wheels, carburetor

1 Michael described his friend's new car,
   2 the sleek, low body,
   2 its four-barrel carburetor.

1 Sue drew a picture of her ideal car,
   2 the vivid exterior color,
   2 the contrasting interior trim,
   2 and the four brightly shining wire wheels.

(1) breakfast: cereal, toast, juice, eggs, bacon, milk, coffee, cocoa

(2) clutter: books, pencils, papers, lamp, boxes, typewriter, calendar, candy

(3) everything: water, mud, fish, rocks, cans, tires, boats, ducks, swimmers

(4) everywhere: record store, Chinese restaurant, pet shop, movie theater, boutique, food court

(5) guests: friends, relatives, neighbors, children, pets
Noun Phrase Exercise D

Directions: This exercise will give you practice in varying the types of modifiers that you add to your noun phrases. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the sentence providing the types of words requested in parentheses that will modify the noun headword given. You will find noun determiners and possessives in the noun phrase section of this workbook.

(1) 2 Under the Christmas tree,
1 Peter found the gifts he had wanted most,
2 (noun determiner) (adjective), (adjective) book,
2 and (noun determiner) (adjective), (adjective) (noun) jacket.

(2) 1 Mother has thrown out all of our mess,
2 (possessive noun determiner) (adjective) comics,
2 and (possessive noun determiner) (past participle) models.

(3) 1 The resources of our library are limitless,
2 (noun determiner) (adverb) (adjective) reference-books,
2 (noun determiner) (adjective) reserve books,
2 (noun determiner) (adjective) (noun) collections,
2 and (noun determiner) (adjective), (past participle) magazines and newspapers.

(4) 1 The farmer, / , carried the bale on his hip,
2 (noun determiner) (adjective), (adjective) worker.

(5) 1 The platform was crowded with luggage:
2 (noun determiner) (adjective) (past participle) trunks,
2 and (noun determiner) (adjective) (adjective) suitcases.

(6) 1 A few hours later we caught two bass,
2 (adverb) (adjective) fish (prepositional phrase).

(7) 1 The little man pulled at the top of his tie,
2 (noun determiner) (adjective) tie (prepositional phrase).
Noun Phrase Exercise E

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, write new sentences by taking material from the source sentences and adding it to the final sentence in the manner indicated.

EXAMPLE: Source Sentences: Kay looked about her room. It was a cozy place. It was full of sunshine.

1 Kay looked about her room, a/an neat, cozy, sunshiny place.

(1) Source Sentences: The new teenager was always smiling. She was very friendly. No one seemed to notice that she was rather awkward.

1 Everyone in the neighborhood likes the new girl down the block, a/an neat, cozy, sunshiny place.

(2) Source Sentences: The umpire was a short, heavy-set man. He was sweating. He was hard-bitten.

1 The crowd shouted insults at the umpire, a short, sweating, hard-bitten man.

(3) Source Sentences: Jean found that a summer job involved some busy hours. Some were rather hectic. There were days that were interesting. Others were profitable.

1 Jean found out what a summer job involved:

(4) Source Sentences: The students were planning an exciting evening. It was to be an unusual one.

1 The students were planning the first social event of the season, a/an exciting, unusual evening.
NOUN PHRASE EXERCISE F

Directions: Choose one noun for each sphere and write four “WOW” noun phrases to rename each noun.
NOUN PHRASE EXERCISE G

Directions:
2 On a separate piece of paper,
1 diagram the sentences below according to the levels of generality,
2 filling in the blanks with appropriate noun phrases and
prepositional phrases.

(EX.) According to Bob, _noun phrase_, Steve and Jamie broke up
_prep. phrase_ _prep. phrase_, _noun phrase_ _prep. Phrase.

2 According to Bob,
 3 the know-it-all town gossip,
1 Steve and Jaime broke up at the fair on Saturday,
 2 a rainy, dreary afternoon for both of them.

(1) The birthday card, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_ _prep. phrase_, arrived late every year.

(2) _Noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_ _prep. phrase_, the Palm Pilot
kept track of Ron’s busy life, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_, and _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_.

(3) _Noun phrase_, the novel had all the right elements of a great
piece of literature, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_, and _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_.

(4) _Noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_,
_noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_ — these are the greatest features of
_your favorite television show_.

(5) Superman, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_, might just be able to
defeat both Alien and Predator, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_.

(6) _Prep. phrase_, the computer seems to freeze up, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_.

(7) The last sentence on this page, _noun phrase_ _prep. phrase_ is
at the bottom of this page.