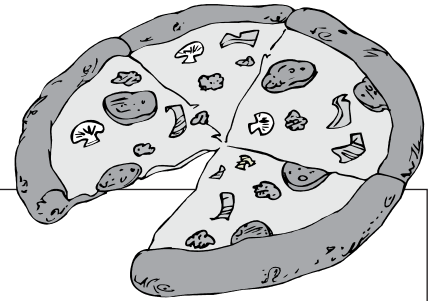


Language Supplement

Lesson 1.4 Absolute Phrases



Key Term

- **Absolute phrase** – a noun or pronoun plus a participle or participial phrase

An **absolute phrase** is made up of a noun or a pronoun and a participle or participial phrase. It will modify the entire sentence and add information. It is set off by commas.

Example 1: The project finally completed, the students ordered pizza to celebrate.

The underlined phrase does not modify the noun *students*. Instead, the phrase modifies the idea of the students' ordering pizza to celebrate.

Example 2: The fishermen pulled the fish from the live well, the limit having been caught.

The absolute phrase again does not modify the noun before it, *live well*, but the whole sentence of the fishermen pulling the fish from the live well.

Now look at another sentence that may look similar.

Excited about the win, the players lifted the coach and carried him to the locker room.

In this sentence, the underlined phrase **does** modify a single word *players* so the phrase is a participial phrase, not an absolute one. Remember that an absolute phrase modifies the entire sentence.

Practice

In the blank, put an *A* if the sentence contains an absolute phrase. Leave it blank if it doesn't.

- _____ 1. Read by all her friends, the book was coming apart.
- _____ 2. The case solved, the FBI team flew home.
- _____ 3. The wedding dress finally finished, the seamstress took a vacation.
- _____ 4. Studying all weekend for the exam, Alicia was determined to do well.
- _____ 5. We basked in the sun on the beach, the sound of the waves lulling us to relax.
- _____ 6. Knocking softly on the door, her mother stood in the hall.
- _____ 7. Their victory assured, the fans stayed on their feet yelling and clapping.
- _____ 8. She led the fitness class's routines for thirty minutes, sweat running down her face.

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Lesson 7.1

Context as Clues



Key Terms

- **Context clues** – words or phrases in a sentence that help a reader to understand an unknown word
- **Synonym** – a word that has similar meaning to another word; example: *happy* and *joyful* are synonyms
- **Antonym** – a word that has the opposite meaning to another word; example: *happy* and *sad* are antonyms
- **Inference** – a reasonable guess based on clues

Sentences often contain **context clues**, which are hints that define or illustrate the meaning of a difficult word. There are six types of context clues: definitions/descriptions, examples, synonyms/antonyms, causes and effects, inferences, and comparisons/contrasts. Each type is described below.

Definition/Description

A **definition** is a clear statement that gives the meaning of a word or word group using only the most important information about that word. Signal words that will help you recognize a definition are the *to be* verbs, *is* and *are*, and the word *or*. Also look for a definition in an **appositive**, a noun or noun phrase that follows another noun and renames it.

Example 1: An **heirloom** is a piece of property handed down from one generation to another.

In this example, the word *heirloom* is defined in the sentence. “*Is*” connects the unfamiliar word with its definition; *heirloom* is a noun that means *a piece of property handed down from one generation to another*.

Example 2: They planned to have the concert in the **amphitheater**, an open space with rising tiers of seats surrounding it.

This example is similar to Example 1, but in this case, the definition comes as an appositive right after the word *amphitheater*. The appositive, *an open space with rising tiers of seats surrounding it*, renames *amphitheater* and tells the reader what the word means.

A sentence can also describe a word so that the reader better understands what the word means. The description may not be as clear and complete as a definition, but it can still be very helpful to the reader. A description is often a mental or visual image. Signal words may be sensory words that tell color, shape, smell, sound, and so on.

Example 3: The **dialect** for *you* used by Southerners is *y’all*, but Northerners use *you guys*.

This sentence describes the dialect used by Southerners, but what does the word mean? The rest of the sentence gives examples of the same word in two different dialects. The reader has enough clues to figure out that *dialect* means *different ways of talking in different regions* even though the sentence does not tell specifically what a *dialect* is.