

Sentence Composing

Different Structures for Expansion Subject-Verb Splits

1. present participle (phrase)

starts with an -ing form

The Iraqi spy, moving like a shadow, tried to escape.

Mike, wasting no more time mounted his horse and rode off.

The toddler, laughing the entire time, crawled down the front sidewalk.

2. past participle (phrase)

starts with an -ed/en form

Kenny, frozen from several hours in the cold, finally went inside the house.

Karen, dressed in her wedding gown, began to walk down the aisle.

Mark, discouraged because he didn't know the final answer, handed in her math test.

3. prepositional phrase

starts with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun

Jack, on the front porch, rocked back and forth in the swing.

The two little boys, at the far side of the room, played with blocks.

Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, from their bedroom window, saw their daughter drive away.

4. appositive (phrase)

a noun (phrase) that means the same as the subject

Miyax, a classic Eskimo beauty, collected food for the long winter.

Harry, the class clown, walked into the room with a big red nose.

Hawks, members of the raptor family, search for their food from the sky.

5. adjective clause

starts with a clue word: "who" or "which"

Phil, who is usually the first one out of the room, slowly exited Mr. Ross's classroom.

Jack, who was a health fanatic, ate a breakfast of granola bars.

The assignment, which is due tomorrow, should take little time to complete.

6. adjective(s)

one adjective or a pair or more of adjectives without a noun afterwards; sometimes with a comparison

The model, tall and handsome, walked to his place in the show.

Jack, as happy as a child getting a Christmas present, received his high school diploma.

Jenny, freckled, smiled at her teacher.

Superman, faster than a speeding bullet, flew to help the screaming woman.

7. adverb(s)

one adverb or a pair or more of adverbs (often -ly words)

The police, slowly and carefully, approached the crime scene.

Everyone, sadly, entered the funeral service.

He, happily, approached the President to receive his award.

8. absolute phrase

almost a sentence except that the word *is*, *are*, *was*, or *were* is missing; often starts with a possessive word

The thief, his hands held up in the air, surrendered to the police.

Jim, eyes closed and fingers pinching his nose, jumped into the water.

Debbie, her prayers finished, climbed into bed and pulled over the covers.

9. infinitive (phrase)

starts with an infinitive (*to + verb*)

Jack, to get a better view of the parade, climbed the lamp post.

Mr. Jones, to learn about the history of Rome, visited Italy last summer.

Gertrude, to lose weight quickly, had stomach surgery.

In all of the above cases, a subject-verb split always comes between the subject of the sentence and the verb. It refers to the subject. (Subject of the sentence) ? (Verb)

Remember that these expansions are never complete sentences. They are just words, phrases, or dependent clauses. So if you actually create a full sentence when you add the split, then you haven't done the job correctly.

Also remember that you may combine one type of expansion with another. In other words, you could have an opener AND a subject-verb split.