

The background is a vibrant collage of abstract shapes and patterns. It includes a large teal shape with white wavy lines, a red shape with a black dotted pattern, a yellow shape with a black dotted pattern, and a grey shape with a black dotted pattern. There are also various wavy lines and small geometric shapes scattered throughout.

# THE POWER OF LANGUAGE: PHRASES

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BY ACCESS



Sentences can be written in a variety of ways and still come out with the same meaning. When writers use complex sentences, phrases, or clauses, they are using sentence structure to their advantage.

By deconstructing complex sentences, we can better understand how sentences are put together, and how expert writers and speakers use complete sentence structures to convey meaning in an unambiguous way.





Study the following example:

*The alligator, who was quietly scouting her prey in the swamp, noticed a log drifting swiftly by her.*

The deconstruction of that sentence would look like this:

- The alligator was quietly scouting her prey.
- The alligator noticed a log.
- The log drifted swiftly by her.

Here's another example:

*"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."*



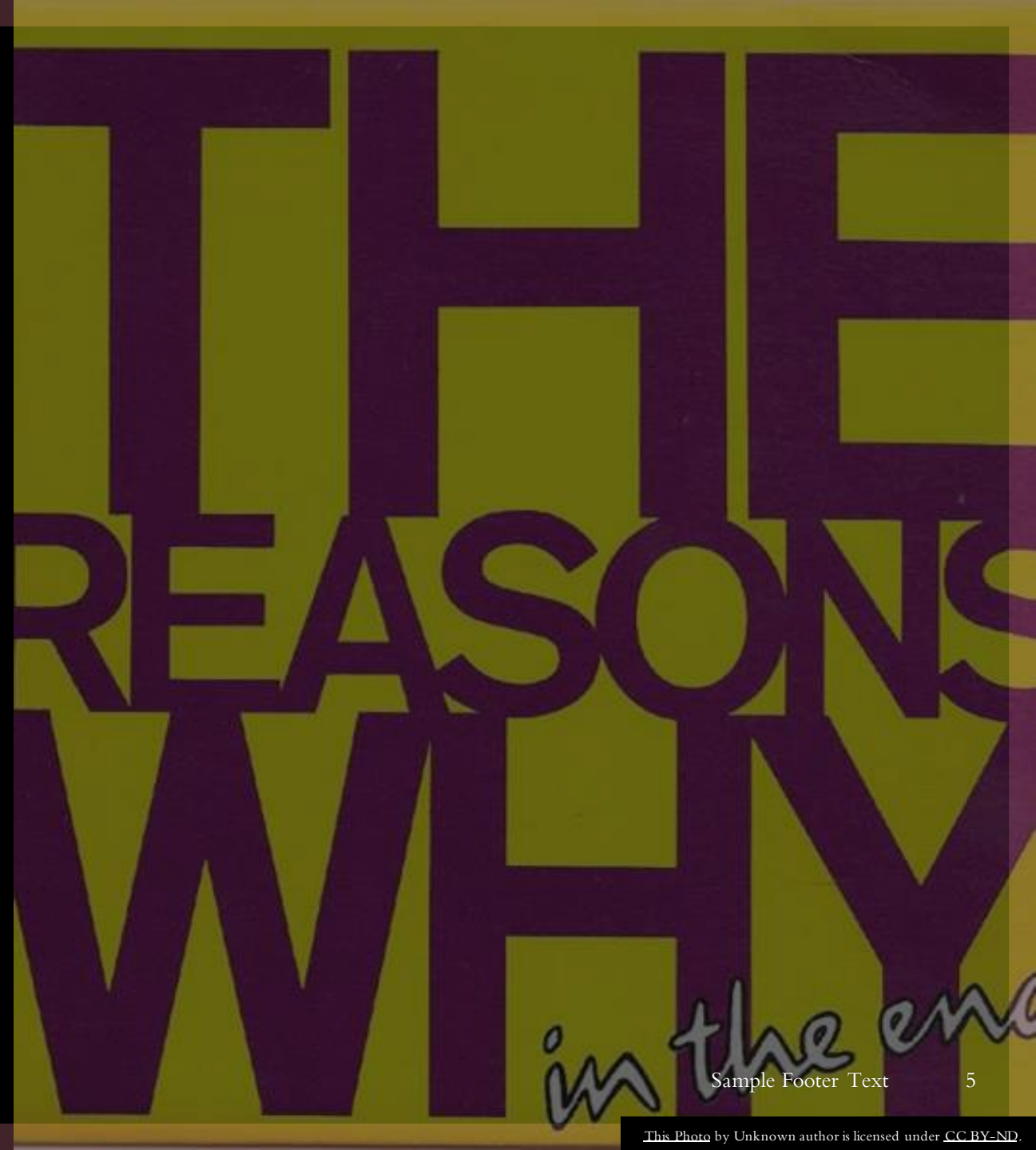
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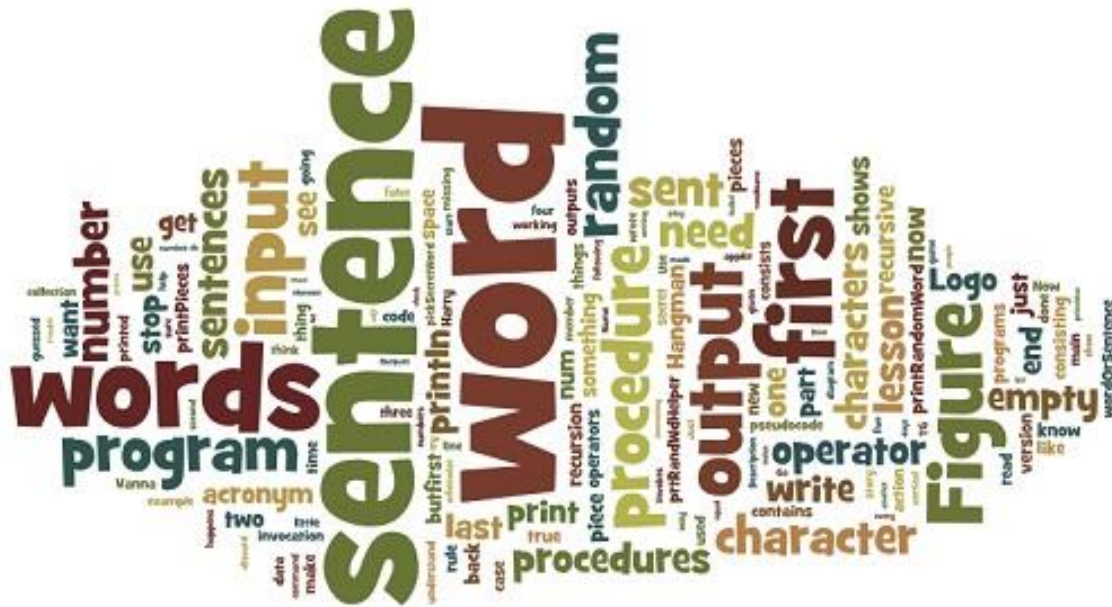


The deconstruction of that sentence would look like this:

- Sometimes it's necessary for people to break up political groups.
- Sometimes it's necessary to be separate but equal.
- To be respectable, people must give reasons for the separation.

By deconstructing the text, you are able to build a deeper understanding of how the language creates meaning, especially in the harder texts that were written hundreds of years before you were born.





A **phrase** is a group of words that function as a unit. A phrase cannot stand alone because it lacks a subject, a predicate (the part of the sentence that contains the verb), or both.

There are three types of phrases that you need to know: **prepositional**, **appositive**, and **verbal**.

## Prepositional Phrases

A **preposition** is one of the eight parts of speech that describes a relationship between two things.

A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and ends with the object of that preposition, which is either a noun or pronoun.

For example:

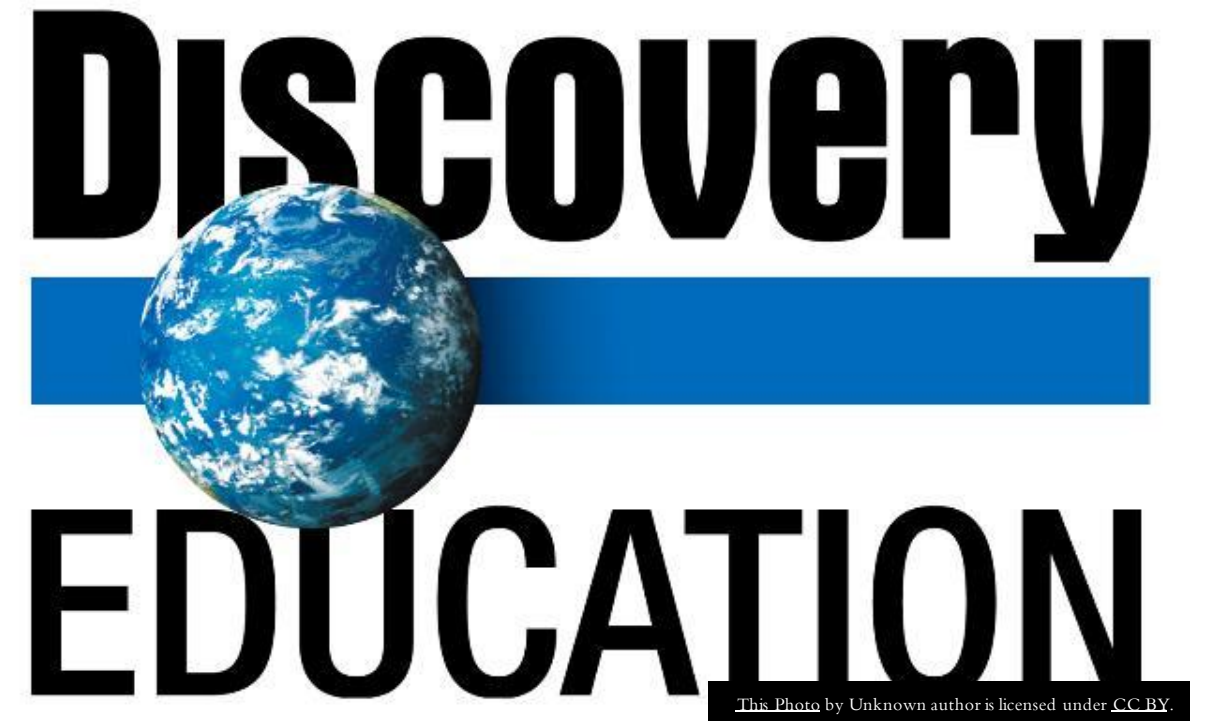
*Lacy left her book in the classroom.*

The word *in* is the preposition and *classroom* is the object of the preposition.



Watch *Prepositional Phrases* (6:01) to learn about prepositions and their uses.

Login instructions for Discovery Education.





## Appositive Phrases

An **appositive** is a noun or pronoun that modifies, or describes, another noun or pronoun.

What's the purpose of the appositive? It provides additional information about the noun or pronoun.

For example:

*My friend Jane lives in Hawaii.*

*Jane* provides additional information about friend.



An appositive phrase is the appositive plus any words that modify, or describe, it. For example:

*Tucker, my golden retriever, chased a cat for three blocks.*

Appositives can be essential or nonessential to the sentence.

The phrase *my golden retriever* provides more information about *Tucker*.

Notice that the appositive is separated by commas.

Only the appositives that provide the extra information receive the comma like in the second example.

In the first sentence, *Jane* is essential for the sentence to make sense, so there is no need for commas.





# Verbal Phrases

Verbal Phrases text  
version | Open Verbal  
Phrases in a new tab





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