

## ENGLISH 287, FALL 2007 HANDOUTS

### PART 3: ADVANCED NOUN PHRASES

<b>More About Nouns</b>	2
Nominal Adjectives	
Noun Modifiers—compound noun	
How We Recognize Nouns and Adjectives—affixes	
Pronoun Substitution and Noun Phrases	
<b>Participles as Modifiers and Nominals</b>	5
Participles as Premodifiers	
Participial Phrases and Adjectives as Postmodifiers	
Participle Phrases in Front of Subjects—dangling modifiers	
Absolutes	
Gerunds and Gerund Phrases as Nominals	
<b>More on Determiners and Pronouns</b>	9
Numbers as PostDeterminers—cardinal vs. ordinal numbers	
Indefinite Determiners and Pronouns	
WH-Pronouns—interrogative pronouns	
Quantifiers	
Other PreDeterminers—fractions, multipliers	
Mass Nouns and Count Nouns—non-count nouns	
More or Less	
<b>Relative Clauses</b>	13
Who/Whom	
Who/That/Which	
Whose	
Prepositions and Relative Pronouns	
Other Relative Pronouns—relative adverbs	
Relative Trees	
Restrictive Relatives	
More on <i>That</i> —noun complements	
<b>Deleted and Reduced Relatives</b>	17
<i>That</i> -DELETION	
Diagramming Relative Clauses w/o Relative Pronouns	
<i>That</i> -DELETION with Complementizers—complement clauses, noun clauses	
Reduced Relative Clauses and Other Modifiers in NPs	
Reduced Relatives and Dangling Modifiers	

## MORE ABOUT NOUNS

Nouns are words that specialize in certain sentence functions, but other kinds of words and phrases can serve in such nominal roles, and nouns can sometimes be found doing un-noun-like things.

### Nominal Adjectives

Most of the expressions we discuss as **nominals** take the place of noun phrases as subjects, objects, and so on, like the *that*-clauses we mentioned as our examples of complementizer clauses. Sentences (1) and (2) have *that*-clauses as subject and direct object respectively:

- (1) **That I might be boring you** would never occur to me.
- (2) I know **that some of you will take advantage of this.**

The nominals in sentences (1) and (2) are not noun phrases and a complete subject, the *that*-clause in sentence (1) has no equivalent simple subject, because there can be no head noun in a complementizer phrase. For purposes of subject-verb agreement, such expressions are treated as singular, whatever their content.

**Nominal adjectives**, on the other hand, are adjectives which seem to have usurped the role of nouns as the heads of the noun phrases in which they appear:

- (3) The **old** watch the **young** dance.

Both “old” and “young” are usually adjectives, and in fact, they still behave as adjectives in his sentence. We can add an intensifying adverb like “very,” as in sentence (4) or make them comparative or superlative, as in sentences (5) and (6):

- (4) The **very old** watch the **very young** dance.
- (5) The **younger** watch the **older** dance.
- (6) The **oldest** watch the **youngest** dance.

We couldn't do all this if “old” and “young” had become nouns. They are, then, still adjectives, even though serving as nominals. Another test which we can use to distinguish such nominal adjectives from normal head nouns is by inserting the word “ones” after the suspected adjective:

- (7) The **old ones** watch the **young ones** dance.
- (8) The **very old ones** watch the **very young ones** dance.
- (9) The **older ones** watch the **younger ones** dance.
- (10) The **youngest ones** watch the **oldest ones** dance.

Nominal adjectives are normally treated as plural for purposes of subject verb agreement, but the comparative and superlative forms can also be used with singular verbs:

- (11) The **older** watches the **younger** dance.
- (12) The **oldest** watches the **youngest** dance.

### Noun Modifiers

We have also found noun phrases serving as adverbials of time (“last night”) and possessive nouns and noun phrases serving as determiner's and objects:

- (13) **George's** cup overflows.
- (14) My car hit **George's**.

There are a few exceptions to the rule that possessive noun phrases occupy the determiner

position when they occur inside other noun phrases. Consider the following sentence:

(9) He wore a red **champion's** belt.

In sentence (15), “champion’s” occurs in the same noun phrase as the central determiner (“a”) and comes after the modifying adjective. It is functioning as a **noun modifier**, a noun serving the adjectival function of modifying another noun. In sentence (16), “trophy” serves the same function:

(16) Alice is a red **trophy** wife.

How do we know that “champion’s” and “trophy” are not just adjectives in these sentences? The possessive ending on “champion’s” is certainly one good clue. Adjectives do not have a possessive case form in English. Both “champion” and “trophy” can be possessive, though “trophy’s” would not make sense in sentence (16).

Adjectives don’t have plural forms in English, but both “champion” and “trophy” do. Most adjectives, on the other hand, can be preceded by intensifying adverbs like “really,” but champion and trophy cannot, so that sentences (17) and (18) are unacceptable:

(17) \*He wore a red really champion’s belt.

(18) \*He wore a red really trophy belt.

Expressions like “champion’s belt” are not all that common in English, but noun modifiers without the possessive ending are. They characteristically come immediately before the head noun, after any other modifiers. They can, in fact, be considered as the first part of a **compound noun**. English has a great range of such nouns, formed by putting together a noun and another noun—they can involve other parts of speech combined with nouns, as well, but we’ll put those off for now.

Some noun+noun compounds have been used together for so long that we put no space between the two nouns and treat them as a single word:

(13) George had **bedroom** eyes.

Other combinations, almost equally common, are usually printed with a space between:

(14) He went into the **dining room**.

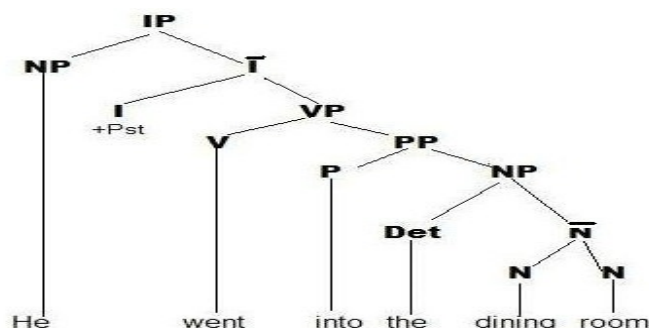
Many combinations seem to vary according to the whim of the writer:

(15) George is in the **doghouse**.

(16) George built a **dog house**.

Hyphens can also be used between the two portions of a compound noun, especially if only one part is a noun.

In diagramming such structures, we’ll show the two nouns as part of the same head noun, even when they are printed as separate words:



Compounding, making new words by shoving together old ones, is one of the most productive ways of making new words in Germanic languages like English. On the other hand, stringing together a long series of noun modifiers can make your prose sound ugly, though it is not uncommon in academic, business and other forms of bureaucratic prose.

## How We Recognize Nouns and Adjectives

In distinguishing head nouns from nominal adjectives and noun modifiers from regular adjectives, we have already noted some of characteristic ways in which we identify parts of speech—for adjectives, the “very “ test and being made superlative or comparative; for nouns, the ability to form the plural and the possessive. There are quite a few other word-endings (**affixes**) which also help us identify nouns but these are much less reliable than the tests we have just mentioned. You will probably be able to think of other nouns which have the same endings as these:

- (17) citizenship
- (18) government
- (19) innovation
- (20) rapidity
- (21) freedom

English uses endings like these to take words from one part of speech and put them to work as another part of speech. Sometimes, of course, it does this without changing the ending at all, a process which usually annoys people until they get used to it. Until recently, for example, “effort” was simply a noun, but it is coming into use as a verb—“We are efforting that”—a usage that still sets some people’s teeth on edge.

When we encounter new words in our reading, we are often able to recognize what kind of word they are even when we are uncertain of their meaning. That is one of the points of the famous Lewis Carroll poem, “Jabberwocky,” which begins with this quatrain:

*'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.*

We read this and assume that “toves” is a plural noun; it comes after a “the” and in front of “did,” which we recognize as a modal verb, and the “s” at the end looks like a plural ending. Because it comes between a recognized determiner (“the”) and a probable noun, we guess that “slithy” is an adjective; the “-y” ending appears on a lot of adjectives, so that “slithy” just “sounds” like an adjective. Assuming that “did” is a modal, we think of “gyre and gimble” as verbs explaining what “toves” do in the “wabe,” which we take to be another noun, some kind of place.

## Pronoun Substitution and Noun Phrases

Since pronouns are normally defined as taking the place of nouns, you might think they would help us identify nouns, but in fact, pronouns will take the place of noun phrases headed by adjectives and other nominals:

- (22) The rich believe that **they** are better than us, but we don’t believe **it**.

The general rule, in fact, is that pronouns must take the place of a complete noun phrase or nominal rather than just part of it. This is one of the ways in which we know that noun phrases are real features of the language and not just inventions of grammarians.

## ADVANCED NOUN PHRASES: MORE YOU SHOULD NOW BE ABLE TO DO

This section has been primarily concerned with equipping you to recognize nouns and verbs even in cases where the adjectives are functioning as nominal adjectives or the nouns as noun modifiers within compound nouns.

## PARTICIPLES AS MODIFIERS AND NOMINALS

Noun modifiers are by no means the only interlopers who can be found occupying the slot in noun phrases normally occupied by attributive adjectives. Various modifiers which normally follow nouns can be found as premodifiers from time to time, including place adverbials like “outside”, prepositional phrases (often hyphenated), and even clauses:

- (1) We had only an **outside** privy.
- (2) He was a **by-the-book** officer.
- (3) It was definitely a **quit-while-you’re ahead** day.

More common than these are **present and past participles**. Present participles, in particular, can be confusing in this position, because they are easily mistaken for gerunds, *ing*-participles which act like nouns but remain verbals.

### Participles as Premodifiers

As premodifiers within noun phrases, participles generally follow true adjectives, though this is not an absolute rule. Since participles are generally not gradable, both the “very”-test and the ability to form the comparative can be used to distinguish true adjectives from these participles. Sentence (4) is grammatical, but sentences (5) and (6) are not:

- (4) The **watching** crowd was still.
- (5) \*The **very watching** crowd was still.
- (6) \*The **more watching** crowd was still.

On the other hand, participles can be modified by manner adverbials that would not occur as intensifying adverbs in front of adjectives:

- (7) The **avidly watching** crowd was still.

The comparative test can yield ambiguous results with some past participles, however, and superlative constructions are perfectly acceptable with past participles:

- (8) ?The **more watched** show was a newscast.
- (9) The **most watched** show was a newscast.

In addition, there are present participles which have been used as adjectives for so long that they pass all adjective tests and might as well be regarded as adjectives:

- (10) The **very exciting** gortch is here.
- (11) I saw an **even more frightening** sight.

In the end, the best test is how one would interpret the sentence if the “ing”-word concerned were in a predicative position:

- (12) The crowd was **watching**.
- (13) The show was **watched**.
- (14) The gortch was **exciting**.
- (15) The sight was **frightening**.

In sentences (12) and (13), we interpret the *ing*-words as participles and main verbs, helping to create a progressive in sentence (12) and a passive in sentence (13). In sentences (14) and (15), on the other hand, we interpret the *ing*-words as adjectives and subject complements. For one thing, if “exciting” and “frightening” were verbs, they would need to be transitive—that is, we would expect to find direct objects tell us who was being excited or frightened.

## Participial Phrases and Adjectives as Postmodifiers

Participles can also become postmodifiers within noun phrases, and generally must do so if they have complements:

- (16) The crowd **watching** was still.
- (17) The crowd, **watching** in horror, was still.
- (18) The show **watched** most was a newscast.

Since compound adjectives and adjectives with complements can also follow the nouns they modify, the postmodifying position is not an absolute indicator that the modifier is a participial phrase:

- (19) Your professor, **kindly and wise**, has your best interests at heart
- (20) The gortch, **exciting as ever**, is back in town.

For that matter, single adjectives can also sometimes be found following the adjective they modify, either in a conventional phrase like that in sentence (21) or when someone is waxing poetic, as in sentence (22):

- (21) The attorney **general** sued.
- (22) I sing the body **electric**.

## Prepositional and Participial Phrases in Front of Subjects

At the beginning of the sentence, some prepositional phrases and participial phrases that would normally come after the head noun in the subject noun phrase can be moved in front of the subject:

- (23) **In a bit of a snit**, Judy stomped out of the room.
- (24) **Watching in horror**, the crowd was still.

In sentences like (23) and (24), the sentence-opening phrases still modify the simple subject and are still part of the complete subject. One probably should distinguish a sentence like (23) from cases in which adjunct adverbial prepositional phrases have been moved to the front of the sentence:

- (25) **At night** we can see the stars.
- (26) **In the park** the night is full of couples coupling.

Sentence-opening participial phrases which do not modify the simple subject are generally disapproved of as **dangling modifiers**, and English teachers enjoy collecting particularly awful examples of them:

- (27) **Looking around**, the nearest Walgreen's looked like the best bet.
- (28) **Dressed in a low-cut gown**, George couldn't help ogling Martha.

In sentence (27), it seems unlikely the any Walgreen's is doing the "looking," and we rather think that it is Martha rather than George who is dressed in a revealing gown.

Opening participial phrases do not have to modify the subject if they are clearly meaning as sentence adverbials (disjuncts):

- (29) **Speaking frankly**, George is rather stupid.

Prepositional phrases can serve the same purpose, of course:

- (30) **In fact**, George is very stupid.

## Absolutes

When the internal subjects of participial phrases like that in (29) are given, they are generally

uninflected, yielding a rather formal construction sometimes known as an **absolute phrase** or **absolute clause**. (The term **absolute** is also applied to the ungraded form of adjectives, as compared to comparative and superlative forms, but the usage is unrelated.) The expressions consist of a noun followed by a modifying participial phrase, as in sentences (31) and (32), or a noun followed by a modifying adjective phrase, as in sentence (33) and (34). As the sentences show, they need not come at the beginning of the sentence:

- (31) Mission accomplished, he went home.
- (32) He went home, his mission accomplished.
- (33) His eyes full of tears, he went home.
- (34) He went home, eyes full of tears.

In effect, the underlined expressions in (31) are just participial phrases with noun subjects supplied, while those in (32) are noun phrases with adjective modifiers following. What links them is that both can be turned into independent clauses by adding a tensed "be" verb in front of the modifier, at least when the determiner "his" is around for the subject noun. Adding in a determiner, one can also rewrite these sentences with subordinate clauses or prepositional phrases:

- (35) He went home, since his mission was accomplished.
- (36) With his mission accomplished, he went home.
- (37) His eyes were full of tears, so he went home.
- (38) He went home with his eyes full of tears.

When the participle phrase includes "being" or "having" or "having been," these can often be deleted as well--in the case of "being," at least, they almost always should be. This is the kind of stylistic point that crops up on sentence correction exercises on the GMAT and similar tests. Notice that the omitted matter adds nothing to our sample sentence:

- (39) He went home, his mission (having been) accomplished.
- (40) His eyes (being) full of tears, he went home.

Far from sounding elegant, sentences with an unnecessary "being" sound awkward and suggest a bad writer trying to sound like their betters. Such usages are not uncommon in academic and bureaucratic prose. Correctly used absolute phrases, on the other hand, are truly formal and should reassure the reader that the writer knows what he or she is doing. An even more formal tone can be achieved by using pairs or series of such constructions. The pairs should usually be joined by coordinating conjunctions, while series can be separated only by commas.

- (41) He went home, his mission accomplished but his eyes full of tears.
- (42) The wine poured, the dinner cooked, the table laid, we awaited our dinner guests.

## Gerunds and Gerund Phrases as Nominals

Present participles offer one special source of confusion all their own. They can also be used as nominals, by themselves or as the verbals in participial phrases. When used this way, they are known as gerunds, and some traditional grammars are very insistent on reserving the term "participle" for their adjectival use. For safety's sake, learn to call uses like the following "gerund":

- (43) Listening is the key.
- (44) Jogging is good for you.
- (45) He enjoys dancing.

Gerunds of this sort can be modified by adjectives as if they were nouns, as in sentence (46),

but they can also be modified by manner adverbials, as in sentence (47);

(46) **Active listening** is the key.

(47) **Listening closely** is the key.

When gerunds come with subjects or complements or modifiers adjunct adverbials, we have a **gerund phrase**, with the gerund as its head. It can be tricky distinguishing between sentences in which a present participle modifies a head noun, as in sentence (48), and sentences in which a gerund head takes a noun as its direct object, as in sentence (49):

(48) **Thanking mothers** is the purpose of Mother's Day.

(49) **Doting mothers** make a teacher's life hard.

The subject of the verbal gerund is usually left implicit, but it can be expressed. If so, its subject can either be a possessive or (if a pronoun) in the objective case:

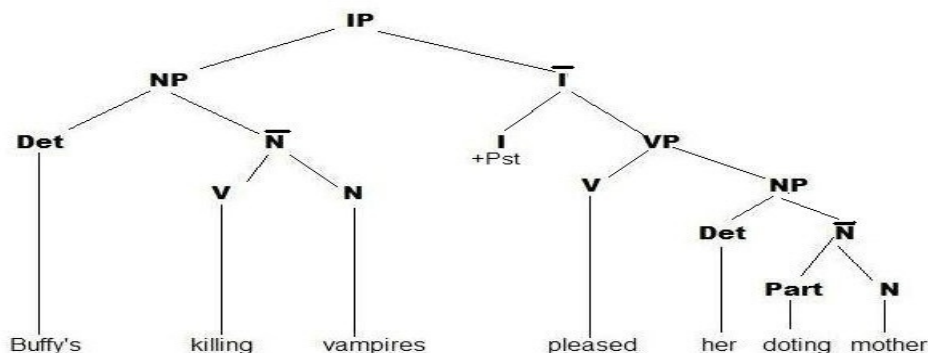
(50) **Our thanking our mothers** is the purpose of Mother's Day.

(51) **Us thanking our mothers** is the purpose of Mother's Day.

(52) **Buffy's killing vampires** pleased her doting mother.

(53) **Buffy killing vampires** pleased her doting mother.

When it comes to diagramming sentences, it does not seem necessary to add another phrase type to our existing inventory. We can diagram gerund phrases as VPs or IPs or as noun phrases with a verbal in place of the head noun. The diagram below takes the last of the options:



### ADVANCED NOUN PHRASES: MORE YOU SHOULD NOW BE ABLE TO DO

– In a given noun phrase, determiners from adjectives from premodifying participles from noun modifiers within a compound noun.

–Recognize the complete subject when there is an unusual kind of sentence opener and be able to say whether that sentence opener is part of the subject NP or an adjunct adverbial, a disjunct adverbial, vocative, or interjection.

– Say whether an *ing*-word is a participle and if so, whether it is helping to form the progressive, serving as a noun premodifier or postmodifier, serving as a sentence adverbial, part of an absolute clause, or serving as a gerund or head of gerund phrase.

– Say whether an *-ed* or *-en*-word is a participle and if so, whether it is helping to form the passive, helping to form the perfect, serving as a noun premodifier or postmodifier, or part of an absolute phrase.

## MORE ON DETERMINERS AND PRONOUNS

In the way we have been looking at noun phrases, a distinction is drawn between premodifiers like adjectives and participles and the determiners. We have already encountered several kinds of determiners—articles, demonstratives, possessive personal pronouns, and possessive noun phrases. There are several less common varieties, some with unusual properties. Most can also serve as stand-alone pronouns.

### Numbers as PostDeterminers

All determiners are sometimes categorized as adjectives, since they can be regarded as modifying nouns. The **numbers**, at least, do seem to be found in the adjective position sometimes. Most of the time, however, numbers must be placed in front of any adjectives, for which reason we will consider them a kind of determiner. There are two main kinds of numbers: **cardinal numbers** like *one, two, ten, six hundred*, etc. and **ordinal numbers** like *first, second, tenth, and last*.

Cardinal numbers can serve as stand-alone pronouns as in sentence (1), as replacements for central determiners like "the" as in sentence (2), or as **postdeterminers** which follow another determiner, as in sentences (3) and (4):

- (1) **Ten** danced.
- (2) **Ten** people danced.
- (3) **The ten** people danced.
- (4) **My ten** friends danced.

The term "postdeterminer," we might note, is common among linguists but a bit technical for general handbooks. The simple point here is that noun phrases can have more than one determiner, and that when they do so, some regularly come after central determiners like "the" and some are apt to come in front of a "the."

Ordinal numbers do not appear as central determiners, but can be postdeterminers as in sentences (5) and (6) below. Similarly, when ordinal numbers are used in a nominal function like subject, they normally require a central determiner in front of them, as in sentences (7) and (8):

- (5) **The third** man sneezed.
- (6) **His fourth** opponent defaulted.
- (7) **The first** shall be last.
- (8) **My second** left me.

The determiner and pronoun "one" can be regarded as either a cardinal number or as one of a set of **indefinite pronouns** or as a word that can be either. It can certainly appear in the postdeterminer position like a number:

- (9) She was **the one** girl for me.

If we regarded it as a number, we have another reason for regarding numbers as determiners rather than adjectives, since singular nouns preceded by "one" are acceptable when the same nouns preceded by a mere adjective would not be:

- (10) **One dog** bit me.
- (11) \***Red dog** bit me.

## Indefinite Determiners and Pronouns

Besides “one,” lists of **indefinite pronouns** generally include *some, any, either, no, and neither*.

Unlike “one,” these must be central determiners and cannot be postdeterminers—that is, they cannot co-occur with articles, demonstratives, or possessives. Those who prefer the term “possessive determiners” for possessive personal pronouns as determiners generally prefer to speak of **indefinite determiners** when indefinite pronouns serve this function.

- (12) **Some** bears are needed.
- (13) **Any** bear will do.
- (14) **Either** bear will do.
- (15) **No** bear will do.
- (16) **Neither** bear will do.

Of these, all except “no” can serve as stand-alone pronouns. The indefinite pronoun equivalent to “no” is “none.”

- (17) **Some** will do, or **any** will do.
- (18) **Either** will do, or **neither** will do.
- (19) Perhaps **none** will do.

There are also a set of indefinite pronouns which are only used as pronouns and are formed by adding “one,” “body,” or “thing” to “some,” “any,” or “no.”. The resulting compounds are treated as single words, the exception being “no one”:

- (20) **Someone** cheered, and **somebody** laughed, as **something** buzzed.
- (21) **Anyone** cheered, and **anybody** laughed, if **anything** buzzed.
- (22) **No one** cheered, and **nobody** laughed, as **nothing** happened.

The same treatment can be applied to “every”:

- (23) **Everyone** cheered, and **everybody** laughed, as **everything** happened.

“Every” and “each, along with some words (“all,” “both”) we are about to treat as quantifiers are also classified by some as indefinite pronouns or determiners. The case for this. Both “every” and “each” must be central determiners. Although “each” and “every” imply that there is more than one thing around, in Standard English they treated as singular whether as determiners or (for “each”) as pronouns:

- (24) **Each man** took up his kit.
- (25) **Each** has its advantages.
- (26) **Every man** has certain rights.

Quite aside from the pressure for non-sexist language, the indefinite pronouns (even as determiners) tend to lure us into using plural pronouns for subsequent references, though this is still stigmatized as non-standard:

- (27) **?Each army** kept **their** watch that night.
- (28) **?Every dog** has **their** day.
- (29) **?No one** wants **their** taxes raised.
- (30) **?Somebody** left **their** book in the classroom.

Such usages are widespread enough that they may one day become fully acceptable. In the meantime, it is safest to prefer to treat such expressions as consistently singular.

## WH-Pronouns

English has a large group of pronouns beginning with “wh-.” Some of these (*who, which, whom, whose, whichever, whatever*) are used to make the various kinds of relative clauses we’ll be talking about soon. Some of these and some other *wh*-words (*what, where, when*) are used as

**interrogative pronouns** or as heads of other kinds of clauses. Of these, the relative pronoun *wh*-words other than “who” and the interrogative “what” can function as determiners within the clauses they introduce:

- (31) I don't know **which bear** danced.
- (32) **What idiot** laughed?
- (33) **Whose purse** is this?
- (34) **Whatever choice** you make is OK by me.
- (35) **Whichever road** you take will be scenic.?

### Quantifiers.

Rather like numbers, a group of words called **quantifiers** can also appear either as central determiners or as postdeterminers. Many of them can also appear as **predeterminers** (determiners that come in front of central determiners like “the”), though some require or can have a following “of” to do so:

- (36) My **many** friends agree.
- (37) **Many of** my friends agree.

A sentence like (37) can also be treated as having “Many” as a pronoun followed by a prepositional phrase with *of*. One reason for regarding constructions like “many of” as predeterminers is that where there can be a question, the verb agrees with the head noun. Consider these variants of the predeterminer “all”:

- (38) **All** my heart weeps, and **all** my friends weep.
- (39) **All of** my heart weeps, and **all of** my friends weep.

In both sentences (38) and (39), whether the predeterminer is “all” or “all of,” the verb seems to agree in number with “heart” and “friends.”

Some frequent quantifiers are *few*, *less*, *little*, *many*, *much*, and *several*. All can operate as stand-alone pronouns, though “less” and “much” are not that common. All can be predeterminers with “of,” and “many” can appear in front of indefinite articles:

- (40) **Many** a day passes.

### Predeterminers

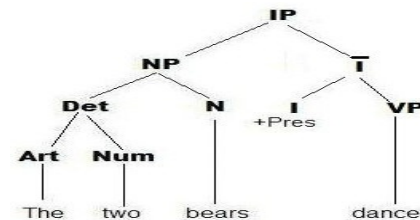
Some quantifiers are either central determiners or predeterminers: *all*, *both*, and *half*. All of these can also be used as pronouns, and all can be used in “of” constructions. Both characteristics are true as well of the **fractions** other than “half”:

- (41) One-tenth the speed would be better.
- (42) One-tenth would be better.
- (43) One-tenth of the speed would be better.

Other miscellaneous predeterminers include **multipliers** and “such,” a word which can appear in various odd combinations. Most of these can also appear as pronouns on occasion, and “such” does so with some regularity:

- (44) **Double** the money suffices.
- (45) **Once** a day suffices.
- (46) **Ten times** the money would be better.
- (47) **Such** a day is rare
- (48) **Many such** days will come
- (49) **Such** is life.

When we have more than one determiner, it makes sense to label the kinds of determiners in our phrase structure trees:



## Mass Nouns and Count Nouns

Of the quantifiers discussed in the last section, one set is particularly troublesome. When used as independent pronouns, “many” and “few” are generally used for people and other animate beings, with “much” and “less” being used for everything else. The first pair can also appear as nominals with determiners:

- (50) He seemed mad to **many**.
- (51) He didn't do **much**.
- (52) They attracted **few**.
- (53) He gave **less** to the church.
- (54) They attracted **a few**.
- (55) He seemed mad to **the many**.

When used as postdeterminers, however, “much” and “less” (and “little” when used for quantities) are used only with a special group of nouns called **mass nouns** (or **non-count nouns**) because they cannot be counted. Most English nouns, of course, are **count nouns** and a few can be used in both ways (e.g., “trouble”). The list of mass nouns is pretty arbitrary, and we simply have to learn it as we learn the nouns that compose this. Native speakers generally seem to do this, but it can be a hard distinction to master as a adult.

- (56) They carry **many sofas** in their store.
- (57) I don't own **much furniture**.
- (58) I want **less rice** with my meal.
- (59) I need **little soy sauce** on my rice.
- (60) You only gave me **a few dishes**.

Many mass nouns are hard-to-divide abstractions--*goodness, truth, and beauty--belief, evidence, information--anger, disgust, resentment*. Many such terms can be used as singular nouns with no determiners:

- (61) **Goodness** conquers all.
- (62) **Anger** is a non-productive emotion.

But concrete items which are seen as an undifferentiated mass can also be treated as mass nouns: *bread and cheese, coffee and tea, cake and sugar, whiskey and water, silver and gold, money and soap*. We can divide such nouns up with expressions using “of”:

- (63) I gave him **a bit of advice**.
- (64) She gave me **a look of disgust**.
- (65) He gave her **a pound of chocolate**.
- (66) They gave me **a glass of wine**.
- (67) You gave them **a slice of meat**.
- (68) They gave you **a piece of news**.

Do not confuse mass nouns with collective nouns, those (usually singular) nouns which by their very nature refer to collective entities like the army, government, or police. Most such nouns can be count nouns, and a few can be used with many even when in the singular, as in sentence (69) through (71) below, while a few can also be mass nouns, as seen in (72) and (73):

- (69) I didn't see **many enemy**.  
 (70) We didn't need **many police**.  
 (71) They didn't invite **many family**.  
 (72) You can't have too **much government**.  
 (73) We have too **much administration** as it is.

### More or Less

Errors caused by using “less” when “fewer” would be more acceptable seem to be more common than confusions of “much” and “many.” The reason may be that “less” is also paired with “more” as part of the superlative. In sentence (74), for example, it is an intensifying adverb modifying “acceptable”:

(74) That is a **less** acceptable usage.

In sentence (75), on the other hand, it is a quantifier modifying the mass noun “starch”:

(75) We should eat **less** starch.

### ADVANCED NOUN PHRASES: MORE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Outside of a few clausal postmodifiers that we will be discussing shortly, you should now be equipped to identify the parts of almost any noun phrase.
- You should be able to recognize, correct, and explain usage errors resulting from failure to pair mass or count nouns with the correct qualifiers.

### RELATIVE CLAUSES

The most complicated of the postmodifiers found in noun phrases is probably the **relative clause**. Relative clauses usually begin with a relative pronoun. Like other pronouns, these have the same referent as a noun phrase—in this case, the one being modified. When relative clauses are in their normal postmodifying position, they come at the end of a noun phrase and modify its head noun:

- (1) The girl **who is in the corner** danced.
- (2) The man **who was hit by the car** laughed.
- (3) The team **which was washing the car** quit.
- (4) The wagon **which is outside** is broken.

We can tell that the *wh*-words here are relative pronouns because they take the place of the noun they modified in the clause they introduce:

- (5) The girl (**the girl** is in the corner) => The girl **who** is in the corner
- (6) The man (**the man** was hit by the car) => The man **who** was hit by the car
- (7) The team (**the team** was washing the car) => The team **which** was washing the car.
- (8) The wagon (**the wagon** is outside) => The wagon **which** is outside

If the relative pronoun is not the subject of the relative clause, it still gets moved to the front of the clause, as in sentence (9) below:

- (9) The girl (I love **the girl**) is pretty => The girl **whom** I love is pretty.

This is our old friend *WH*-MOVEMENT, the same process that English uses in making questions with interrogative pronouns (*who*, *which*, *where*, *how*, etc), which is not surprising, since the relative pronouns (other than “that”) also serve as interrogatives (question words). English uses *WH*-MOVEMENT wherever *WH*-pronouns occur.

**Who/Whom.**

As sentence (9) shows, the relative pronoun for animate beings is another place where the objective case has survived as a separate form. In theory, “who” should be used only when it is the subject of its clause, whether as a relative pronoun or as an interrogative. In sentence (9), “the girl” is the direct object of “love” in the relative clause, and “whom” is the correct use. In the same way, formal Standard English would consider sentence (10) the correct way to ask a question about the object of my affections:

(10) **Whom** do I love?

In practice, this is another case where English is losing its inflections. In any but the most formal of situations, most speakers of Standard English, in the United States, at least, would be more apt to use the following:

(11) The girl **who** I love is pretty.

(12) **Who** do I love?

The tendency is to use “whom” only when it is serving as the object of a preposition and is directly following. In other contexts, it seems almost excessively formal. One would not lean close to one’s significant other and teasingly ask, “Whom do I love?”—unless, of course, one’s significant other is an English teacher turned on by good grammar. It seems best to reserve most uses of “whom” for highly formal prose, and even then, one might want to revise so as to avoid it altogether.

**Who/That/Which.**

Even “the girl who I love” is too formal for so me, and many American speakers of Standard English would use something like sentence (13) instead:

(13) The girl **that** I love is pretty.

This violates an old school grammar rule still found in some handbooks tells us to use “that” only with inanimate objects, the same kind for which we would use “which.” According to this rule, one should use “who” or “whom” for all relative clauses modifying people and other animate beings. I have had a number of friends and colleagues who would swear by this rule, though it is not accurate as a reflection of Standard English, and never has been, since English has always used “that” for both animate and inanimate objects. Many of my friends have retired, of course, but you might want to follow this old handbook rule when writing for teachers. Following it will not result in any unacceptable sentences. Just do not judge others as incorrect when they follow the splendid example of Irving Berlin, who wrote

(14) The girl **that** I marry will have to be as soft and as pink as a nursery.

(Extra points, of course, for those who actually know who Irving Berlin was.)

**Whose**

“Who,” “which,” and “that” are the main relative pronouns, but they are not the only ones. The possessive relative (and interrogative) pronoun “whose” can be used in either the determiner slot like “my,” in which case its whole noun phrase moves with it, or as an independent possessive (like “mine”). “Whose” can also be used this way with inanimate referents, though it cannot do so when used as an interrogative pronoun:

(15) He stole someone’s data, but I was not told **whose**.

(16) Everyone turned to Mandy, **whose** degree was in English.

(15) The facts, **whose** importance cannot be dismissed, suggest otherwise.

(16) Police are looking for a driver **whose** car went through the restaurant window.

“Whose” is generally preferable to the alternatives, “of whom” and “of which.”

## Prepositions and Relative Pronouns

“Which” and “who/whom” (and occasionally “whose”) can be objects of prepositions as well. Whether or not the prepositions are moved to the front of the relative clause by WH-movement depends in good part on how closely one feels them tied, if at all, to the verb. We’ll discuss such links a little later. In the meantime, unless one is around purists who hate ending clauses with prepositions, sentence (17) below is an acceptable alternative to the more formal sentence (18). In each sentence, the “which” would have been the complement of “at” in the predicate of the relative clause before WH-MOVEMENT:

- (17) The book **which** I was looking **at** proved useless.  
 (18) The book **at which** I was looking proved useless.

## Other Relative Pronouns

Lists of relative pronouns sometimes omit “whoever” “whomever,” and “whichever,” perhaps considering them mere alternative forms. They are relative pronouns, in any case, and can head postmodifying relative clauses, as in sentence (19):

- (19) The potion would make him love the user, **whoever it might be**.

Both “what” and “whatever” can also be used as relative pronouns, though using “what” to head a postmodifying relative clause is regarded as non-standard:

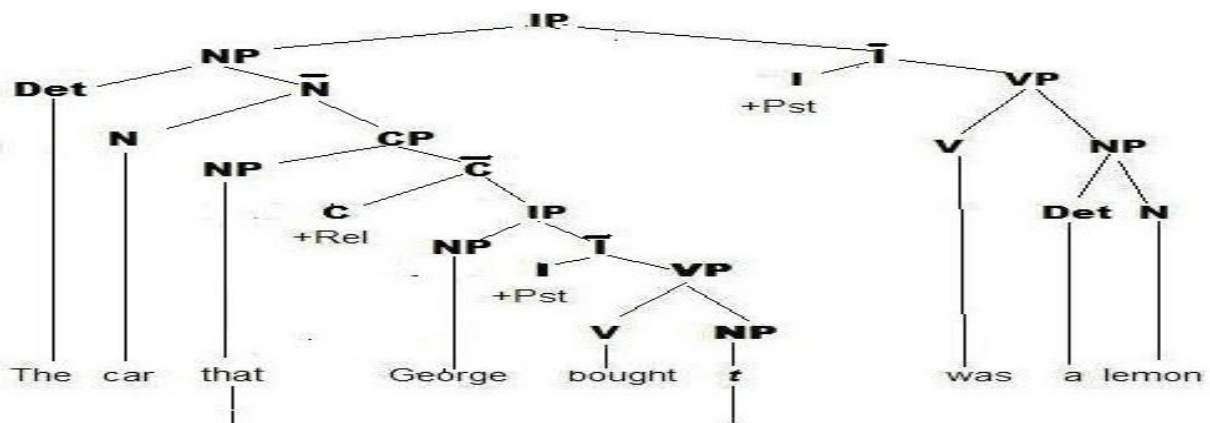
- (20) I found the hammer **what I was looking for**.

Other WH-pronouns occasionally head post-modifying clauses in noun phrases, particularly the clausal equivalents of place and time adverbs. The “where” in the following sentences can be called a **relative adverb**, since it introduces clauses which take the place of a postmodifying adverb like “here.”

- (21) We went to the the place **where he is buried**.  
 (22) This was in San Francisco, **where I was born**.

## Relative Trees

In our phrase structure trees, postmodifying relative clauses will be treated as part of that noun phrase. Instead of a PP (for prepositional phrase) under the N-bar part of the NP, we will have a CP (for complementizer clause). The results of WH-MOVEMENT are the same as for WH-questions, but this time there is a relative clause marker in the C element instead of a Q-Marker.



## Restrictive Relatives

All families have difficult relatives, and English is no exception. The big problem with post-modifying relative clauses is keeping track of whether they are restrictive or non-restrictive, because the way we punctuate depends on this distinction. A restrictive relative clause is needed to "restrict" or specify exactly which example of the noun phrase is being talked about. A non-restrictive relative clause adds information but it is extra stuff, not really needed to make it clear who or what is being talked about, and so it gets set off by punctuation, usually commas, as in sentence (23). Restrictive relative clauses, as in sentence (24), are not set off by punctuation.

(23) The man, who has blue eyes, is very handsome..

(24) The man who has blue eyes is very handsome.

Sentence (23) assumes that we already know what man is being talked about--hence the definite article "the." That he has blue eyes is just an additional piece of information, possibly relevant to the judgment that he is handsome. Relative clauses following names are almost always non-restrictive, since it is assumed that the name identifies who is being talked about. Sentence (24) assumes that we have been talking about more than one man and that we are singling out the one with blue eyes for favorable comment.

When you are setting off any sentence element, you want punctuation both before and after, usually the same punctuation--at the end of a sentence a non-restrictive post-modifying relative clause can make do with a period after it, and there are some other exceptions. If you put a comma at the end of a relative clause, though, always put one in front of the relative pronoun. This is another case where punctuating by one's breathing can be misleading. After a long relative clause, even a restrictive one, one can feel like a breath, but never punctuate a sentence like this:

(25) \*The man who has been following me around lately, is at least very handsome.

## More on *That*.

The restrictive/non-restrictive distinction is a serious sticking point for some students. One clue is the use of "that," which can only be properly used in restrictive relative clauses. One also hears occasionally that one should not use "which" with restrictive relative clauses, often from the same people who claim one should only use "who" when referring to persons. This is another shibboleth that it will do you no harm to follow when asked to do so, but one should not be caught enforcing it oneself.

The ability to use "that" with any restrictive clause is actually rather handy, since it allows one to test whether a given clause with some other relative pronoun should be regarded as restrictive or non-restrictive; if one can substitute "that" for the pronoun and mean the same thing, the relative clause is restrictive. When a relative clause following a noun phrase begins with "that" we know that it is restrictive.,

One minor hazard to watch out for while using this rule of thumb is the occasional occurrence of postmodifying *that*-clauses in which the "that" is a complementizer introducing a complementizer clause rather than a relative pronoun introducing a relative clause. One can double check by reversing the substitution test we just mentioned; if one can substitute "who" or "which" for the "that," one has a relative clause. In the complementizer clause, on the other hand, the "that" has no role to play within the clause itself, being simply a marker setting off the clause. Take away the "that" and the clause itself could stand as a separate sentence:

(26) The idea that I would do such a thing is shocking.

(27) I would do such a thing.

There is a limited set of nouns which can be modified by such **noun complements**, so one doesn't encounter them all that often. Even so, their existence is one more complication in our sorting out postmodifying elements in noun phrases.

### **ADVANCED NOUN PHRASES: WHAT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO NOW**

–Given the context, say whether a given relative clause is restrictive or non-restrictive and punctuate it correctly.

–In a set of sentences, identify any punctuation errors resulting from restrictive vs. non-restrictive errors and be able to explain and correct them.

–In a sentence, say whether a particular use of “that” is as a demonstrative determiner, a stand-alone demonstrative pronoun, a relative pronoun, or a complementizer.

### **DELETED AND REDUCED RELATIVES**

One easy way to avoid the question of whether one should say *The girl whom I love* or *The girl who I love* or *The girl that I love* is to cut out the relative pronoun entirely, yielding a sentence like this:

(1) The girl **I love** is pretty.

Although this kind of structure saves words and avoids some usage questions, it is yet another complication we must deal with in identifying post-modifying elements in noun phrases. Relative clauses with “be” as the main verb seem to be subject to even further reduction.

#### ***That*-DELETION**

Since the noun phrase to which a post-modifying relative clause refers is right in front of it, the relative pronoun (or adverb) itself serves mainly as a warning sign that what follows is some kind of dependent clause. Standard English allows us to delete that warning sign when relative clause is restrictive and the pronoun is not its subject. Some grammarians speak of such constructions as having a zero relative pronoun. Various names have been given to the omission of the relative pronoun in such cases. We will consider it kind of ***that*-DELETION**, since “that” is used only with restrictive relative and because *that*-clause complementizers are also subject to deletion. Remember, though, that it can apply to any relative clause, including those headed by relative adverbs:

- (2) The girl whom I love => the girl I love
- (3) The car which I hit => the car I hit
- (4) The day when we met => the day we met
- (5) The place where I was born => the place I was born

As a general rule, if the meaning remains clear, shorter is better, but it is a judgment call. Consider the following sentences, each of which has a relative clause which has had its pronoun deleted:

- (6) Barberry plants can form a border no intruder will relish.
- (7) Their fine thorns exact a price trespassers must pay.
- (8) You might consider the pygmy barberry the Boerner Botanical Gardens in Milwaukee uses as a hedge border for their annual gardens.
- (9) The Barbary Pirates captured many Christian slaves they then sold in the Moroccan slave-markets.

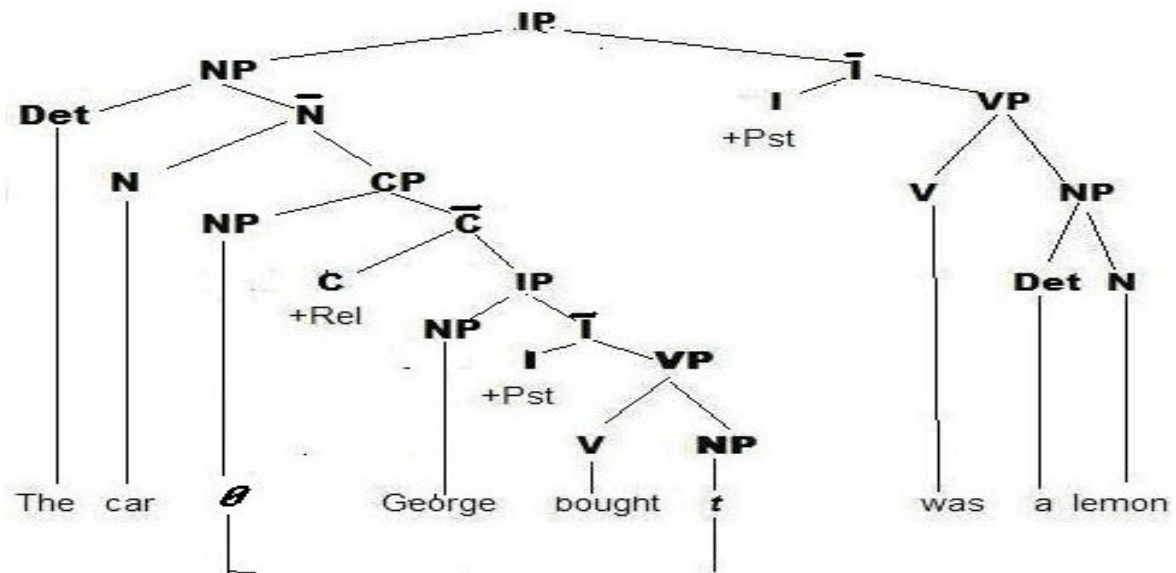
Of these, sentence (8) has the verb “consider,” and we might want to restore a “that” after “barberry” to make it clear the “consider” is not a complex transitive verb in this sentence. Even sentence (9) might sound less like a potential run-on sentence if we restored its relative pronoun, particularly since it is not clear that the relative clause involved should be treated as restrictive

(10) You might consider the pygmy barberry **that** the Boerner Botanical Gardens in Milwaukee uses as a hedge border for their annual gardens.

(11) The Barbary Pirates captured many Christian slaves, **which** they then sold in the Moroccan slave-markets.

### Diagramming Relative Clauses w/o Relative Pronouns

In diagramming clauses that have undergone That-DELETION, we will assume that WH-MOVEMENT has taken place, moving the relative to the specifier position in the CP clause, where it is replaced with a zero relative. The zero relative is represented by a zero, and the tree otherwise looks just like the one we drew earlier for normal "Relative Phrases":



### That-DELETION with Complementizers

We earlier noted that *that*-clauses can take the place of nominals as subjects and direct objects:

(11) **That you would do this** disappoints me seriously.

(12) He should know **that you care**.

More recently, we noted them as noun complements in sentence like this:

(13) The idea **that I would come to your party** is laughable.

Although they can serve as subjects, *that*-clauses are sometimes called **complement clauses**. Although they seem to be serving an adjectival use in sentence (13), they are also called **noun clauses**. For completeness, we should probably note here that they can also serve as complements of adjectives, as of “afraid” in sentence (14)

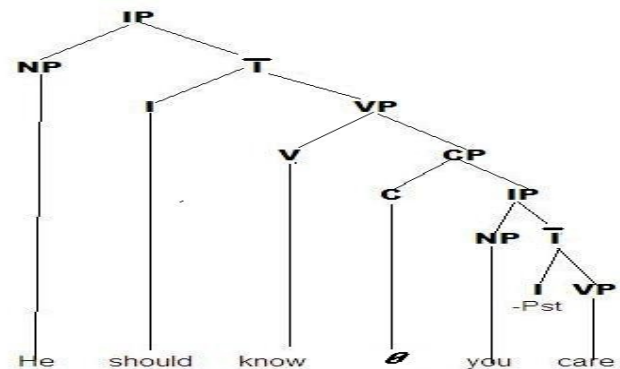
(14) My aunt, afraid **that robbers will break into her house**, recently purchased an AK-47.

As a complementizer, “that” adds no meaning. It is only there as a marker, to help us understand that what follows is only part of the main sentence. One really needs that marker in a sentence like (8), where the *that*-clause is at the beginning of the sentence. Except when a *that*-clause is serving as a subject, though, *that*-DELETION, the same process that operates on restrictive relative clauses, applies to *that*-clause complements. As our test for *that*-clauses would suggest, the clause left behind could stand by itself as a sentence if it were not serving as a dependent clause in another sentence:

- (15) He should know you care.  
 (16) My aunt, afraid robbers will break into her house, recently purchased an AK-47.  
 (17) The idea I would come to your party is laughable.

In diagramming such sentences, the C portion of the CP clause is null. Otherwise the diagram will look just like that of the equivalent sentence without *That*-DELETION.

The same tests that help distinguish *that*-clause noun complements from relative clauses can be used to see whether a deleted *that* was a complementizer or a relative pronoun.



### Reduced Relative Clauses and Other Modifiers in NPs.

When the relative pronoun, whether restrictive or not, is followed by a form of “be,” whether as a main verb or auxiliary verb, both the pronoun and the form of “be” can be deleted. The results can be called **reduced relatives**, and one name for the process involved is **WHIS-DELETION**. At one point, transformational-generative linguists used this process to explain most of the modifying elements one finds in noun phrases, and it is still a useful way of pointing to the relationships between such sentences and those with relative clauses:

- (18) The girl who is in the corner danced => The girl in the corner danced.  
 (19) The man who was hit by the car laughed => The man hit by the car laughed.  
 (20) The team which was washing the car quit => The team washing the car quit.  
 (21) The wagon which is outside is broken = The wagon outside is broken.

If one assumes a later movement process, relative clauses can also be used to account for many of the optional premodifiers in noun phrases as well, including most adjectives, participles, and even an occasional locative or prepositional phrase:

- (22) The professor, who was silly, tripped over his own feet =>  
 The silly professor tripped over his own feet.  
 (23) The lake, which is rapidly evaporating, may be in danger =>  
 The rapidly evaporating lake may be in danger.  
 (24) The hall which was upstairs was dimly lit =>  
 The upstairs hall was dimly lit.  
 (25) The interview, which was by the book, went well =>  
 The by-the-book interview went well.

On the things we learn by observing such relationships is that we other modifying elements can be classified as restrictive or non-restrictive even when there is no distinctive difference in classification. This points to the inherent, if rarely important ambiguity, of sentences like (26):

(26) The **red** dog bit George.

Without more context, we don't know whether the adjective "red" is necessary to single out which of several available dogs "bit George," or whether "red" is just an incidental feature of the dog's appearance, mentioned for its oddity. We can think of the first case as equivalent to a sentence with a restrictive relative clause, as in sentence (27), and the second as equivalent to a sentence with a non-restrictive relative, like sentence (28):

(27) The dog **which was red** bit George.

(28) The dog, **which was red**, bit George.

We can also use this relationship to test whether adverbs following a subject noun phrase are postmodifiers within that noun phrase or adjuncts modifying a following verb.

In sentence (29), we know that the adverbial noun phrase "last night" is part of the subject noun phrase because the sentence is equivalent to sentence (30):

(29) The meeting **last night** was a failure.

(30) The meeting, **which was last night**, was a failure.

We cannot, by the way, treat either cardinal numbers or noun modifiers in this way, another reason for treating the former as a kind of determiner and the latter as part of compound nouns.

### Reduced Relatives and Dangling Modifiers.

Finally, we can use the concept of reduced relatives to test for dangling modifiers. Sentence (31) is clearly equivalent to sentence (32), but the sentence-opening participial phrases in sentences (33) and (34) would make no sense at all if we tried to derive them from relative clauses:

(31) **Rapidly evaporating**, the lake may be in danger.

(32) The lake, **which is rapidly evaporating**, may be in danger.

(33) **?Looking closely**, the errors were obvious.

(34) **?Hit by a speeding car**, I picked up the dead deer.

### ADVANCED NOUN PHRASES: THINGS YOU SHOULD NOW BE ABLE TO DO

- Recognize and be able to distinguish between relative clauses and *that*-clauses even when they have undergone *that*-deletion.
- Correctly identify complete subjects and all parts of those and other noun phrases even when quite complex in structure.